

Podiatrists and Vaccinations

BY BARRY H. BLOCK, DPM, JD

If you are looking for an indication of lack of parity with medical specialty, you can begin with restrictions on the ability to give vaccines to our patients. Even during the worst pandemic in a century, most podiatrists are prohibited from vaccinating patients. Even when podiatrists in a few states are granted this privilege, often it is restricted by requiring us to do so under the supervision of a physician, a physician's assistant, or a nurse. Pharmacists who have virtually no clinical training or experience can administer vaccines; and in Idaho, even ambulance drivers without clinical experience can inject other ambulance drivers!



What's wrong with this picture? We are now a medical specialty that requires three years of post-graduate training for licensure in most states. The problem is that while there is now unified education and training, there is a lack of a unified scope of practice. Each state has its own limitations, and because legislative changes are necessary to increase scope, there will never be uniformity without a degree change to either an MD or a DO.

Unfortunately, podiatry tends to be reactive instead of proactive. Today's podiatric leaders need to have the vision necessary to adequately prepare for tomorrow's podiatrists. Remember, podiatrists have advanced to this point because our predecessors had the courage to push the envelope and mandate increased education and training. It's time to put our self-interests aside and plant the seeds for fruits of a tree that we may never taste.

Respectfully Submitted,

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