

Podiatric Education and Licensing at a Crossroads

BY BARRY H. BLOCK, DPM, JD

This month's roundtable discussion (page 83) tackles the hot button topic of podiatric licensing, an issue that refuses to go away. As Western University of Health Sciences College of Podiatric Medicine Dean Kathleen Satterfield, DPM states, "We are at a historic point in podiatric medical education, and as a profession, we need to make a choice whether we continue to grow or if we go backwards."

Education and training remain the foundation for the impetus for licensure change and an expansion of scope of practice to match our education and training. As Dr. David Armstrong has opined, "podiatric physicians in the United States are either a) over trained or b) under licensed."

A critical issue is how to obtain a uniform scope of practice. Currently, unlike MDs or DOs, DPMs are subject to varying state laws. While most of our panelists believe that a degree change is unlikely in the near term, they do support the idea of our students taking the Step 1 USMLE Exam. As APMA President Jeffrey DeSantis says, "Part of achieving recognition that MD equals DO equals DPM is taking the same exams as MD and DO students."

We applaud the efforts of our educational and political leaders to gain parity with allopathic physicians. It seems a slow and sometimes painstaking process, but as the great pitcher Satchel Paige said, "Don't look back, something might be gaining on you."

Respectfully Submitted,

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