

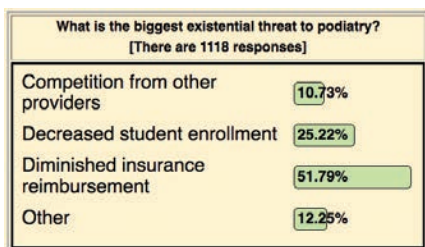
The Biggest Existential Threats to Podiatry

BY BARRY H. BLOCK, DPM, JD

Despite the many challenges that have faced modern podiatry over the past half century, this profession has not only survived, but has grown. We now have 11 colleges of podiatric medicine, more than twice the number of schools we had 50 years ago. Our students are the best educated ever with every graduate completing a three-year residency and many following that with a fellowship.



While this progress has been nothing short of extraordinary, it has also come at a cost. New practitioners are often saddled with hundreds of thousands of dollars of student debt. To add to this misery, inflation has made everything more



expensive while insurance reimbursements have not kept pace, even declining in some instances.

A recent *PM News* Quick Poll confirms these concerns. It's hard to run a successful practice when the economics don't add up. This underscores the importance of the American Podiatric Medical Association and its state components. Individually, podiatrists can do little to fight the power of the insurance companies. Our only hope is the strength provided by a unified front. Regrettably, many Millennials are not joiners, so membership numbers are in decline.

Finally, over a quarter of the poll respondents recognize the threat that decreased student enrollment poses to our schools, residencies, and ultimately our future. To ensure podiatry's survival, it's up to each and every podiatrist to promote this profession. This means speaking at career days in local high schools, participating in health fairs, and volunteering to act as a mentor to prospective students.

Respectfully Submitted,

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