

## **Fact Sheet: Studies Prove Podiatrists Prevent Complications, Provide Savings**

According to the CDC, nearly 26 million Americans live with diabetes. Diabetes is the leading cause of non-traumatic lower-limb amputation; however, amputations can be prevented. Two recent studies evaluated care by podiatrists for patients with diabetes and demonstrated that compared to other health-care professionals, podiatrists are best equipped to treat lower extremity complications from diabetes, prevent amputations, reduce hospitalizations and provide savings to our health-care delivery systems.

### **Access to a Podiatrist Can Lead to Savings for US Health-care Delivery Systems**

According to a study conducted by Thomson Reuters Healthcare that compared outcomes of care for patients with diabetes treated by podiatrists vs. care provided by other health care professionals and physicians published in the *Journal of the American Podiatric Medical Association*<sup>1</sup>:

- Among patients with commercial insurance, a savings of \$19,686 per patient with diabetes can be realized over a three-year period if there is at least one visit to a podiatrist in the year preceding a diabetic ulceration. Diabetic ulcerations are the primary factor leading to lower extremity amputations. Among patients with commercial insurance, each \$1 invested in care by a podiatrist results in \$27 to \$51 of savings for the health-care delivery system.
- Among Medicare-eligible patients, a savings of \$4,271 per patient with diabetes can be realized over a three-year period if there is at least one visit to a podiatrist in the year preceding ulceration. Among Medicare eligible patients, each \$1 invested in care by a podiatrist results in \$9 to \$13 of savings.
- Conservatively projected, these per-patient numbers support an estimated \$10.5 billion in savings over three years if every at-risk patient with diabetes sees a podiatrist at least one time in a year preceding the onset of an ulceration.

### **Care by a Podiatrist Can Reduce the Risks and Prevent Complications from Diabetes**

According to an independent study conducted by Duke University published in *Health Services Research*<sup>2</sup>:

- Medicare-eligible patients with diabetes were less likely to experience a lower extremity amputation if a podiatrist was a member of the patient care team.
- Patients with severe lower extremity complications who only saw a podiatrist experienced a lower risk of amputation compared with patients who did not see a podiatrist.
- A multidisciplinary team approach that includes podiatrists most effectively prevents complications from diabetes and reduces the risk of amputations.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Economic Value of Specialized Lower-Extremity Medical Care by Podiatric Physicians in the Treatment of Diabetic Foot Ulcers", *Journal of the American Podiatric Medical Association*, Vol. 101, No 2, March/April 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Sloan, F. A., Feinglos, M. N. and Grossman, D. S. , RESEARCH ARTICLE: Receipt of Care and Reduction of Lower Extremity Amputations in a Nationally Representative Sample of U.S. Elderly. *Health Services Research*, no. doi: 10.1111/j.1475-6773.2010.01157.x