Fact Sheet: Studies Prove Podiatrists Prevent Complications, Provide Savings

According to the CDC, over 29 million Americans live with diabetes. Diabetes is the leading cause of non-traumatic lower-limb amputation; however, amputations can be prevented. Two peer-reviewed published 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

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According to a study conducted by Thomson Reuters Healthcare (accessible at: www.tinyurl.com/trstudy) that compared outcomes of care for patients with diabetes treated by podiatrists versus care provided by other health-care professionals and physicians published in the Journal of the American Podiatric Medical Association:

- 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 the year preceding the onset of an ulceration.

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

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According to an independent study conducted by Duke University published in Health Services Research:

- 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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