



APMA Career Path Research

Findings from In-depth Interviews, Focus Groups, and Surveys of Key Audiences

January 2019

What We Already Know:

- The overall quality of current podiatric medical school applicants has decreased.
- The overall number of qualified applicants is declining.
- Resolution 9-18 was approved at the 2018 APMA House of Delegates, tasking APMA with increasing the number of qualified applicants to podiatric medical schools, and calling on funding support from stakeholders within the profession.

Study Objectives

Business Objectives:

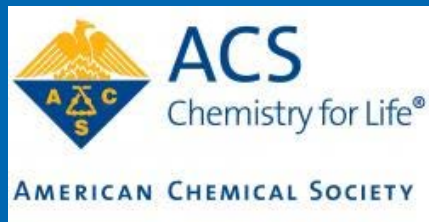
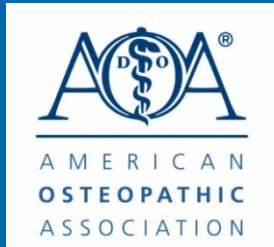
- Raise awareness of Podiatry as a career path for the next generation of physicians.
- Improve strategies and tactics around recruiting prospective students.
- Identify where APMA can make connections and impact decisions.
- Have data-driven recommendations to share with partners, members, and prospective students.

Research Objectives:

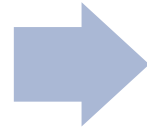
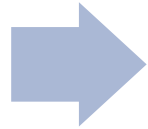
- Measure awareness, understanding, and interest in Podiatry as a career option.
- Uncover mindset, motivations, and preferences of best targets for recruitment.
- Explore traction around various recruitment messages.
- Identify best communication tactics and channels for recruitment.
- Identify demographic and psychographic information.

ABOUT EDGE

Edge Research is a woman-owned small business that provides marketing research services to associations, corporations, nonprofits, universities, foundations, and government agencies. Over the last two decades, Edge has worked with numerous associations and nonprofit, member-based organizations on their membership acquisition, retention and engagement strategies, branding research, and research to inform value proposition development, which has helped lead to meaningful change for the organization. Most of these associations we continue to partner with over time. Clients in this space include the following groups:



Research Methodology



Immersion and Exploration

- Kick-off call
- Meeting with students at The National
- Conversations with five (5) Podiatric Medical School Admissions Officers

June-August

Qualitative Research

- 2 Focus Groups with Students at two PMS
- 4 Focus Groups with Prospects near two PMS

October

Quantitative Research

- National online survey among **1170** respondents, including:
 - **352** Current PMS students and
 - **818** Prospect Students* in high school (n=413) and college (n=405)
- Incentives offered to current PMS students to improve response rates and minimize self-selection bias
- Data collected November 12, 2018 to December 3, 2018

November-December

Overview of Findings

1

Exposure=Opportunity

Even though Prospects start out comparatively unfamiliar with Podiatry as a medical career path, it is on par with Osteopathic Medicine, where the number of medical students has grown exponentially over the last decade. This suggests that if you create opportunities, students will find you. Exposure to Podiatry impacts consideration – the field needs to be more aggressive and deliberate in turning podiatric experiences (especially at a young age) into career consideration.

2

A Carefully Crafted Pitch Has a Meaningful Impact

Two-in-ten Prospects start off saying they are likely to consider a career in Podiatry, and that shifts more than 10 points with more information. Key selling points that increase interest include: the range of practice settings, the salary to work-life balance ratio, residency opportunities, and the ability to form meaningful patient relationships. For those who are further along in the consideration funnel, subspecialty opportunities and path to surgery are key messages. These align with the personality and preferences of a true Podiatric Prospect: outgoing and interested in work-life balance, as well as flexible practice settings.

3

Outreach Needs to Start Young and Be High Touch and High Tech

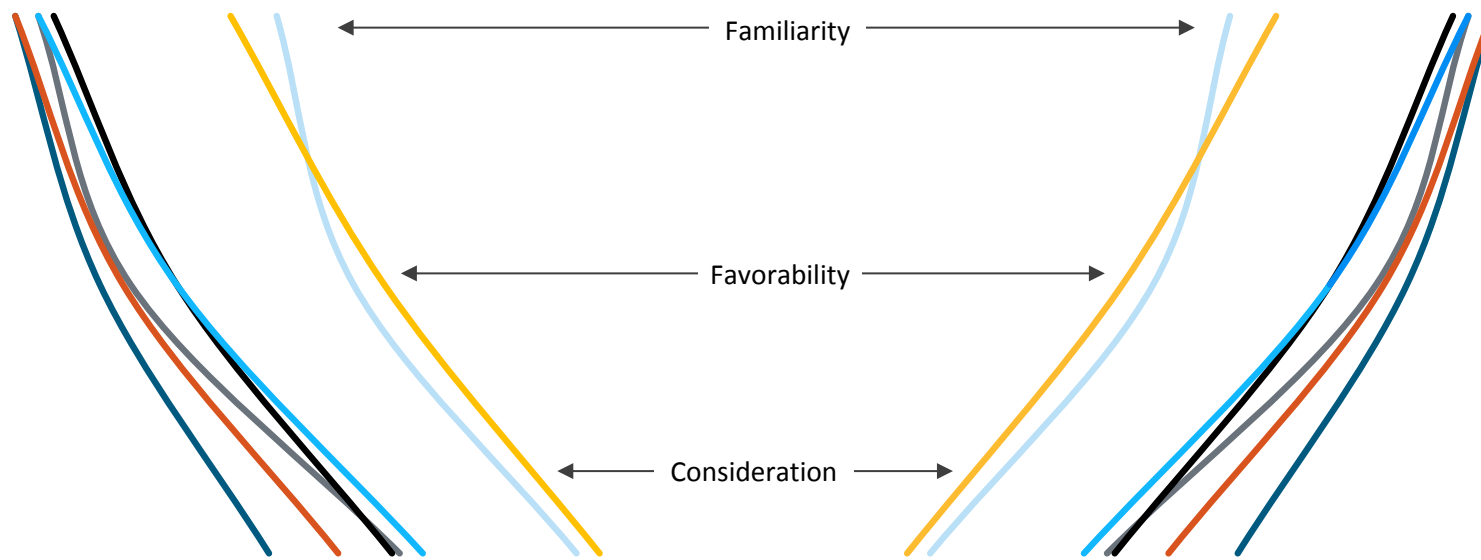
The data suggests that you need to get on Prospects' radar early in their lives – during or even before high school if you want to be a “first choice” profession for a larger number vs. something a smaller number discover later in life. For younger students, internet search and word of mouth from teachers, friends, family, and guidance counselors makes the most difference. PMS students say shadowing helps seal the deal. More extensive WOM and search engine optimization (SEO) need to be part of the outreach going forward.

What Do Prospects Know?

A Career in Podiatry Is Not Top of Mind

- Prospects start out comparatively unfamiliar with Podiatry; 2-in-10 would consider it as a career.
- The Podiatry consideration funnel is on par with Osteopathic Medicine, a field which has grown exponentially in recent years (the number of osteopathic medical students in the United States has grown 85% in the past 10 years).

Brand Funnel Among Prospects



6%
of Prospects are
already
considering a
career in
Podiatry

<i>(very or somewhat for each)</i>	MD	Nurse	Surgeon	Physical Therapist	Physician Assistant	Podiatrist	DO
Familiarity	96%	96%	93%	93%	91%	68%	62%
Favorability	85%	82%	81%	75%	75%	48%	52%
Likely to consider	63%	54%	46%	43%	47%	20%	23%

With Little Information, Misperceptions Are Common

- We heard a range of misperceptions and assumptions in focus groups.

Podiatrists work in private practice, and I would still want to work at a hospital vs. a private practice, because it accepts more insurance, there's more diversity, and I can treat people who cannot afford private practice. (Prospect, Philadelphia)

You go through all that schooling to go take someone's hangnail off.
(Prospect, Phoenix)

I don't know if medical schools offer a Podiatry clinical rotation for that exposure.
(Prospect, Phoenix)

My Podiatrist said he doesn't work with people my age a lot. He works with older people. (Prospect, Phoenix)

I think it would be the same thing everyday. Just toenails and bunions. (Prospect, Philadelphia)

Prospects Are Uninformed on a Few Key Aspects of Podiatry

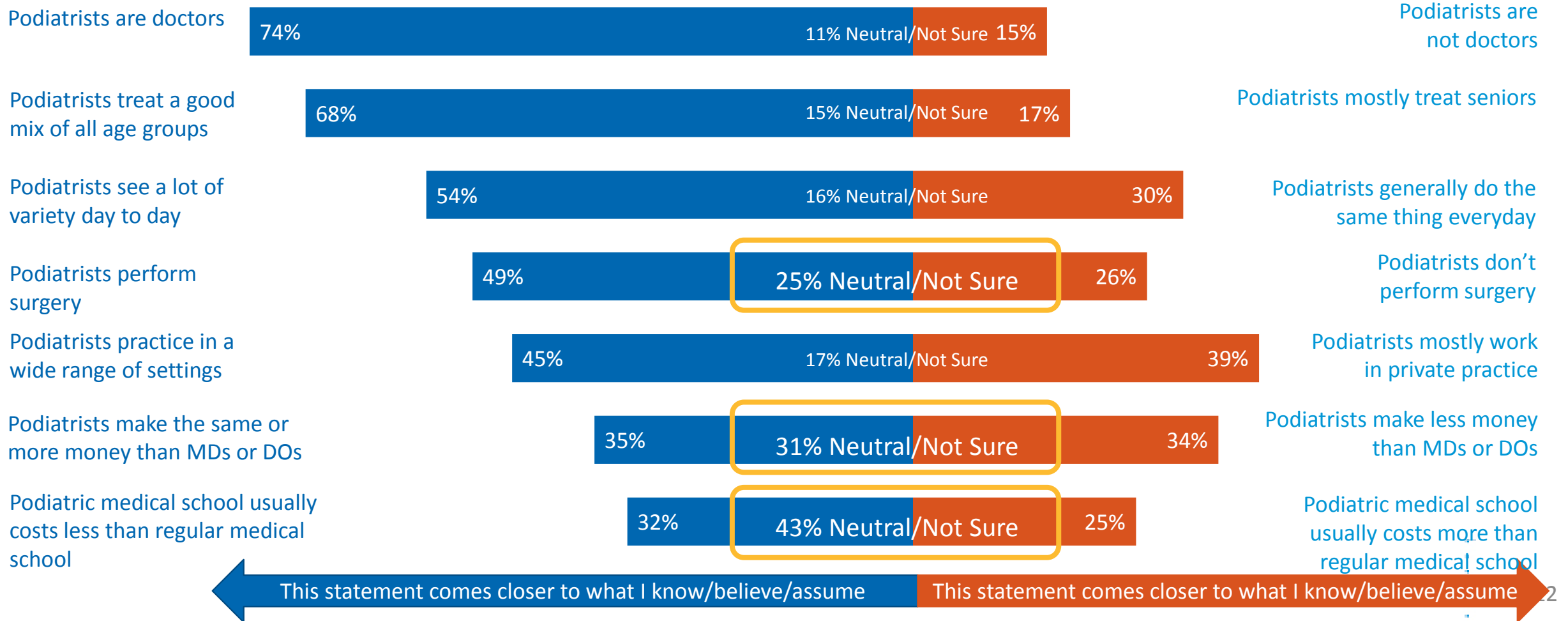


- The greatest misunderstanding or confusion exists around the opportunity to perform surgery (a key benefit), the costs of medical school, and salary.
- Many Prospects are also unaware of the variety of patients, conditions, and practice settings.
- **NOTE:** 70% of Prospects did not know PMS was separate from medical school before this survey.

Fact

Fiction

Assumptions/Beliefs about Podiatry

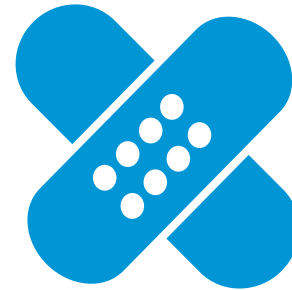


Exposure to Podiatry Impacts Consideration

- Current Podiatry students are more likely to have had foot problems themselves and more likely to have a doctor or Podiatrist in their family. APMA needs to brainstorm ways to turn this exposure into career consideration opportunities.

Is anyone in your family currently practicing as any of the types of medical professionals listed below?

	Prospects	Podiatry Students
Doctor	19%	25%
Podiatrist	3%	10%
Physician's assistant	8%	3%
Nurse/Nurse practitioner	27%	16%
Some other type of medical professional	11%	15%
No, there are no medical professionals in my family	51%	52%



74% of Podiatry students have been diagnosed with foot problems or injuries, compared with only **56%** of Prospects.



48% of Podiatry students have visited a Podiatrist before, compared with only **25%** of Prospects.

What Do They Want (or Not Want)?

Motivations: Path to Medicine

- Prospects and current Podiatry students are driven by similar goals:
 - Helping people, including the underserved
 - Following in family footsteps
 - Past health problems (personal or family members')
 - Passion for science
 - High-paying jobs
- Among Prospects, saving lives is also a key driver.

My dad was very sick while I was growing up, so I was interested in what he was going through and how doctors helped him. (Prospect)

My whole family works in the medical field. My step mom is a nurse, my mom is a nurse, my aunt is a nurse, my uncle is an EMT. I always love caring for people and had a love for the science field. (Prospect)

Medical work and health has always fascinated me, and I would love to go to work knowing I can make a huge difference in someone's life. (Prospect)

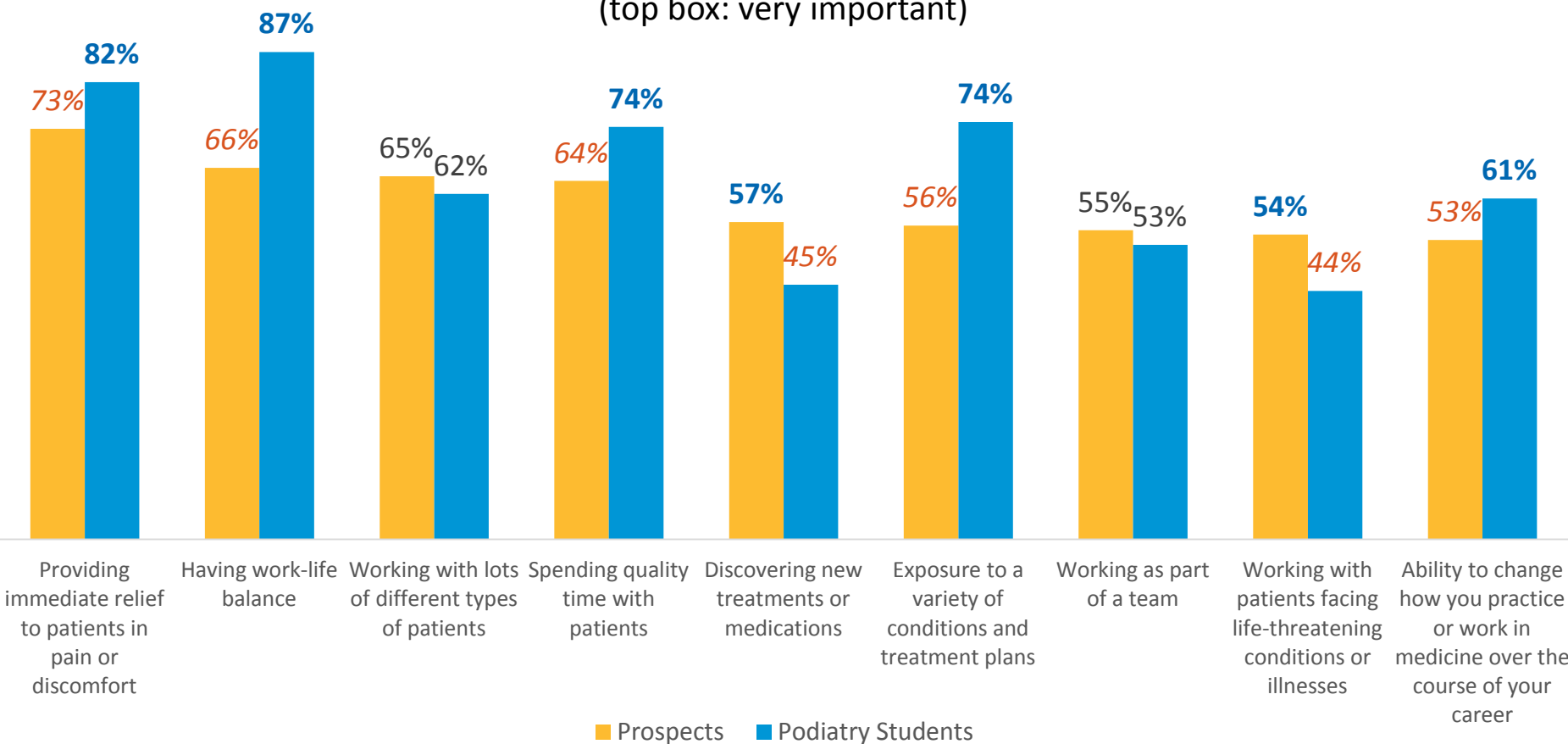
Science keeps my attention and makes sense to me. It also gives me the opportunity to help people while figuring out problems. The pay and lifestyle also suits what I am looking for out of a career. (PMS Student)

Many of Prospects' Priorities Align with Podiatry

- Most Prospects prioritize providing immediate relief to patients, work-life balance, patient variety, and quality time with patients—all elements of podiatric practice.
- Current Podiatry students over-index on most of these items and are less interested in R&D and saving lives.

How important is each to you personally as you think about a medical career?

(top box: very important)



Of lesser importance:

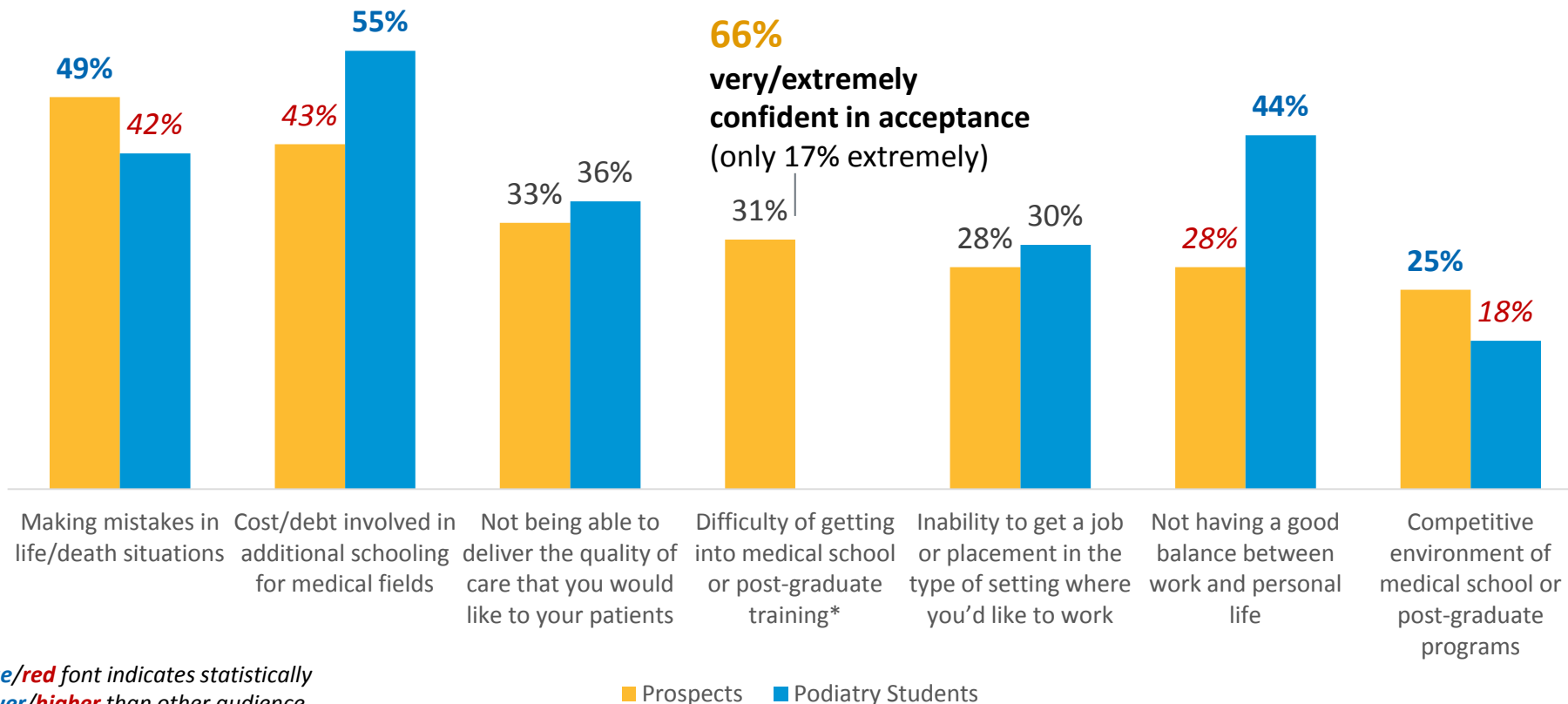
- Working in a fast-paced and exciting environment
- High salary
- Working with low-income patients
- Being able to specialize in a single area of medicine
- Working in a competitive setting or field
- Working regular hours (i.e. 9am-5pm or similar)
- Ability to own your own medical practice
- Working independently
- Having the title of 'Doctor'
- Being your own boss

A Podiatry Career Can Address Top Concerns

- The most common are about making mistakes in life/death situations, debt, quality of care, and getting into medical school.
- Current Podiatry students over-index on concerns about debt and work-life balance.

How concerned are you personally with each of the following?

(top box: one of my biggest concerns)



Respondents reported less concern regarding:

- Navigating the process of board certification or other needed certifications of your field
- Additional time for medical schooling
- Emotional burnout
- Having to delay starting a family or other personal goals
- Difficulty of succeeding in your chosen specialty or field
- Difficult work hours/schedule
- Stress of working in medicine

Blue/red font indicates statistically lower/higher than other audience

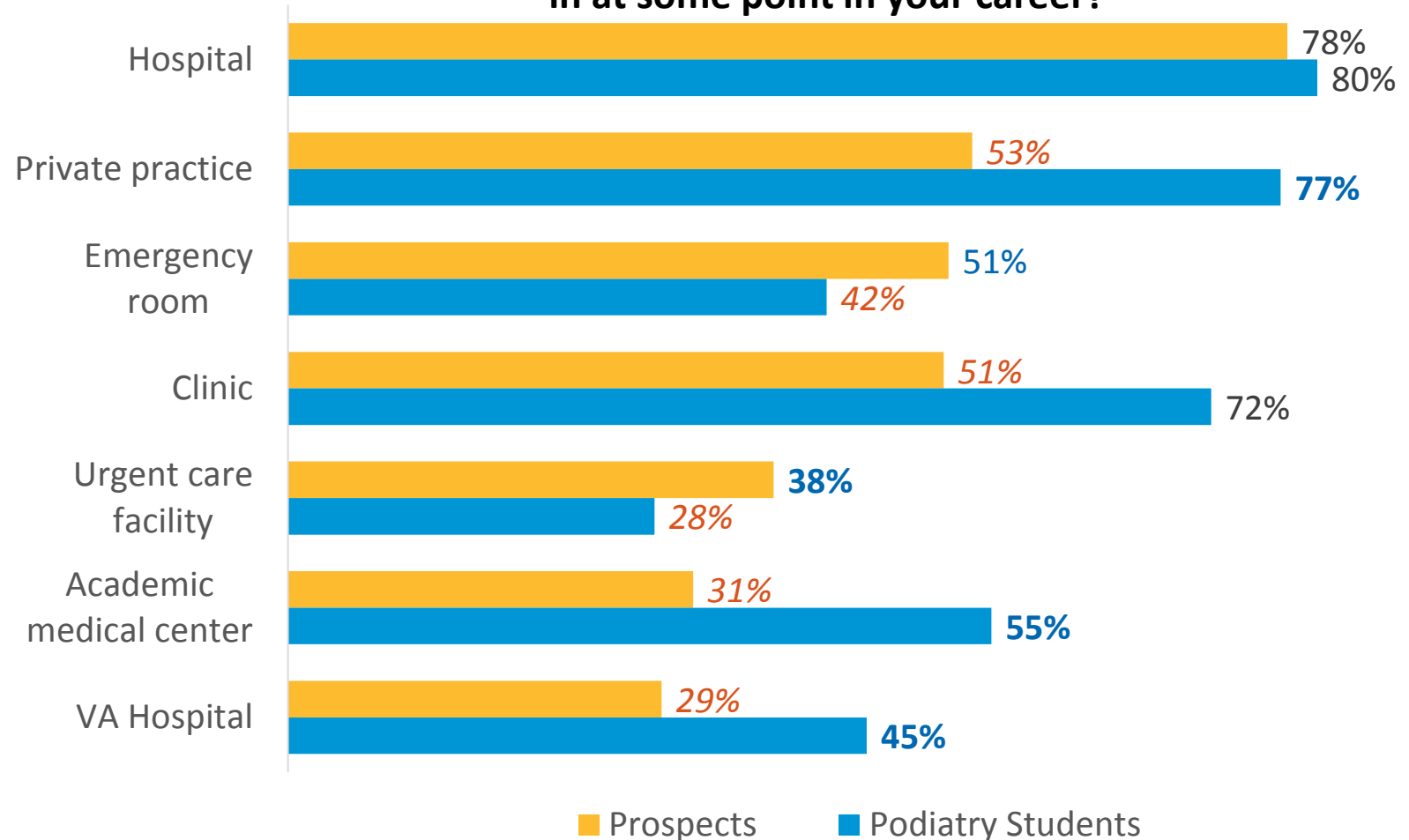
*Not asked of Podiatry students

Expectations around Practice Setting Come into Play

- Larger numbers of Prospects imagine working in a hospital setting vs. private practice, while most current Podiatry students have more than one option in mind, highlighting their interest in variety and flexibility.

Prospects who are familiar with Podiatry, and who become more interested as they learn more, are more likely to be open to a range of practice settings, including private practice.

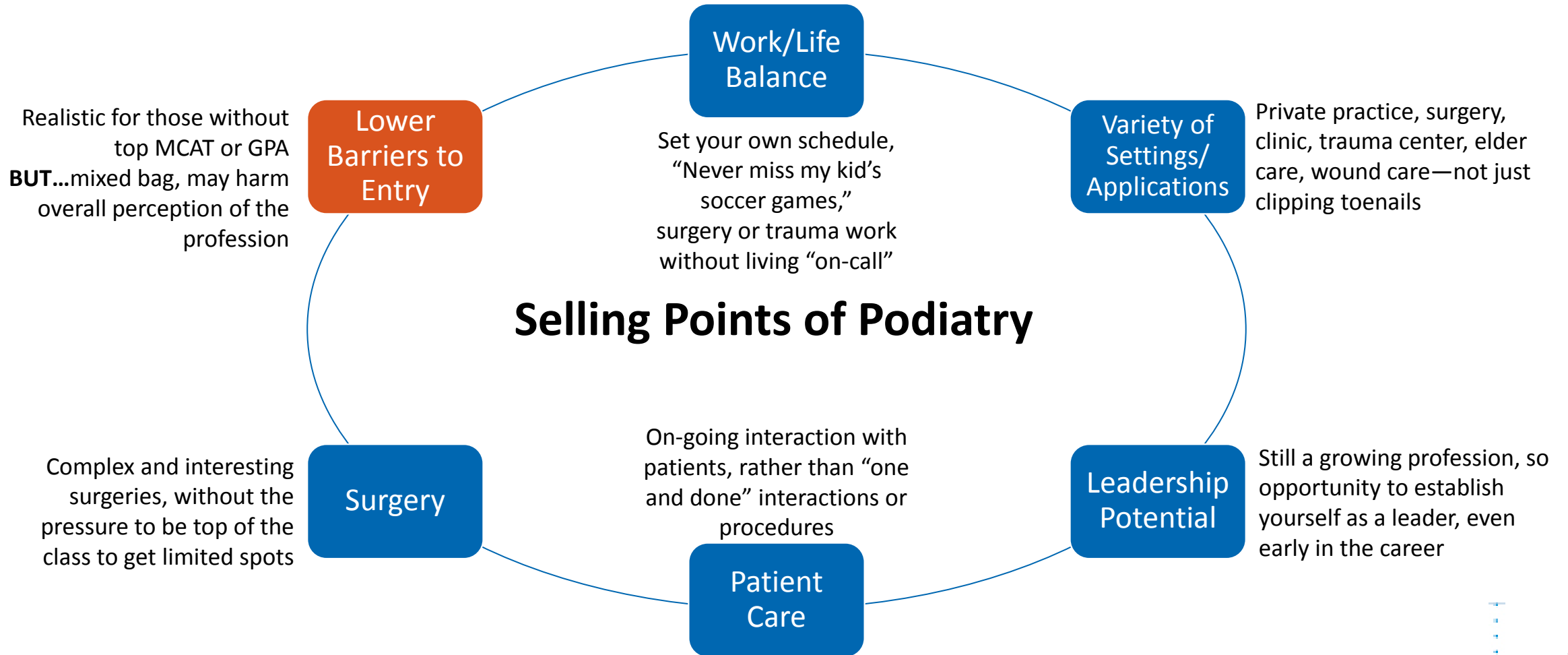
Which of the following settings would you be interested in working in at some point in your career?



What Do We Need to Tell Them?

Current Messages/Proof Points from Schools

- Admission Officers explain that first they need to educate and “sell” Podiatry, *before* they can even begin to talk about their program.



From Current Students: Why Podiatry?

- Current Podiatry students reinforced these themes, with more specifics on how they think about their career trajectory.

You KNOW you're going to be a surgeon when you're in school, it's not as competitive for residency. Something like 65% of DOs end up getting in primary care. 99% of the time as a graduate of a Podiatry school you'll be a resident. (PMS Student, Midwestern)

The Path

- More supportive/less competitive educational environment
- Same common courses with MD/DO, but specialization from start
- Quicker path to practice, surgery
- May be an option, even if you don't test well

Well, the foot has so many different kinds of systems I get to look at every day. (PMS Student, Kent State)

The Practice

- Variety: patients, conditions, settings, subspecialties, ability to change these over course of career
- On-going relationship with patients
- Fewer "life and death" situations; less physician burnout
- Opportunity to collaborate with other medical professionals

I always wanted to do surgical but found out I could have a better work-life balance and could cut down on residency time, so it was also a time-saver. (PMS Student, Kent State)

The Lifestyle

- Good pay, better hours
- Ability to set your own schedule, at some stages/in some settings
- Still feasible to own a practice if you want to

A Short Elevator Pitch Has Impact

- Using feedback from Admissions Officers and the qualitative research, we crafted an elevator pitch for Podiatry that starts to move the needle.

Initial Consideration

21% of
Prospects likely
to consider
Podiatry

Podiatry is a growing and progressive field that offers opportunities for doctors to practice in a wide range of settings over the course of their career, including private practice, hospitals, surgical centers, clinics, skilled-nursing facilities for seniors, on staff with professional sports teams, in the armed forces, public health settings, etc. In treating conditions of the lower extremities, Podiatrists often take patients from diagnosis, through treatment or surgery, to recovery and on-going care, allowing for meaningful patient relationships. There are also a number of subspecialties to choose from, like sports medicine, pediatrics, dermatology, radiology, geriatrics, and diabetic foot care. Overall, Podiatry typically offers doctors a lot of variety, a good salary, and a regular work schedule.

After Reading More

32% of
Prospects likely
to consider
Podiatry

43% of
Prospects shift
More Likely to
Consider

From the Elevator Pitch...

Prospects picked up on some key benefits of practicing in Podiatry...

*“**The variety.** I hadn't considered Podiatrists working for sports teams or in the army.”*

*“It offers a **good salary** and regular **work schedule** and I love that.”*

*“I like that it's an **expanding career** field with many specialties.”*

*“What stand out as positive for me is that they can practice in a **wide range of settings.** Being able to make **relationships with many patients** makes me more interested in Podiatry.”*

... But Some Barriers/
Misperceptions Persist

“I don't want to only focus on a certain region of the body.”

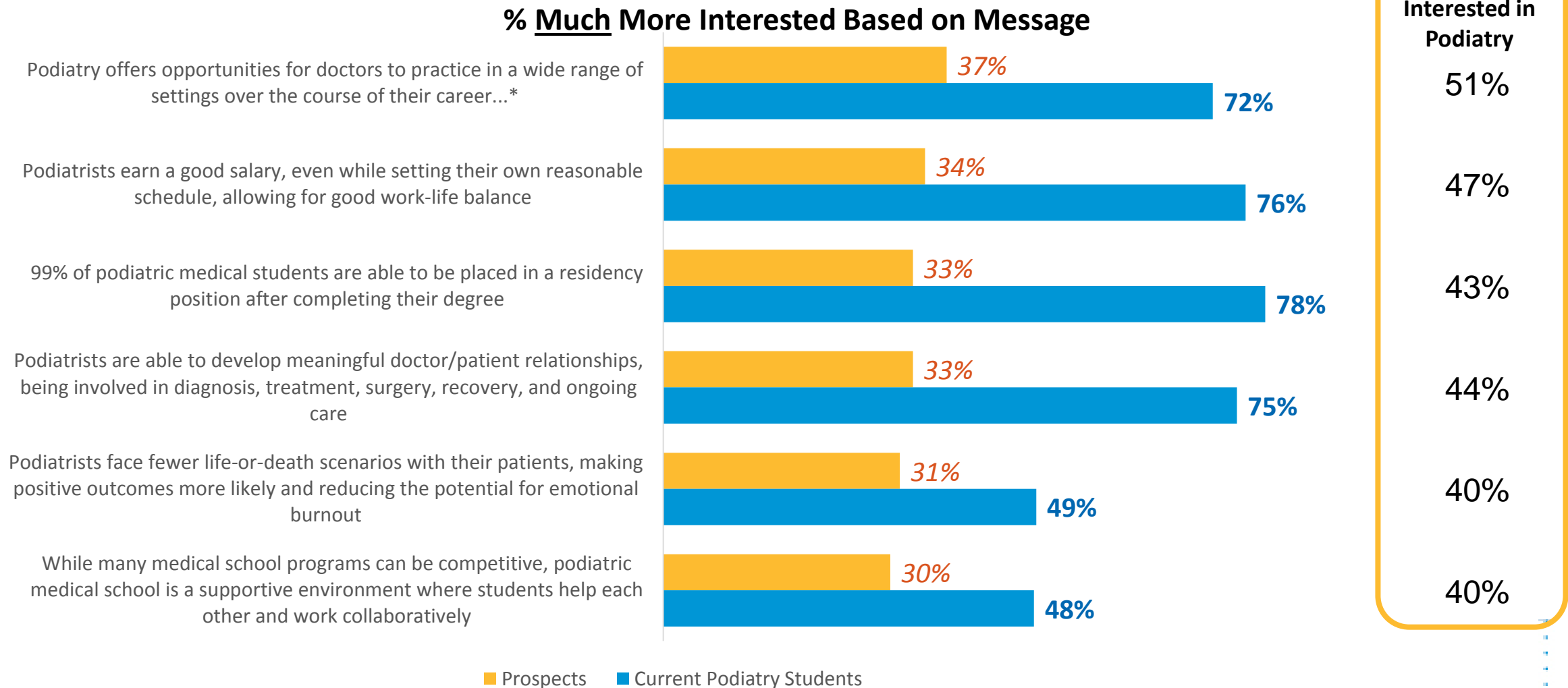
“I don't like handling other people's feet.”

“I don't want to work with seniors.”

NOTE: Most of these comments were about feet or initial assumptions about Podiatry rather than negative responses to the description.

Top Tier Messages

- Information about variety of work/setting, salary, residency opportunities, and relationships with patients most increase respondents' interest in Podiatry.

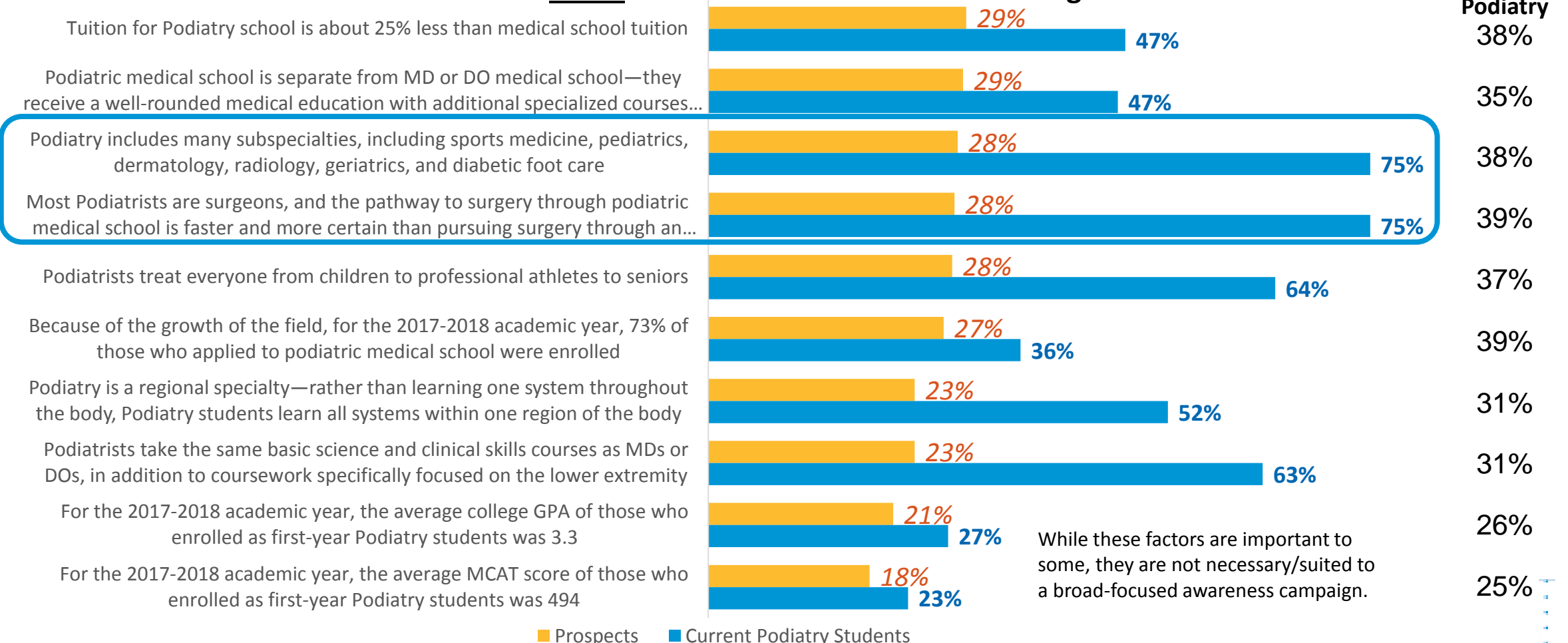


Second-Tier Messages

- Prospects were less interested in specific information about podiatric skills/specialties and the lower bar of entry for PMS.
- For those already in PMS, subspecialties and path to surgery are key messages.

% Much More Interested Based on Message

Shift More Interested in Podiatry 38%



While these factors are important to some, they are not necessary/suited to a broad-focused awareness campaign.

■ Prospects ■ Current Podiatry Students

Blue/red font indicates statistically lower/higher than other audience

Educating Prospects May Need to Happen in Stages

- Some messages that matter to current Podiatry students do not pop with Prospects—yet.

Educate with Messages that Match Overarching Wants/Needs/Concerns

High-Touch Care	Podiatrists are able to develop meaningful doctor/patient relationships, being involved in diagnosis, treatment, surgery, recovery, and ongoing care.
Work-Life Balance/ Cost/Debt	Podiatrists earn a good salary, even while setting their own reasonable schedule, allowing for good work-life balance.
Variety	Podiatry offers opportunities for doctors to practice in a wide range of settings over the course of their career, including private practice, hospitals, surgical centers, clinics, skilled-nursing facilities for seniors, on staff with professional sports teams, in the armed forces, public health settings, etc.
Career Path	99% of podiatric medical students are able to be placed in a residency position after completing their degree.

Increase Consideration with “Next Level” Messages

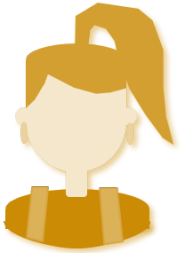
(important to PMS Students and/or address key misconceptions)

Podiatry includes many subspecialties, including sports medicine, pediatrics, dermatology, radiology, geriatrics, and diabetic foot care.
Most Podiatrists are surgeons, and the pathway to surgery through podiatric medical school is faster and more certain than pursuing surgery through an MD or DO degree.
Podiatrists treat everyone from children to professional athletes to seniors.
Podiatrists take the same basic science and clinical skills courses as MDs or DOs, in addition to coursework specifically focused on the lower extremity.

Profile of a True Podiatric Prospect

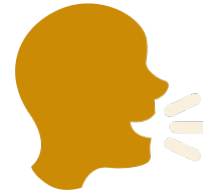
- The survey uncovers several psychographic attributes of a true Podiatric Prospect.

Personality and Preferences of A True Podiatric Prospect:



Younger and Untapped:

Most of those who shift toward considering Podiatry are in High School--catching them before their career goals are fixed is key.



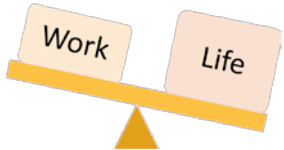
Outgoing, Not Introverted:

These students may connect with the “high-touch” aspects of Podiatry, including quality time with patients and robust patient relationships



Open-minded, Undecided, or Still Exploring:

These students may be easier to interest and respond to the variety and flexibility of Podiatry



More Concerned about Work/Life Balance:

Those who are interested in Podiatry by the end of the survey are more likely to want work/life balance and 9-5 hours. They are also more concerned that medicine means delaying personal goals like starting a family.



Want More than Hospital Work:

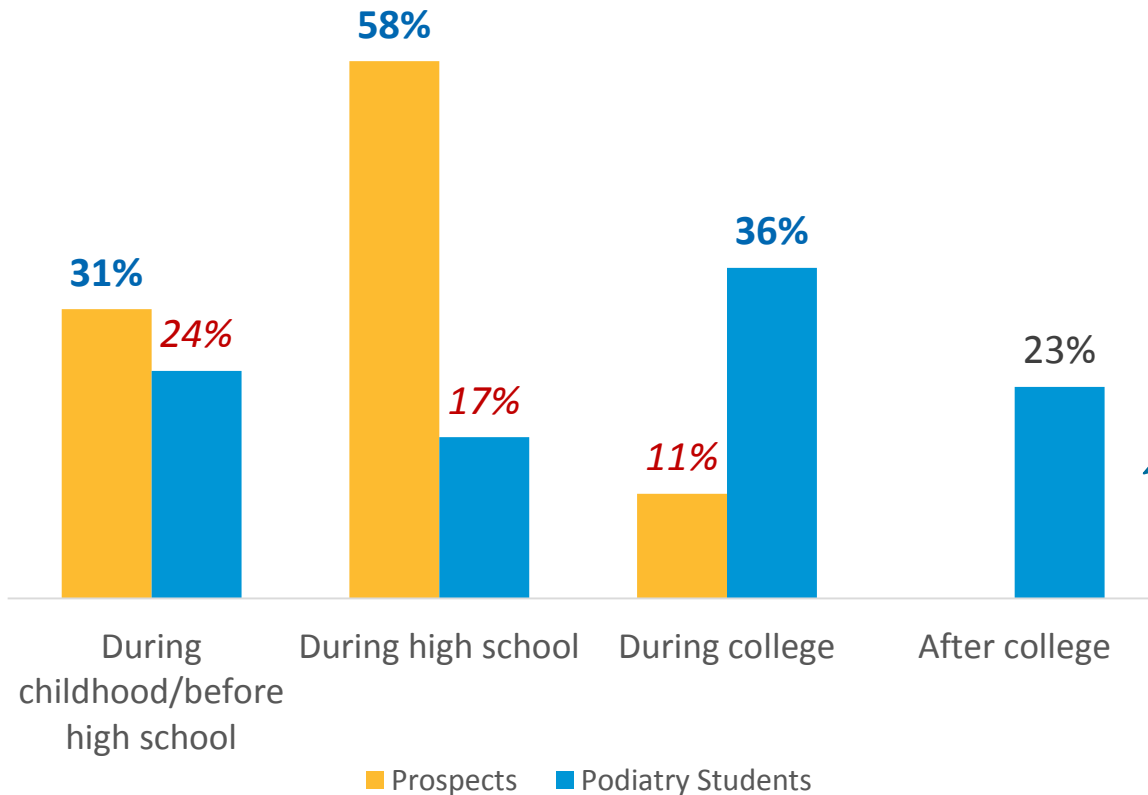
Those interested in Podiatry are open to practicing in settings beyond a hospital, and many like the idea of being able to own their own practice.

How Do We Reach Them?

Earlier Exposure to Podiatry Makes a Difference

- Interest in medicine among Prospects occurs earlier than for Podiatry students – before/during high school is a key time to raise awareness of career options.
- The current cohort of Podiatry students found medicine/Podiatry later, perhaps as a second choice. This is a metric we will want to shift over time.

When did you decide you might want to pursue a career in a medical field?



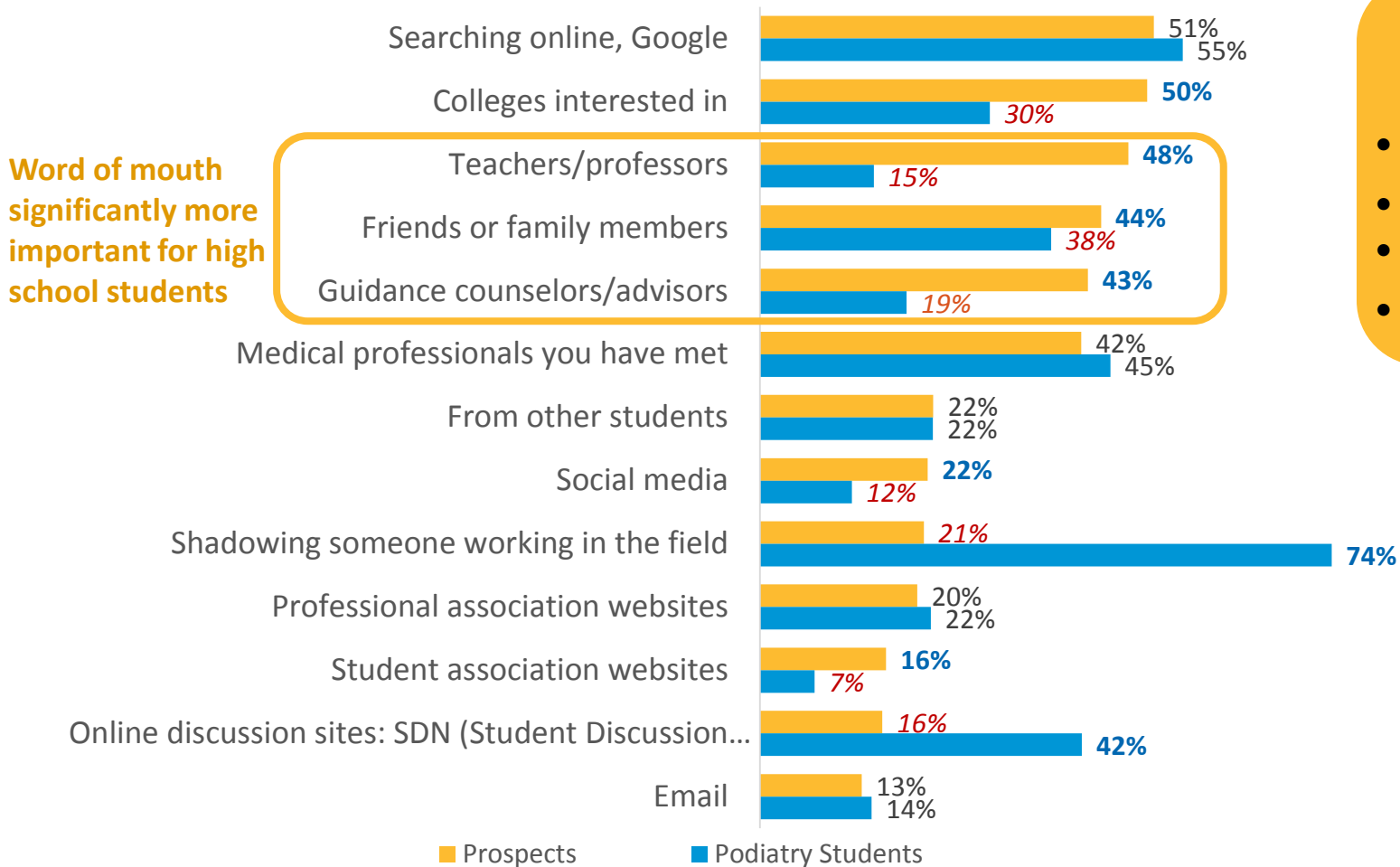
Among Prospects considering Podiatry (n=33), **67%** became interested in the field *before* college. Among current Podiatry students, this drops to **11%**, and 39% of PMS students say they got interested *after* college.

I shadowed a Podiatrist during college (because my mom needed foot surgery), and when I decided to take a gap year I rediscovered the field. (PMS Student)

Prospects Say Online Resources and WOM are Key

- Prospects are using a range of resources to research medical careers, including a mix of online search and word of mouth—the latter of which ranks as most influential on the list.
- Podiatry students overwhelmingly confirm the importance of shadowing to seal the deal.

Use of Resources to Get Info about Medical Careers/Podiatry



Word of mouth significantly more important for high school students

Most Important Info Sources for Prospects

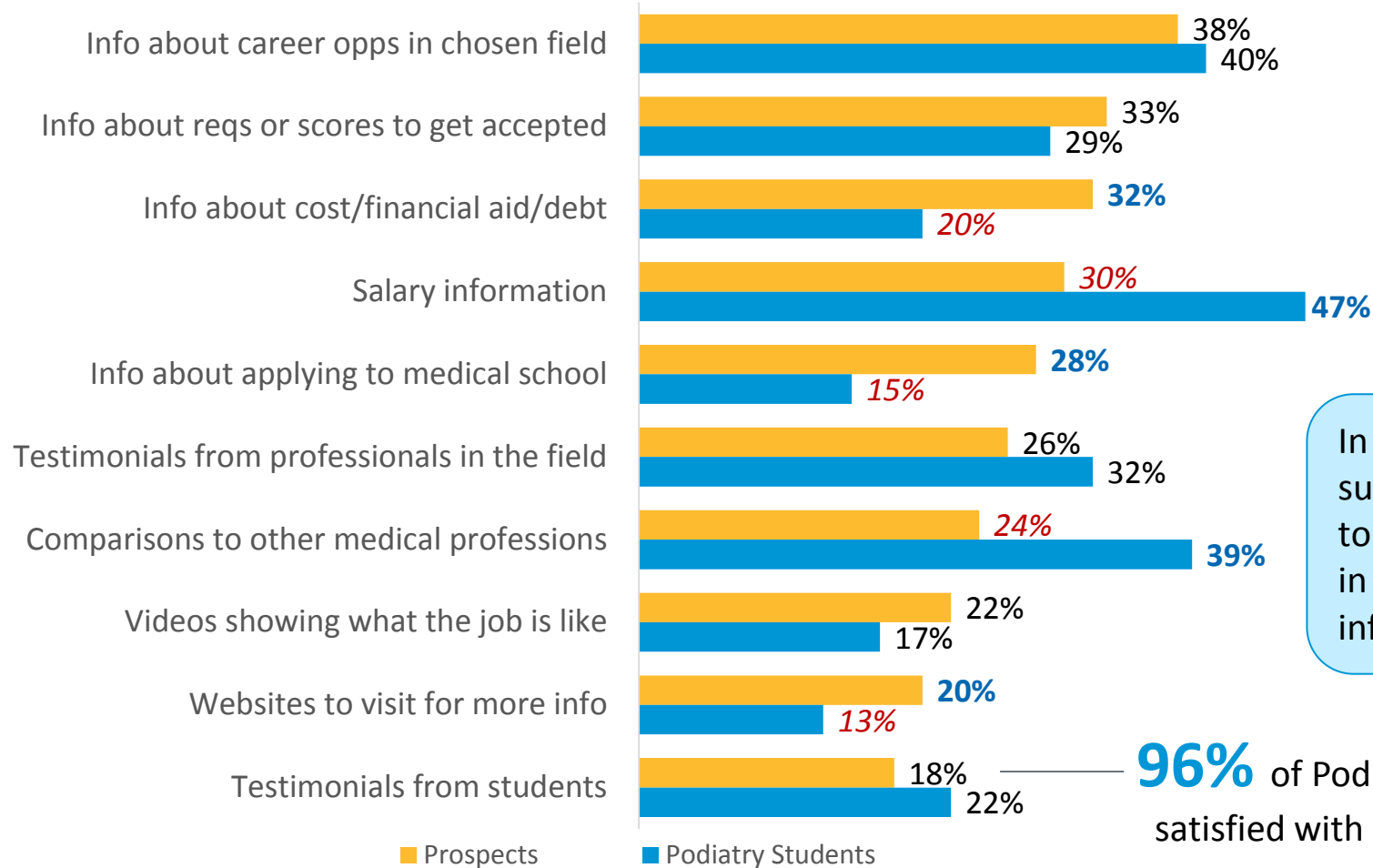
- Medical professionals you have met
- Colleges/universities you are/were interested in attending
- Friends or family members

48% of Podiatry students identify shadowing a professional as their most important resource for learning about Podiatry.

What They Want to Know

- Prospects most want to know about career opportunities and logistics like cost and requirements.
- Current Podiatry students, who have been persuaded, also wanted/needed to hear about salary and how Podiatry compares to other medical professions.

Interested in Content about Medical Careers



In the focus groups, Current Students suggested using info comparing Podiatry to other professions as a way to show up in search results for broader searches for info on medical careers.

96% of Podiatry students are satisfied with their decision to pursue Podiatry

Current Recruiting Strategies and Tactics

- Schools are grappling with a transitional time in admissions recruitment—traditional methods are often labor/travel-intensive with little payoff, while impact of digital outreach methods is still TBD.
- Personal grassroots contact, either via email, phone, or shadowing/internship, is seen as most effective.



Traditional

- Most still use in-person “fairs” and info sessions, though attendance varies
- Podiatry-only events often suffer low attendance (as opposed to broader medical career fairs)



Digital

- Many experimenting with social media but unsure of impact or efficacy
- One mentioned hiring a digital marketing firm
- Student leaders report seeing social media, online ads, and emails sent through MCAT lists



Personal

- Personal written emails employed by some, even though time-consuming; usually to MCAT list members
- Shadowing is key to understanding the profession/life of a Podiatrist

Recommendations

Outreach and Messaging: Implications and Ideas

WHERE: Leverage Exposure to Podiatry



- You intuited it, but this survey proves it -- exposure to Podiatry has a big impact on consideration of a career.
- Empower members to be aggressive ambassadors for the profession in their offices and their communities. This will take traditional tactics (materials, talking points, training), as well as some creativity, trial and error.

WHEN: Start Early



- Prospects develop their interests and aspirations in specific medical careers at a young age – most before college. Early understanding of the possibilities of Podiatry is key.
- Target high school students for greater outreach and communication. (Based on the 2012 Teen Foot Health Study, most teens (62%) have foot problems and 18% have visited a Podiatrist. These are existing opportunities to spark career consideration.)

WHO: Target by Personality and Preferences



- Podiatry is not for everyone, but it is a good fit for many who share certain personality traits like interest in high-touch medicine, desire for a varied career, and focus on work-life balance. Those who are interested in Podiatry also tend to be more outgoing/less introverted than other prospects.
- Consider using the survey findings to develop a “personality quiz” (i.e. Is Podiatry Right for You?) to engage prospects online and/or at recruiting events and gather information for targeted follow-up communications.

WHY: Educate on Basics, then Deepen Interest



- Prospects are most interested in messages that match their top “wants”, like meaningful relationships with patients, work-life balance, variety of settings, and the security of the career path.
- After they are educated, you can increase consideration by closing other information gaps and providing more detailed, “next level” information like surgical opportunities, subspecialties, patient types, and details about the PMS.

Audience Demographics

Audience Demographics



Podiatry Students

55% Men

44% Women

1% Non-Gender
Conforming

Prospects

32% Men

67% Women

	<u>Podiatry Students</u>	<u>Prospects</u>
<18 years old	-	42%
18-24 years old	29%	38%
25-35 years old	70%	14%
>35 years old	1%	6%



	<u>Podiatry Students</u>	<u>Prospects</u>
White	65%	73%
Asian	23%	9%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish-speaking background	5%	16%
Black or African American	5%	15%
Native American	1%	2%
Pacific Islander	1%	1%
Something else	5%	4%



Thank you!

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