

House of Delegates Resolution 9-18: Student Recruitment

RESOLVED, That the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) immediately dedicate such resources and personnel as it deems necessary to increase the number of qualified applicants to podiatric medical schools;

RESOLVED, That the stakeholders that participated in the June 2016 summit on career promotion, including the American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine; American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery; American Board of Podiatric Medicine; American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons; American Podiatric Medical Association and its component societies, American College of Foot & Ankle Orthopedics & Medicine, American Podiatric Medical Students' Association, and American Society of Podiatric Surgeons be called upon to help in this endeavor through funding and other resources; and

RESOLVED, That said preliminary steps to establish an action plan, and benchmarks necessary to achieve said plan, shall be taken within six months from the date of this 2018 House of Delegates, with drafting and publication of said plan to take place within nine months from the date of this 2018 House of Delegates, and a report made to the House of Delegates in 2019.

APMA Strategic Goals:

- LEAD through the development of future leaders, exceptional membership engagement, and effective governance.
- MANAGE through outstanding sustainability of financial, operational, and member recruitment efforts.

Objectives:

- Drive awareness and understanding of careers in podiatric medicine, as measured by consumer surveys.
- Drive students to take action to learn more about podiatry, generating traffic to APMA online career content. Establish baseline traffic in 2019 in order to set goals for future years.
- Drive students to take action by applying to the nine colleges of podiatric medicine, increasing the pool of quality applicants to a ratio of 2.5 prospects to each available seat over the next five application cycles (2020 academic year through 2024 academic year).

- Drive APMA members to take action to become involved in student recruitment efforts, increasing participants in the DPM Mentor Network to 1,000 in 2019.

Strategies and Tactics:

Awareness and Understanding

- Deliver easy-to-access materials, informed by market research, to engage prospective students and families.
 - **Tactic:** Create a non-branded, informational website geared specifically to students considering a career in podiatry, skewing toward high school students. Website should be high-tech, high-touch, and mobile-optimized. Website to link directly to AACPMAS.
 - **Tactic:** Conduct significant paid and organic search engine optimization around this site and key terms prospects search.
 - **Tactic:** Develop a toolkit for members to include video, posters, handouts, website graphics and content, suggested social media posts, special edition of *Footprints* patient newsletter, and other collateral for use on member websites/social media, in member offices/waiting rooms, and at career events.
- Engage known influencers for prospective students, including teachers/counselors and family.
 - **Tactic:** Identify and leverage high school classroom programs/curricula that expose students interested in STEM to careers in health care. Develop materials specifically for these programs.
 - **Tactic:** Conduct paid digital advertising targeting parents of STEM students.
- Inform prospects with high-level information, driving them further into the “funnel” to learn more.
 - **Tactic:** Use social media content matching their top career requirements (as demonstrated in research) as a hook to drive students to website, where they can explore information about subspecialties, individual schools, etc.
- Leverage APMA’s existing public education campaigns and channels to promote awareness of careers in podiatric medicine.
 - **Tactic:** Create career-focused messages that complement the focus of every public education campaign.
 - **Tactic:** Create career-focused messaging for each social media channel (specific to audience demographics).
- Reach students on the platforms where they interact.
 - **Tactic:** Use a personality quiz as a hook on social media and via online advertising to draw prospects with personalities that match our podiatry student persona. Drive those prospects to informational website.
 - **Tactic:** Develop a targeted digital advertising campaign (Outbrain or other) to reach students on websites they use most.

- **Tactic:** Develop a targeted social media campaign to reach students. Investigate Instagram (or paid promotion on Instagram). Use student faces and voices in this campaign.
- Lead a consortium of stakeholders, including AACPM, to leverage in-person exhibits and other channels for distribution of campaign materials, and attend/sponsor events in areas that are most advantageous (subject to market research). Streamline messaging from all stakeholders in general to ensure consistent communications with prospective students.
 - **Tactic:** Create a profession-wide matrix of events, accessible to all stakeholders, that outlines location, activities, budget, reach, and responsibility for each event. This matrix should also track outcomes and be a tool for facilitating follow-up with attendees. Create and/or refine standard follow-up messages and contact points.
 - **Tactic:** Create a toolkit for exhibiting with scalable materials that can be used for large events or small classroom discussions.
 - **Tactic:** Continue to host Step Into Podiatry event at APMA Annual Scientific Meeting, primarily targeting local high school students. Provide staff guidance for state components and regions wishing to host similar events at their meetings.
 - **Tactic:** Establish a schedule of stakeholder calls and in-person meetings to track progress and discuss ongoing activity.
 - **Tactic:** Conduct an audit of existing recruitment materials from all stakeholders to avoid overlap and fine-tune/standardize messaging across the profession.
 - **Tactic:** Create a toolkit of updated resources, including messaging, website graphics, suggested social media content, video, etc., for use by colleges and other stakeholders on their institutional sites and accounts.
- Collaborate with APMSA to engage current podiatry students as often as possible as the “face” of the campaign to prospective students, creating both aspirational and “peer-to-peer” appeal.
 - **Tactic:** Create speaker panel of students willing to participate in recruitment efforts; may be a subset of members within mentor network.
 - **Tactic:** Continue to provide grant (but expand beyond matching grant with schools) to support students’ travel; encourage them to visit high schools.
 - **Tactic:** Use students in development of a recruitment video (to highlight *all* schools) for use at in-person events, as well as shorter, more informal videos for use on social media.

Take Action: Learn More

- Create easily accessible, in-depth information about careers in podiatry. Avoid multiple channels with differing information.
 - **Tactic:** Create a neutral, informational website geared specifically to students considering a career in podiatry. Website will link directly to AACPMAS.
 - **Tactic:** Use retargeting ads to hook those who have interacted with our digital awareness efforts.
- Optimize search terms that resonate with students and their families.

- **Tactic:** Conduct significant paid and organic search engine optimization around informational site and key terms students search.

Take Action: Apply

- Provide prospects who have taken action to learn more with specific, clear direction about the educational path and application process.
 - **Tactic:** Create a neutral, informational website geared specifically to students considering a career in podiatry, skewing toward high school students. Website should be high-tech, high-touch, and mobile-optimized. Website to link directly to AACPMAS.
 - **Tactic:** Ensure materials offering information on application process have been fully vetted by AACPM and are consistent across all stakeholder resources.
 - **Tactic:** Provide online chat option or other digital tool for prospects to submit questions to be answered by a mentor or AACPM staff.
- Ensure ongoing communication with leads from time of generation until projected matriculation.
 - **Tactic:** Create shared database for interested students based on projected year of matriculation to podiatric medical school. Send regular communications and calls to action in years leading up to that date.
 - **Tactic:** Develop “opt-out” survey for use when prospects opt out of communications to determine whether and why they have decided not to pursue podiatric medicine.
 - **Tactic:** At time of matriculation, communicate with student about becoming part of DPM Mentor Network student mentor subset.

Take Action: Members, Get Involved

- Empower members to be aggressive ambassadors for the profession.
 - **Tactic:** Develop a toolkit for members to include video, posters, handouts, website graphics and content, suggested social media posts, special edition of *Footprints* patient newsletter, and other collateral for use on member websites/social media, in member offices/waiting rooms, and at career events.
 - **Tactic:** Investigate opportunities to assume responsibility for and improve DPM Mentor Network, avoiding multiple/confusing channels for member involvement and student shadowing and picking up the 400 or so podiatrists who already have engaged in the AACPM process.
 - **Tactic:** Regularly engage registered mentors with education, reminders about materials, stakeholder calls, and outreach about local events.
- Leverage all existing communications channels to send regular messages about the importance of recruiting students.
 - **Tactic:** Highlight members participating via APMA publications, website, and member social media channels. Investigate creation of an award or other recognition for those who contribute most to professional recruitment efforts.

- Create easy-to-use, consistent materials for affiliated, component, and other organizations, as well as colleges, to disseminate.
 - **Tactic:** Conduct an audit of existing recruitment materials from all stakeholders to avoid overlap and fine-tune/standardize messaging across the profession.
 - **Tactic:** Create a toolkit of updated resources, including messaging, website graphics, suggested social media content, video, etc., for use by colleges and other stakeholders on their institutional sites and accounts.
- Leverage relationship with APMSA to heavily engage current podiatry students in the effort.

Audiences:

- Prospective students
 - High school students, particularly those with an interest in STEM—APMA to lead efforts
 - Elementary school students—APMA to lead efforts
 - Undergraduate students—AACPM to lead efforts
 - Adult learners and/or community college students—AACPM to lead efforts
- Families of prospective students
- Undergraduate prehealth advisors—AACPM to lead efforts
- Members with an interest in student recruitment—APMA to lead efforts
 - Established physicians with an interest in student recruitment
 - Young physicians with an interest in student recruitment
 - Current podiatry students with an interest in student recruitment
- Partner organizations—APMA to lead efforts

Market Research Required:

- **COMPLETE** Research among undergraduate prehealth students to identify motivating factors in selecting a health profession, as well as their awareness/understanding of podiatry
- **COMPLETE** Further research among recently matriculated podiatry students to identify:
 - How they were exposed to podiatry
 - What factors about the career drove their interest
 - Primary sources of education and information about careers in podiatry
 - Value of mentors and how we could improve the mentor experience
 - Application experience

(Conduct via SurveyMonkey in collaboration with APMSA)

- Gather research on broad characteristics of Generation Z/post-millennials—those born in the early 2000s
- **COMPLETE** Audit of college websites to understand what messages and formats they are using

- Audit of a selection of undergraduate university websites to find information about podiatry as a career
- Trends in matriculation to schools for past 15 years (*Seek from AACPM*)
- Trends in GPAs and MCAT scores of matriculating students for past 15 years (*Seek from AACPM*)
- Trends in geographic pull of recently matriculated students to identify underserved areas, as well as hotspots for prospective students (*Seek from AACPM or individual colleges*)
- Competitive landscape analysis of career promotion efforts to include:
 - Allopathic recruitment
 - Osteopathic recruitment
 - Dental recruitment
 - Physician Assistant recruitment
 - Physical Therapy recruitment
- Affordable, reliable methods for identifying and targeting elementary and high school students
- Affordable, reliable methods for identifying and targeting prehealth and other undergraduates
- Updated workforce study to determine the patient demand for podiatrists and the number of students needed in the next five years to support that future demand. Use data as a key message to demonstrate ongoing need and potential job security.

Budget:

- \$50,000 from APMA, plus staff costs
- Contributions from other stakeholder organizations

Expenses:

Market research	\$50,000 COMPLETE; BUDGET EXHAUSTED
Promoted social media	\$80,000
Paid advertising (Outbrain, retargeting, targeted digital ads)	\$120,000
Video production	\$25,000
Graphic design	\$50,000
IT (mentor network enhancements, SEO, development of leads database, development of informational website)	\$150,000
Administrative	\$500
Staff costs	
TOTAL	\$475,500 (plus staff costs) (-\$50,000 SPENT)

Messages (*all messages to be adjusted based on research and demonstrated efficacy*):

Awareness and Understanding

(At this stage, all messages should lead with the benefits, rather than podiatry.)

- Want a health-care career that offers great work–life balance?
- A health-care career doesn't have to be limited to a specific practice setting. Podiatrists practice in a wide variety of settings, including hospital practice and group practice, and can tailor their practice to their changing needs over the course of their careers.
- Want to diagnose and treat a wide variety of conditions in a diverse patient population?
- Do you want to form meaningful, long-term relationships with patients, from diagnosis to treatment to recovery to ongoing care?
- Do you like the idea of relieving pain and improving quality of life?
- Save limbs and lives. Podiatrists are often the “first responders” to life-threatening conditions such as diabetic ulcerations and vascular disease.
- Be an integral part of the health-care team in hospitals, wound care centers, and private practices.

Take Action: Learn More

- Podiatrists earn a significant salary comparable to MD and DO salaries.
- Podiatrists take the same basic science and clinical skills courses as MDs and DOs, in addition to coursework specifically focused on the lower extremity.
- Podiatry offers significant opportunity for prehealth students—it's lesser known and a growing profession. Podiatry students enjoy a supportive educational environment.
- Podiatrists are a critical part of the collaborative health-care team treating a variety of specific disease states.
- Podiatry typically offers a fairly regular work schedule.
- Podiatrists treat everyone from children to professional athletes to seniors.
- Podiatry school tuition is less expensive on average than allopathic or osteopathic medical school tuition.
- Podiatrists are surgeons. Every podiatrist is trained in a surgical residency program. If you want to be a surgeon, podiatry offers a straightforward path.
- Podiatrists enjoy a wide variety of subspecialties, including sports medicine, pediatrics, dermatology, radiology, geriatrics, wound care, surgery, and more.
- Podiatric medical students follow a unique, dedicated educational path (three to four years undergraduate (some podiatry schools allow completion of bachelor's degree at the podiatry school), four years at an accredited school of podiatric medicine), followed by three years of hospital-based residency alongside other physicians in training.
- Ninety-nine percent of podiatry students match with a residency program.
- Find a local mentor to experience the excitement of a career in podiatry firsthand.
- Prepare to apply <outline steps high school and college students can take to prepare themselves to submit an application when the timing is right; include prerequisites, requirements for applications, timing, fees, etc.>

- Understand financial aid options.

Take Action: Apply

- Begin your application now <include clear, detailed information about timelines, requirements to apply, fees, etc.>.

Take Action: Members, Get Involved

- You are the very best ambassador for your profession.
- Sign up to become a mentor through the DPM Mentor Network.
- Here's how to handle students shadowing in your office.
- Visit your high school alma mater—or your kids' schools—to speak to prehealth students.
- Visit your children's elementary schools to speak to students.
- Participate in local career fairs and other events.
- Coordinate your participation through APMA so that we may include your efforts in our matrix of activities.

Vehicles:

Prospective students and families

- Website
- SEO optimization
- Social media
- Video content
- In-person outreach at career fairs, workshops, and events
- In-person contact between DPM mentors/student mentors and prospective students
- Digital advertising
- Targeted messaging to engaged prospects

Faculty and prehealth advisors

- Targeted emails
- Print mailings (possible based on outcomes of research)
- Website
- Digital advertising
- Social media

Members, current students, partner organizations

- Weekly Focus
- APMA News
- Targeted emails
- Monthly Focus (ask states to share message with members)
- Campaign collateral for offices and websites
- Quarterly calls
- Separate, branded, digital communication to student recruitment stakeholders

Metrics:

- Applicants to podiatric medical schools
- GPAs and MCAT scores of applicants
- Number of attendees at in-person events
- Number of participants in lead database
- Website traffic
- Open and interaction rates for emails
- Impressions and engagement for social media posts specific to career awareness
- Digital ad analytics
- Number of participants in mentor network
- Level of participation among affiliate/component organizations and schools and other stakeholders
- Results of repeated consumer surveys