

NEWS

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Vascular Surgeons and Podiatrists Announce Historic Collaboration to Save Diabetic Limbs

***--Society for Vascular Surgery and American Podiatric Medical Association
Announce Joint Effort at Georgetown DLS Conference in Washington, DC—***

The Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS) and the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) announced an historic collaboration to save limbs at risk from the complications of diabetes. Leadership of the two groups said their members would work together to identify clinical issues relating to critical limb ischemia and find solutions that will benefit patients.

The announcement was made September 25, 2009, by Ronald D. Jensen, DPM, president of APMA and Anton Sidawy, MD, president of SVS, at the Georgetown University Hospital Diabetic Limb Salvage Conference, A Team Approach at the JW Marriott Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC. Drs. Sidawy and Jensen were joined by other leaders of the two groups, including George Andros, MD and Richard F. Neville, MD of SVS and David G. Armstrong, DPM, PhD of APMA.

Dr. Jensen said: “The collaborative clinical efforts of podiatrists and vascular surgeons will profoundly benefit patients with critical limb ischemia, especially those individuals with diabetes. The growing relationship between the APMA and the SVS has created enormous opportunities for the podiatric and vascular communities to come together in the best interest of patient care.”

“Early on Vascular Surgeons realized that fixing the occlusive arterial disease in not enough to heal and maintain integrity of the foot skin envelope in diabetics. Other specialties, in particular Podiatry, have a lot to offer towards the goals of limb maintenance and salvage in this group of patients. This collaboration between SVS and APMA aims to formalize this clinical partnership and popularize the team concept for better care of the diabetic patient,” said Dr. Sidawy.

"What we have found is that teams trump technology. When you put people together -- such as in our 'toe and flow' model -- good things happen. In the case of treatment of the diabetic foot, we are able to heal people and keep a few more legs on a few more bodies," said Dr. Armstrong, professor of surgery and director of the Southern Arizona Limb Salvage Alliance (SALSA) at the University of Arizona College of Medicine in Tucson.

"Prevention of amputation in diabetics is best achieved by a team that includes podiatrists and vascular surgeons," said Dr. Andros. "The collaboration announced at the Georgetown DLS meeting is an alliance of specialists that both groups welcome and view as long-over-due. When these two groups of doctors work together there are many beneficiaries but most of all the patients and their families," he said. Dr. Andros is medical director of the Amputation Prevention Center at Valley Presbyterian Hospital in Los Angeles, Calif., and founding partner of Los Angeles Vascular Specialists in Van Nuys.

"Given the fact that almost 100,000 limbs in the U.S. alone are lost each year to the ravages of diabetes, and about a million worldwide, this collaboration between vascular surgeons and the podiatric community is of tremendous importance – it will mutually advance the efforts of both groups while improving care for the patient with a threatened limb," said Dr. Neville. Dr. Neville is chief of the Division of Vascular Surgery and medical director of the Noninvasive Vascular Laboratory at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC.

Founded in 1912, the American Podiatric Medical Association has a membership of about 12,000 podiatrists. The Society for Vascular Surgery, founded in 1947, has a membership of about 3,000 vascular surgeons.

SVS and APMA will collaborate on practice guidelines and reporting standards in the care of the diabetic foot, according to officials of the groups. They will also work together on joint postgraduate courses, publish diabetic foot materials in the journals of the two groups, conduct joint public awareness programs and pursue other avenues of collaboration.

The third annual Georgetown Conference on Diabetic Limb Salvage held September 24-26, 2009, brought a record 1400 physicians and other medical specialists to Washington, DC, to learn about advanced therapies and technologies to save limbs. Next year's conference will be October 14-16, 2010, again at the JW Marriott Pennsylvania

Avenue in Washington, DC. For information, visit the conference web site at www.DLSConference.com.

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