

The Responsibility of Our Hippocrates Oath

By Hal Ornstein, DPM



AAPP
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
PODIATRIC PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

10 Maple Street, Suite 301
Middleton, MA 01949

978-646-9091

978-646-9092 fax

office@aappm.org

www.aappm.org

The Responsibility of Our Hippocrates Oath

I recently had the unique opportunity to visit the national headquarters of a podiatry company which sells in-office dispensing related products. An interactive session was held with the owner and top management to discuss the mind set of podiatrists relating to “the “practice” of in-office dispensing. I call this “the practice” to relate this to our oath as physicians to provide our patients with the best care and alternatives available not to be compromised by our apprehensions based on what we consider fact but in reality is fiction. Much of our discussion revolved around why some podiatrists refuse to dispense products in the office and others pledge that it has become as essential to their patient care as the #15 blade and nail nippers

In podiatry school and residencies we are taught ad nauseum that we are “professionals” and we must maintain this pristine perception in our community and amongst our medical peers. So this retail perception that many of us associate with in-office dispensing creates conflict associated with our education and what is called our “paradigm” know as our way of thinking.

For years, I refused to dispense products for in my office for several reasons. My view on this has changes dramatically. As President of the American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management, I have the opportunity to frequently speak with hundreds of successful practitioners throughout the country. A common denominator I have seen amongst these successful practices is their ability to open their minds to use of in-office dispensing to benefit to their practices and not making the cardinal mistake of thinking for their patients and trying to look from their perch. Too often we develop mental blocks because of what we think the patient is thinking such as “they can’t afford that”, “this doctors is just trying to make money” and “what’s this, a retail store?”

Part of the success of our groups practice is that we learn and grow from mirroring success.

In our practice we have found the following benefits to in-office dispensing:

- Improved patient satisfaction because of convenience and professional quality of product delivered.
- Significant increase in compliance with instructions for use provided by myself and staff with product in hand.
- More complete approach to patient care that our patients greatly appreciate. They often articulate how great their feet feel due to use of the products we use.
- Viable and ethical source of income that has dramatically enhanced our bottom line.
- Profit sharing with our staff increasing job satisfaction and reinforcing the importance of the team approach.
- More patient contact with my office when they return just for purchase of a product.
- Increased patient referrals by virtue of current patients discussing their satisfaction with products and care with others. We frequently have people whom are not patients come to our office to purchase products upon a recommendation from one of our patients. Our patients are out in our community spreading the word of our practice due to our comprehensive approach and delivery of in-office dispensing.
- Very little storage room is needed for your return on investment. The small plastic bins with drawers that can be purchased at local department stores work great and cost under twenty dollars.

With the advent on managed care and competitive nature of medicine dispensing of products have addressed these issues very successfully. I advise that for those who are reluctant because of issues of professional appearance, space and time constraint and lack of patient willingness to pay for the products that you re-visit this concept. Consider starting with one product and get comfortable with the concept. Then explore products in each category to have

available for your patients. The doctors, staff and most importantly, your patients will all be winners.

Hal Ornstein, DPM, FACFAS. Diplomate, American Board of Podiatric Surgery and Fellow, American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons. Dr. Ornstein is Chairman of the American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management and Consulting Editor for Podiatry Management Magazine. He is a lecturer and author on topics pertinent to practice management and patient satisfaction and physician manager of Affiliated Foot and Ankle Center, LLP with his main office in Howell, NJ. Dr. Ornstein can be contacted at hornstein@aappm.com