

Five Questions for ...

Ushita Patel, DPM, FACPM, FASPS, President, Virginia Podiatric Medical Association



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The Richmond Academy of Medicine’s Services Corporation (RAMSC) has the privilege of managing the day-to-day operations of several medical societies in an array of specialties across the state of Virginia. As the old saying goes, “teamwork makes the dream work,” and this is especially true of RAMSC and its societies.

Working with society leadership to draft goals and work towards accomplishing them, RAMSC custom tailors plans for each member-based organization and manages the minutiae of administrative details, such as dues, financial record-keeping, communications, and meeting and convention management, just to name a few. Society leadership is allowed to focus on the long-term course they wish to steer for their members.

The Academy enjoys showcasing its societies. Our newest is the Virginia Podiatric Medical Association (VPMA), whose current president is **Ushita Patel, DPM, FACPM, FASPS**. She kindly answered a few questions about her organization so that we can share with you more about it and its mission.

What benefits do members of VPMA gain?

Members have access to benefits provided by VPMA as well as our national organization, the American Podiatric Medical Association, which nationally represents about 80% of podiatrists (Doctors of Podiatric Medicine, DPMs). All members of VPMA are also concurrent APMA members.

Benefits include subsidized CME with a yearly sponsored Scientific Conference in Virginia Beach, as well as political representation at the state and federal levels to protect and advocate for the profession of podiatry, as well contributing oversight over related organizations governing different aspects of the profession.

What are some ways your society reaches out to educate the community at large about podiatry?

Members have participated in lectures to the general community as well as specialized ones with fellow healthcare practitioners, donated clinical time to treat the uninsured, and our national organization has several social media initiatives and contacts with the press.

What are VPMA’s future goals?

Continuing to respond to our membership’s needs, maintaining a high rate of membership amongst the podiatrists in Virginia, helping to grow the profession by recruiting students, and interacting with stakeholders and the community to facilitate better foot and ankle care.

To continue advocating for podiatry’s inclusion and possibly consolidation with the medical community, such as podiatry students having the option to take the USMLE, and stronger intraorganizational connections.

How does RAM Services Corp. help VPMA?

RAM Services Corp. is a well-established organization with a track record for effective management of a variety of medical organizations, and part of a larger group with a long history in the medical community in Richmond, Virginia.

While podiatry is a separate profession, we feel our membership would be best served by such an organization with a long and successful track record in the medical community to better integrate our profession within the medical community.

Is there anything else you’d like to tell our readers that wasn’t covered above?

There are about 18,000 podiatrists nationally. All DPMs complete four years of podiatric medical school followed by a minimum three-year standardized hospital-based medical and surgical residency with rotations such as internal medicine, infectious diseases, orthopedic, and general surgery along with those related to their specialty. Podiatrists serve as officers in the uniformed services and in the Veterans Affairs system, and one serves in Congress. The current president of the Virginia Board of Medicine is a podiatrist (Randy Clements, DPM). Most podiatry schools are affiliated with an allopathic or osteopathic medical college. There is a wide range of podiatric practice, with some practitioners having a limb salvage service line hospital-based practice versus those working in an outpatient setting performing elective foot and ankle surgery, and treatment of dermatological and orthopedic issues of the foot and ankle. Some podiatrists have admitting and surgical privileges at hospitals, while others restrict their practice to outpatient conservative care. **R**

