

# THE JOB CENTER

## PODIATRIST



—Photos by Brian Parton

Americans spend a great deal of time on their feet. As the Nation becomes more active across all age groups, the need for foot care will become increasingly important to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The human foot is a complex structure. It contains 26 bones—plus muscles, nerves, ligaments, and blood vessels—and is designed for balance and mobility. The 52 bones in the feet make up about one-fourth of all the bones in the human body. Podiatrists, also known as doctors of podiatric medicine (DPMs), diagnose and treat disorders, diseases, and injuries of the foot and lower leg.

Most podiatrists have a solo practice, although more are forming group practices with other podiatrists or health practitioners. Some specialize in surgery, orthopedics, primary care, or public health. Besides these board-certified specialties, podiatrists may practice other specialties, such as sports medicine, pediatrics, dermatology, radiology, geriatrics, or diabetic foot care.

### PROFILE

The four podiatrists at Foot and Ankle of West Georgia treat the whole gamut of problems with feet and ankles, and all are qualified to perform surgery. While they all have broad training, each specializes as well.



**Dr. James Bartley** will have been at the practice 25 years in June, and he has a lot of experience in medical and surgical treatment. He's board-certified in foot and ankle surgery, and specializes in reconstructive flat foot and rear foot surgery. His take on the importance of podiatry is, "If your feet hurt, you hurt all over." One reason Dr. Bartley finds his career so rewarding is, "Often you can help a patient on the first visit."



**Dr. Carter Hyneman** is the new kid on the block, having started at the center in August, fresh from a residency in the Brooklyn and Queens boroughs of New York City. Dr. Hyneman learned a lot about treating injuries during his residency, and now specializes in trauma and sports-related injuries. "I got to see a lot of interesting things," he said. "The two main hospitals were in very urban areas. We have a lot of motor vehicle accidents, gunshot wounds, and a lot of pedestrian trauma."



**Dr. Michael Schreck** will have been at the center five years in January. Although his sub-specialty is pediatric care, "I do not limit myself to pediatrics," he said, adding, "I love treating adults of all ages." Dr. Schreck emphasized that podiatrists treat "everything that has to do with the foot and ankle -- surgical corrections, skin problems, bone problems, tumors, fractures, diabetes and wound care." In Georgia, podiatrists also treat skin problems extending up to the knee.



**Dr. Alap Shah**, also at the center five years specializes in diabetic foot care and wound care, practicing at two hospital-based wound centers. "We try to salvage limbs from amputation," Dr. Shah said. Podiatrists are much better trained now than in past years, Dr. Shah said, adding, "We do a lot more aggressive treatment now." Realizing that "the foot doesn't come by itself," podiatrists address patients' overall health concerns.

### SKILLS REQUIRED

Podiatrists need a State license that requires the completion of at least 90 hours of undergraduate study; a 4-year post-graduate program at a college of podiatric medicine; and, in most States, a postdoctoral residency program lasting at least 2 years.

### WHERE/HOW TO GET TRAINING

#### Schooling

All States and the District of Columbia require a license for the practice of podiatric medicine. Applicants for licensure must be graduates of an accredited college of podiatric medicine and must pass written and oral examinations.

Prerequisites for admission to a college of podiatric medicine include the completion of at least 90 semester hours of undergraduate study, an acceptable grade point average, and suitable scores on the Medical College Admission Test. All of the colleges require 8 semester hours each of biology, inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics, as well as 6 hours of English. The science courses should be those designed for premedical students. Potential podiatric medical students also are evaluated on the basis of extracurricular and community activities, personal interviews, and letters of recommendation.

Most graduates complete a hospital-based residency

program after receiving a DPM. Residency programs last from 2 to 4 years. Residents receive advanced training in podiatric medicine and surgery and serve clinical rotations in anesthesiology, internal medicine, pathology, radiology, emergency medicine, and orthopedic and general surgery. Residencies lasting more than 1 year provide more extensive training in specialty areas.

#### Financial Aid

Grants, scholarships, loans, and work/study programs are available for college students. For most of this aid, high school seniors must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which is available from high school guidance offices and higher education financial aid offices.

For more information on federal financial aid programs, or to apply electronically, visit the U.S. Department of Education's Web site at <http://www.ed.gov>.

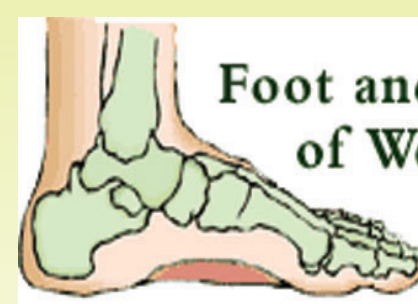


For more information on federal financial aid programs, call (800) 4FEDAID

### FUTURE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Employment of podiatrists is expected to grow about as fast as average for all occupations through 2014. More people will turn to podiatrists for foot care because of the rising number of injuries sustained by a more active and increasingly older population.

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