

Connecting Podiatrists Globally

FIP President Robert Chelin, DPM discusses the state of international podiatry.

By Hermine Block

PM recently had an opportunity to interview the new president of the International Federation of Podiatrists.

PM: What is the FIP?

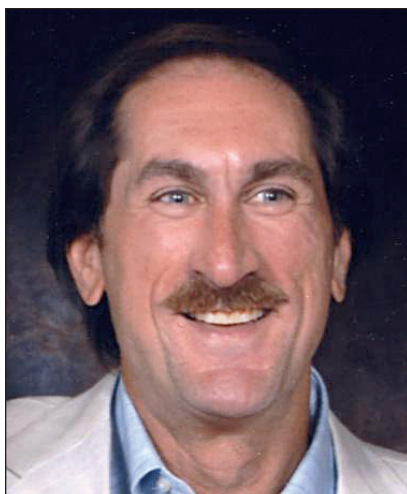
Dr. Chelin: The FIP stands for the Federation Internationale des Podologues/ International Federation of Podiatrists and is the world organization that promotes and provides awareness of the podiatric profession on international level through its "four legs of the chair," as we refer to it—membership, corporate partners, website/online education and the World Foot Health Awareness Month program. When requested, the FIP will advise and assist those countries that need assistance. Currently it consists of 22 organizations on five continents. Collectively, our membership represents 70,000 podiatrists, who provide over 150 million episodes of foot and ankle care a year.

When was the FIP established?

The FIP was established in 1947 in Spain, and its headquarters are located in Paris, France. We also have a North American office, which is located in Pennsylvania.

What does the FIP do?

The FIP brings together the podiatric community to share and exchange ideas, to assist those countries that request assistance with governmental and educational issues. It educates the public about podiatrists and good foot and ankle care through our World Foot Health



Dr. Chelin

Awareness Program. It assists and participates with Special Olympics International in establishing training programs for its screenings. It works with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), an arm of the World Health Organization (WHO) in establishing an international protocol for risk management of the diabetic population in underdeveloped countries. This latter project will facilitate the FIP's membership into the WHO.

How do APMA members become members of the FIP?

All APMA members are automatically members of the FIP. It is one of the benefits of APMA membership. I encourage all APMA members to go to the FIP website www.fipnet.org and sign up to have access to the member section of the website.

Are there any benefits for APMA members?

Yes, there are a number of benefits for members, most importantly, education. The FIP has many online educational programs which we encourage APMA members to view. We also offer reduced subscription rates for the international journal *The Foot*. Our members have the opportunity to submit papers for publication. In fact, there currently is a call for papers. By going to www.fipnet.org, APMA members can find out more information and/or submit a paper.

The FIP brings together the podiatric community to share and exchange ideas, to assist those countries that request assistance with governmental and educational issues.

We also have the first ever Virtual Exhibition Hall where members can view international podiatric suppliers by spending some time at their virtual booths and viewing their products and services.

Another key feature is that only FIP members will have the opportunity to present papers at the next

World Congress.

What were the accomplishments of the World Congress recently held in

Continued on page 130

Connecting Globally...

Copenhagen?

Every three years, the FIP co-hosts an international meeting that brings together podiatrists from around the world to present podiatric-related papers. Many new concepts and theories are introduced and discussion from a multinational perspective follows. It is also a chance to create comradeship among the profession and hook up with old friends. This year's meeting took place in Denmark in the lovely city of Copenhagen, which is known for its history as well as being a shopaholic's paradise. Over 1000 participants gathered for this three-day event. The three tracks of educational seminars consisted of over 100 lectures from lecturers from over 30 countries. The FIP provides simultaneous translation where possible. This year's program received 33 1/3 CME credits.

A Consensus Conference was also held in conjunction with the 2007 World Congress, where aca-

demical leaders of our profession met to discuss global podiatric education issues. As a result of this year's Consensus Conference, an "Academy of World Educators" was established, with the goal to produce a

***All APMA
members are
automatically
members of
the FIP.***

global model of podiatric medicine and to establish world-based competencies. Dentistry and optometry have established similar protocols.

When and where will the next World Congress take place?

The next World Congress will

take place in 2010 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. We are currently in the process of finalizing the exact dates, and will be posting this on our website—www.fipnet.org—in the near future.

How can American podiatrists get involved?

Those members, who would like to participate in committees or in future World Congresses should contact the APMA and speak with their delegate for the FIP (currently Dr. Joseph Caporusso).

As the new President, what are your goals for the organization?

Ultimately, my goals for the FIP include expanding our membership, increasing our corporate development program, enhancing our website and providing more services and information for our members, and maintaining fiscal responsibility.

To date, our membership includes 22 organizations on five continents. We continue to search

Continued on page 131

Connecting Globally...

countries where the profession exists and encourage them to join the FIP, and we are now getting countries seeking us out for inclusion. We are currently awaiting applications from Singapore and Portugal. I will be heading for South America this fall to meet with podiatrists from five Latin American countries who have shown interest in joining the FIP.

We will also continue to grow our corporate development program with our corporate partners. Non-dues income is the success of any organization, and that is very true with the FIP. Our corporate partners have been very generous in funding many of our educational initiatives and together we will continue to develop and fund a variety of podiatry-related programs and activities.

We will continue to grow our website and expand our communications efforts. With the FIP striving to become a paperless organization, the Internet has become a

very effective means for communicating with our membership. We now have a Director of Internal/External Communication who will focus on this initiative.

Last, but not least, in our efforts

*The next World
Congress will take
place in 2010 in
Amsterdam,
The Netherlands.*

to advance all of these goals, fiscal responsibility must be maintained.

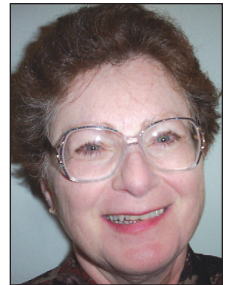
What comments or advice do you have for APMA members?

First of all, I would like to thank the APMA for all its support it has given to the FIP over the years. We

have been fortunate to have one of your outstanding past presidents, Dr. Ronald Lepow, serve as a past president of FIP. The FIP has benefited from his extensive knowledge and his love for the profession. We are truly grateful for that. On a personal note, I would like to thank APMA President Dr. Christian Robertozzi and APMA Executive Director Dr. Glenn Gastwirth for their support and encouragement.

Secondly, the globalization of the podiatric profession is the key to worldwide recognition. At this year's House of Delegates meet-

ing in Washington D.C., the keynote speaker alluded to the fact that the podiatric profession has to get on the same page to receive professional parity. It is no different globally. ■



Hermine Block is managing editor of this magazine.