

INTRODUCTION

Home Study 2005: Elements of Successful Risk Management is part of the complete professional liability insurance package offered by PICA Group. We hope you will use it to improve your understanding of risk management principles and then apply those principles to the clinical challenges you face every day. **Home Study 2005** is designed to help you improve your understanding of the risk management factors that are essential to the success of your practice.

The **Home Study 2005** workbook focuses on the essential keys for preventing diabetic foot ulcers, healing them when they do occur, controlling infection, and preventing amputation. In this workbook we present one principal case study and then analyze the liability of the case against the seven key factors that can prevent lawsuits when treating diabetic patients. Through the additional four case studies we offer valuable risk management tips to help you maintain the health of your practice. In addition, we present general risk management issues that can help you provide the highest quality podiatric care to all your patients.

Risk Management Discount. The purchase of this home study manual entitles you to a 10% premium renewal discount in accordance with PICA Group and OUM policy. Data Trace Publishing Company will automatically inform your insurance carrier of your purchase and the risk management discount will be recorded. If you have questions about your policy, the renewal process, or an invoice, please contact PICA Group directly at 1-800-251-5727, or OUM at 1-800-423-1504.

Continuing Education Units. In addition to valuable practice advice and a PICA Group risk management discount, **Home Study 2005** offers podiatric physicians an avenue for earning Continuing Education Units (CEU) (where available) by simply taking the test at the end of this publication, forwarding the answer form to Data Trace Publishing Company, and receiving a passing grade.

What's in the Workbook?

Section 1—Case Studies

The four case studies in Section 1 of **Home Study 2005** are based on actual claims, although the names and circumstances have been changed. Case Study One illustrates the importance of adhering to the seven principal keys to good management of diabetic foot wounds.

Despite all the advances in care and podiatric treatment of the condition, diabetes accounts for 90,000 lower extremity amputations per year, according to the American Diabetes Association. In the majority of amputations, foot ulcerations are a predisposing factor. The five-year survival rate for unilateral diabetic amputees is only about 50%. Five-year survival of bilateral diabetic amputees is in the single

digits. Podiatrists face lawsuits not only for mistreatment of diabetic ulcerations, but also for amputations and, in some cases, for wrongful death.

A careful reading of this sampling of case studies will help podiatric physicians recognize the importance of following the seven keys for identifying and treating diabetic foot lesions. At the end of each case study you can review relevant teaching points and risk management tips.

Section 2—Risk Management Review

Section 2 of the workbook contains a feature describing the elements of a complete diabetic foot assessment, including a checklist for how to identify and prevent foot wounds which you can copy and give to your patients.

Section 3—Educating Your Diabetic Patients

In Section 3 we take an in-depth look at patient-centered education programs you can offer to help your patients participate in their care. Experts agree that patient education and participation are keys to the successful treatment of diabetic foot wounds.

Section 4—Risk Management Tips for Podiatric Assistants

In Section 4 we reprise a popular feature directed to your Podiatric Assistants. This section offers valuable tips for your staff. By carefully reviewing this information, your staff will understand the important role they play in your practice and how they can also apply risk management principles in their work that can protect you from a lawsuit.

Section 5—Continuing Education

After reading the case studies, risk management review, and in-depth features and listening to the audio program, you can earn Continuing Education Units by completing the brief multiple-choice examination. Questions are based on information provided in the workbook and the audio program.

The continuing education portion of **Home Study 2005** is coordinated by Data Trace Publishing Company, a trusted and respected publisher of podiatric educational material since 1987. Data Trace is approved by the Council on Podiatric Medical Education as a sponsor of continuing education in podiatric medicine and is authorized to sponsor instructional media.

Approval for CEU varies by state, as does the number of credit hours approved. To check if your state has approved credits for this program, visit Data Trace Publishing Company's website at www.datatrace.com/medical/podiatry, or call 1-888-240-8401.

Participation in the continuing education portion of the workbook is optional. If you choose not to participate, you will still receive a 10% risk management discount on your PICA Group malpractice insurance premium.

About the Audio Program

The accompanying audio program, “The Chain of Communication. . . Are You the Weakest Link?,” addresses a major source of malpractice actions against podiatric physicians—breakdowns in communication. Breakdowns come from two sources: 1) poor communication skills, and 2) poorly designed communication processes. The purpose of this lecture is to increase physicians’ awareness of this problem, identify its many sources, and identify ways to reduce the frequency of communication breakdowns between doctor and patient, doctor and staff, and staff and patient. Improvement in communication will not only reduce the incidence of malpractice but will also improve the clinical and financial success of a practice.

The audio program is written and presented by Jon A. Hultman, DPM, MBA. Dr. Hultman is a graduate of UCLA’s Anderson Graduate School of Management, author of St. Anthony Publishing’s *Reengineering the Medical Practice*, and has written and lectured extensively on a variety of healthcare business topics. He is a healthcare consultant focused primarily on improving medical practice performance in areas that impact cost, quality, efficiency, and productivity.

Conclusion

Home Study 2005 is designed as a reference tool for you and your staff. The workbook and audio program are evidence of PICA Group’s continuing commitment to education and managing medical liability risk for the podiatric physician. Your feedback is important to us, and we are pleased with the overwhelmingly positive response to our home study workbooks. Please do not hesitate to contact us with suggestions or comments. Please direct any comments to PICA Group by calling 1-800-251-5727 and asking for your PICA, PACO, or OUM customer care representative.

Thank you for your participation in PICA Group’s Risk Management Program.