

# NEWS

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Contact:  
Dennis A. Vitrella,  
[dennis@dlsconference.com](mailto:dennis@dlsconference.com)

## **Georgetown Diabetic Limb Salvage Conference “A Capital Success,” Exceeding All Projections**

The first Georgetown University Hospital Conference on a Team Approach to Diabetic Limb Salvage held September 27-29, 2007, in Washington, DC, was termed “a capital success” by organizers. The conference exceeded all projections for attendance, participation and support, and plans already are under way for a 2008 meeting.

“We had over a thousand registered attendees from 44 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and 23 foreign countries, 52 faculty members, more than 75 corporate exhibitors and what we believe is the best education program ever presented on the team approach to diabetic limb salvage,” said Christopher E. Attinger, MD, one of the conference co-chairs.

“Participation surpassed our expectations, and indeed the two conference hotels sold out of rooms for the conference dates,” said Dr. Attinger, director of The Center for Wound Healing at Georgetown.

“The education rooms, workshops and symposia were packed – it’s clear that there’s a real need for this kind of medical conference,” said John S. Steinberg, DPM, also a conference co-chair. Dr. Steinberg is chief of podiatry and co-director of the limb salvage team at Georgetown..

Highlights for attendees were the live surgical cases from Georgetown’s ORs. “These limb salvage cases were extremely well received, very informative for the physicians and nurses at the conference, and we plan to have the live cases again next year,” said Richard F. Neville, MD, co-chair. Dr. Neville is chief of vascular surgery at Georgetown.

The 2008 conference is scheduled, again at the JW Marriott Pennsylvania Avenue Hotel in Washington, for September 18-20, 2008. It is hosted and sponsored by Georgetown University Hospital/MedStar Health.

David G. Armstrong, DPM, PhD, was the recipient of the conference’s first Georgetown Distinguished Achievement Award in Diabetic Limb Salvage. Dr. Armstrong, a leading researcher, educator and clinician, is professor of surgery and associate dean of the Dr. William

M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in Chicago and also is director of the Center for Lower Extremity Ambulatory Research (CLEAR).

Attendees, who were within walking distance of the White House and the Senate and House chambers, got a taste of Washington's inside-the-beltway satire when the comedy troupe, Capitol Steps, performed at the conference on September 27.

At the conference, Georgetown physicians and staff presented details of the highly successful team approach to diabetic limb salvage that Dr. Attinger's group at the teaching hospital has developed over the past 17 years. Georgetown University Hospital is affiliated with Georgetown University School of Medicine.

"Nationally, the prognosis for diabetic patients who develop foot ulcers is frightening: One-quarter undergo immediate leg amputation upon presenting with an ulcer, the recurrence rate after healing is 15-40% at seven months and 40-80% at 27 months, and after amputation over one-half lose the contra-lateral leg within the next three years while over 60% die within the next five years," said Dr. Steinberg.

"A team approach, such as we've developed at Georgetown, has the highest chance for limb salvage because the components of a diabetic foot ulcer are beyond the talents of any given individual. With a team approach, we can save diabetic limbs with ulcers and even in cases where amputation is necessary we often can turn that into a successful outcome for the patient," Dr. Neville said.

Dr. Attinger explained that a DLS team should have a vascular surgeon, podiatrist, orthopedist, endocrinologist, internist, nephrologist and wound care team involving a physician, nurse, nurse practitioner and physical therapist, pedorthetist, prosthetist and nutritionist. "The team is only as strong as its weakest link, as each member plays an integral role in the salvage effort," said Dr. Attinger.

Streaming video of selected conference educational sessions and a 20-minute film titled "If You've Got It, Deal with It!" that covers the challenges of diabetic limb salvage from the perspective of actual GUH patients are available, password-free, on the Diabetic Limb Salvage conference web site at [www.DLSConference.com](http://www.DLSConference.com).

For more information, contact Dennis A. Vitrella, conference director, at [dennis@DLSConference.com](mailto:dennis@DLSConference.com) or telephone 337-235-6606.

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