

# ACFAS 2023 Meet the Fellow Questionnaire



Fellow Name:

Remi Minh Khang Le, DPM, AACFAS

Fellowship Program:

NOMS Ankle & Foot Care Centers – Reconstructive Rearfoot and Ankle Surgical Fellowship

City/State:

Youngstown, Ohio

Program Director:

Dr. Lawrence A. DiDomenico, DPM, FACFAS

How many Attendings do you work with regularly?

We routinely work with Dr. DiDomenico and 2 other providers. The group practice consists of over 15 other doctors which the fellow has exposure and access to.

Describe the diversity of your cases so far in fellowship. (For example, has your experience included TAR? Is there an emphasis on: Pediatrics? Sports Medicine? Deformity correction? Complex reconstruction? What percentage of your cases are trauma? Rearfoot/ankle? Forefoot? Please be as descriptive as you'd like.

The fellow will be exposed to a high volume of surgical cases (350-400) involving the forefoot, midfoot, rearfoot, and ankle, including total ankle joint replacement, tibiototalcalcaneal arthrodesis, Charcot reconstruction, limb deformity correction, Ilizarov external fixation technique, muscle/tissue transfers for complex diabetic limb preservation surgery, and peripheral nerve release procedures of the lower extremity. There is a strong emphasis on diabetic limb salvage through reconstructive surgical management of the faulty biomechanics of the diabetic foot. There is also great exposure in complex revisional surgical cases from referrals from the area and out of state, an aspect that is challenging yet rewarding in managing and being exposed to.

How many days per week do you typically spend in the OR? In clinic? Do you have your own "fellow" clinic?

We typically spend 3 days in the OR, not including any add-on surgical cases throughout the week and the weekend. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays are our busy office days where we see all our pre-op, post-op, and regular patients. Saturday is a half clinic day.

How many surgical cases do you typically scrub per month?

30-40 surgeries per month

What conferences have you attended/are you encouraged to attend?

I attended the annual ACFAS Conference, the International Foot & Ankle Conference (IFAC), and am encouraged to attend all industry fellows' courses.

How would you describe your director's teaching style?

Dr. DiDomenico has been a pioneer for our profession and is a renowned surgeon, speaker and educator with over 30 years of experience. He is AO fellowship trained under Dr. Sigvard Hansen & Dr. Bruce Sangerzoan at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, Washington, Dr. Hans Zwipp in Dresden, Germany, Dr. Kaj Klaué in Lugano, Switzerland and Dr. Vladimir Shevtsov from the Russian Ilizarov Scientific Center. Therefore, through this program, the fellow will gain invaluable training from his AO experience.



Working with him daily got me to understand that his main objective is for us to become the most competent, well trained, most skilled, and most importantly, responsible surgeons towards the patient, and towards the profession. He holds the highest standards in the care of his patients and will always push us to adopt the same level of focus and commitment in all our cases.

How is research incorporated into your experience? What resources are provided/available?

The fellow is expected to produce two publications as well as present at the ACFAS national conference. A strong benefit of this program is to have access to Dr. DiDomenico's surgical database that includes over 30 years of experience which is useful in selecting our patient population for research purposes. The fellow will have the option to participate in ongoing lower extremity clinical research studies that the office provides to the diabetic patient population.

Do you take any "call"? If so, how often? What type of call? (General vs. trauma, hospital vs. private practice?)

The fellow takes call with the group at mainly 3 hospitals including East Liverpool City Hospital, Mercy St. Elizabeth Boardman, and St. Elizabeth Youngstown Hospitals. However, Dr. DiDomenico is also director of the East Liverpool City Hospital Podiatry Residency Program which consist of 12 residents who are covering any consults for the practice which the fellow will have the chance to work with as well. At East Liverpool City Hospital, the podiatry department manages any lower extremity conditions that may present including trauma like Pilon and ankle fractures.

How many hospitals/surgery centers are you credentialed at?

I am credentialed at 5 hospitals and 1 ambulatory surgical center in the state of Ohio. We are also licensed in the state of Pennsylvania and have credentials at UPMC Surgical Hospital in Farrell, PA.

What is your didactic schedule like? What academic opportunities are available to you during fellowship? (Cadaver labs, journal club, radiology conference, etc.)

The fellow is encouraged to attend weekly Tuesday Academics with the podiatry residents which covers Radiology Grand Rounds. Once a month, we have access to the group's own private cadaver lab with industry sponsored and non-sponsored workshops. Journal clubs are also held monthly.

Is your fellowship affiliated with a residency program? If yes, what are your responsibilities? How often are you interacting with residents (What % of cases?)

Dr. DiDomenico is the director of East Liverpool City Hospital Podiatry Residency program that consists of 12 residents. The fellow is encouraged to teach them in the office and in the OR as well as during academics. It is a great opportunity to develop our teaching skills and help the residents progress in their training. The residents will assist in all our cases with the fellow having full privileges on the involvement of each case.

Are you able to collect cases for board certification?

If the fellow is the main surgeon on the case and with proper pre-op and post-op documentation, it is possible to collect those cases for board certification.

When should interested applicants visit? What does a visit look like?

Visit usually starts around May/June where we encourage candidates to come visit on a Tuesday office day to meet the team and see the variety of patients and cases that we have.

What is the interview process like at your program?

Applicants that are interested are welcomed to reach out midway through their second year of residency and email their ACFAS standard application and we will hold an introductory phone interview with Dr. DiDomenico and myself. Once all candidates' visits completed, decision is usually made very promptly.



Do you have a co-fellow? What percentage of your cases are scrubbed with them?

No, I do not have a co-fellow.

What support is available for finding post-fellowship employment?

Dr. DiDomenico will always be ready to give his recommendations and advice based on his past working experience to guide us in any way possible. He will always make the fellow aware of any opportunities that comes along the way and can also refer to his peers and colleagues within the field. His experience and connections are invaluable and will always want us to succeed.

What qualities make an applicant a good fit for your program?

The applicant should be first and foremost hard working, efficient and resourceful. Fellowship with Dr. DiDomenico is an opportunity to learn, apply and prepare the fellow to not only be surgically skilled, but knowledgeable in private practice management, patient management and medical legal management. The candidate should always be ready to put in the work and hold high standards in every patient encounter, resident's interactions and carry themselves in a professional manner. It is important to know how to work as a team but also take initiative and lead when it's needed whether it's in the OR, in the office or with the residents.

Why did you apply for fellowship? And why did you choose your fellowship program?

Coming out of residency very well trained, fellowship for me was an opportunity to see different ways of practice outside of 3 years of residency and to gain more skills and exposure to different regional differences. I truly believe that I can never have too much training and education, which will prepare me in the best way for when I start practicing. It goes without saying that the main reason I chose this program was because of Dr. DiDomenico's well respected reputation as a leader and a pioneer for ankle and foot surgery. It is a privilege to learn and work with him, and to complement and implement his surgical approaches and techniques into my own.

Any advice for future fellowship applicants?

This program lead by Dr. DiDomenico comes with great responsibilities, yet it is the most rewarding training that I could possibly ask for. It exposes you to almost any condition possible in the lower extremity and prepares you to be not only able to treat, but to be great at treating anything that comes your way without any hesitation. You will learn how to be efficient in the office, in the OR and adopt a surgical approach that is AO based, with every procedure performed with a reason and evidence based. Like Dr. DiDomenico likes to say, "If you work hard, everything else will come with it." His goal is to prepare the fellow to not only becoming a well-trained surgeon, but to become a leader in the profession and to become an ambassador to the profession in a way to reach parity with our orthopaedic peers.

