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To all my Current and Past patients,

I will retire from clinical practice on December 31st 2018. It seems like only yesterday when I opened my new office in Seal Beach with two treatment rooms 37 years ago. There is a saying that *"time flies when you are having fun"*, and happily I realize that this has been the theme of my career. I have truly loved and enjoyed practicing podiatric medicine. When I wonder where all those years went, I quickly realize that I now treat the children of the young children I treated during those first few years of practice during the 1980's.

In perspective, much has changed and improved in my specialty over the past 40 years. When I first started, we did not have MRI. We had to use clinical skills and educated guessing to diagnose soft tissue and cartilage injuries. Patients undergoing bunionectomy surgery spent several nights in the hospital afterwards, requiring bed rest and lots of pain medication. Now we do this surgery outpatient and most of our patients only need ibuprofen. Running shoes had only one style and design in 1980. Now we have motion control, neutral, minimalist and maximalist shoes. Patients with chronic heel pain basically lived with their condition. Now we have platelet rich plasma, shockwave and radiofrequency nerve ablation. Yes, it has been exciting to learn and implement these fantastic advances in diagnosis and treatment.

I did the math and realized that over the course of my career, I have treated over 50,000 patients. Many of them still see me on a regular basis. Some have come back after 30 years and reminded me of what I did for them a long time ago. This has had a profound impact on me. I chose podiatry as a career because this specialty could provide rapid, effective treatment options, which could improve patient's lives almost immediately. Apparently, this is very true.

This commitment will not go away. Twenty years ago, I designed a new custom ankle brace, which became known as the Richie Brace®. (see www.richiebrace.com) I then designed 7 other models and began teaching doctors how to use the braces to treat very challenging deformities and conditions of the foot and ankle. This ankle brace has gained enormous popularity in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. It has enabled thousands of patients to restore mobility and regain a healthy lifestyle.

So, I am not really retiring. It has been challenging to find the time to teach doctors about my brace while still working full time in clinical practice. During my career, I have lectured at ten or more major medical meetings every year around the country and abroad which required a lot of travel and subsequently also took time away from my patients. As a result, I turned down opportunities to teach doctors and make my brace available to more people.

With retirement from clinical practice, I realize that I can continue to make a positive impact on people's lives in my second career. Teaching doctors, doing research and making my brace products more available to people who will benefit from them has been very gratifying and now I can focus on this full time. I feel very blessed to have this opportunity.

During my career, I devoted a significant amount of time to research and teaching. I still have faculty appointments at two podiatry colleges. I have also trained post-graduate podiatry residents in surgical training programs. I am privileged and thrilled that three of the brightest and most capable podiatrists I ever taught now work in my practice and will assume care of my valued patients. Dr. Cook and Dr. Izadi now own the practice while Dr. Graham has joined as a part time associate.

Dr.'s Cook, Izadi and Graham trained extensively with me for several years, both in the operating room and in the office setting. With these doctors, I am totally confident that my patients will continue to receive the quality, compassionate care, which I have strived to provide during my career. In fact, it is sobering to realize that my patients will probably get even better care as these three doctors are a lot smarter than I am and have had a lot more training than I had!

I hope you will view my retirement as I do, which is as a positive and satisfying occasion. At the same time, I know I will constantly look back on all the wonderful patients I have had the privilege to know and to treat and I will miss them. To have so many people put their trust and faith in me has been a humbling experience. For this, I will continue to be eternally grateful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Richie', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Richie