



LEARN Faculty Spotlight

*Erika J. Ugianskis, MD
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Dr. Erika J. Ugianskis was interviewed by Dr. Bret Wiechmann, LEARN Program Planning Committee member.

Dr. Wiechmann: We are excited to welcome new faculty to this year's LEARN meeting in Nashville, TN! Tell me a little bit about your practice and your interest in peripheral arterial disease treatment.

Dr. Ugianskis: Thank you Bret. I've been in a hospital-based IR practice my entire career, having completed my IR fellowship in 2000. I am the Medical Director of IR at the Indiana University Health Arnett Hospital in Lafayette, IN. We are a practice of 4 IRs and 1 PA employed by the local health system, and serve a predominantly rural region in central Indiana. Our practice is comprehensive and progressive. We have served as the frontline in the endovascular management of PAD in our area for many years. With the availability of atherectomy devices and DCBs, as well as the use of pedal access, we have become the primary service managing CLI.

Dr. Wiechmann: What are the biggest challenges you see in managing PAD/CLI patients?

Dr. Ugianskis: We are successfully treating far more femoropopliteal and infrapopliteal disease now than we were say a decade ago given the extraordinary innovation we have seen with endovascular devices. Thus, I don't think that the challenges lie so much with what we can do, but more so with patient lifestyle choices. Patients themselves often create the biggest challenges to management of their PAD/CLI with their continued tobacco abuse, poor diabetic management and/or lack of compliance with wound care instructions.

Dr. Wiechmann: What do you feel is the best way to educate future vascular specialists in current PAD and CLI treatments? How does LEARN fit into this plan?

Dr. Ugianskis: Forums like LEARN allow IRs to immerse themselves in a particular service line. With regard to LEARN, the meeting gives IRs the opportunity to learn about the multitude of available endovascular devices and techniques, and to have collegial discussions with fellow IRs as to specific tips and tricks on how to use them and thereby expand their respective practices to treat PAD/CLI.