



AOPA 4th Quarter 2017 Staff Report

To: AOPA Membership
From: Thomas F. Fise, Executive Director
Date: January 5, 2018

Subject: A year to remember for many things!

AOPA had a successful 2017, celebrating 100 years since the association's founding! AOPA introduced the new member benefit - the Co-OP, held the record-setting World Congress in Las Vegas, celebrated our first Healthcare Compliance and Ethics Week, launched Orthotics 2020, shared the RAND Study on the Economic Value of Advanced Transfemoral Prosthetics and the new Dobson-DaVanzo cost-effectiveness research, and announced a new affinity apparel program, among other things. We watched the broader healthcare debate where a Republican majority Congress failed to repeal the Affordable Care Act but later eliminated the individual mandate in the recently passed tax bill. We saw several CMS and VA proposals that would harm patients and providers, and the withdrawal of the Qualified Provider rule. AOPA has been advocating for you every step of the way and will continue to fight in 2018.

2018 AOPA Assembly

Save the Date! The 2018 AOPA Assembly will be held September 26-29 in Vancouver, BC, Canada—one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Enjoy the breathtaking scenery while you network, learn and advance your career. For those who have never had a chance to visit this beautiful city—don't miss out on a prime opportunity! For those who have been to Vancouver, you already know what a spectacular city Vancouver truly is.

AOPA is known for its regulatory expertise, research and advocacy. That is why top clinicians, business owners, managers and manufacturers from around the world choose AOPA as their first choice in meetings. Take advantage of pre-Assembly education and post show vacations, as well as everything in between. AOPA has partnered with AlaskaBySea to provide an affordable pre-show Alaska cruise.

Present at the Assembly: AOPA is seeking high-quality educational and research content for the 2018 AOPA Assembly, September 26-29 in Vancouver, BC, Canada. All submissions are due by March 1, 2018.

Your submissions will set the stage for a broad curriculum of high-value clinical and scientific offerings at the National Assembly. AOPA is accepting these topics: Clinical Free Papers, Technician Program, Symposia/instructional course, Business Education, and Pedorthic Program. Submit your paper at bit.ly/present2018.

Exhibit at this important event:

- Build your customer base and increase sales by meeting with owners who actually make the final decisions on purchases.
- Experience face-to-face time with existing customers to answer questions and build new relationships.
- Enjoy sponsored networking opportunities, including an opening reception in the exhibit hall.

- Take advantage of fun traffic-building opportunities.
- Take advantage of education sessions to learn what's happening with regulatory agencies that affect the success of your product.
- Increase visibility for your company/organization in a targeted market.
- Host a Manufacturer's Workshop and/or Product Preview Theater presentation.
- Speak to AOPA reimbursement experts who can answer all your O&P coding, reimbursement and compliance questions.
- Hear from top researchers and clinicians to learn what products and support is needed from manufacturers.
- Participate in key education programs and plenary sessions.
- Be a part of the largest exhibit hall the North America for the orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic profession.
- Much more!

For information about exhibiting, contact Kelly O'Neill at koneill@AOPAnet.org.

Government Affairs and Legislative Round Up

AOPA Submits Comments Regarding CMS' Proposed Changes to DMEPOS Quality Standards Related to Diabetic Inserts

On December 11, AOPA submitted formal comments on CMS' proposed change to the DMEPOS Quality Standards that would expand the definition of the term "molded to patient model" to include custom fabricated diabetic inserts that are fabricated using a virtual or digital model of the patient's foot and a direct milling process. Earlier this year, the DME MACs published a coding bulletin that indicated that because direct milled inserts were not molded over a positive model of the patient's foot, they could not be billed using HCPCS code A5513 and would have to be billed using A9270 which is a statutorily non-covered service.

The proposed change to the DMEPOS Quality Standards creates a pathway for Medicare coverage for direct milled inserts but a subsequent frequently asked questions (FAQ) document published by CMS indicates that direct milled inserts cannot be billed using A5513 and that reimbursement for inserts fabricated this way will be reduced by approximately 14%.

AOPA undertook a multi-faceted agency, Hill and patient-centered strategy to counter this dysfunctional outcome. The included AOPA comments which supported the proposed change to the DMEPOS Quality Standards but challenged the CMS proposal to arbitrarily reduce the reimbursement rate for direct milled inserts. AOPA believes that the manner of fabrication is irrelevant, that it is FDA, not CMS, to which Congress authorized to scrutinize manufacturing processes, and that the proposed change to the DMEPOS Quality Standards should allow direct milled inserts to be properly billed using A5513. AOPA's comments may be viewed on the AOPA website at bit.ly/5513comments.

In addition to its independent comments, AOPA joined the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) in expressing its mutual concern regarding the CMS opinion that direct milled, custom fabricated inserts do not meet the requirements for classification under A5513 and also was party to the comments submitted by the O&P Alliance.

AOPA Submits Comments on the CMS Proposed Rule That Would Provide States with Additional Flexibility in Defining Essential Health Benefits

On November 2, 2017, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* entitled "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; HHS Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2019." Among the provisions in the proposed rule is a section that would provide individual states with increased flexibility in defining essential health benefits (EHB) for purposes of establishing benchmark plans required by the Affordable Care Act.

AOPA submitted official comments on the proposed rule on November 27, 2017. Our comments reflected AOPA's consistent position that orthoses and prostheses must remain essential health benefits and any action by CMS that restricts or reduces access to O&P services is not in the best interest of quality patient care. AOPA's comments may be accessed on the AOPA website at bit.ly/ehbcomments.

AOPA Submits Comments on AHRQ Systematic Review Draft Report

In late October 2017, the Agency for Healthcare Quality Research (AHRQ), in conjunction with a contractor known as an Evidence-based Practice Center (EPC), released a draft report on its systematic review of current scientific literature that address the use of lower limb prostheses in the United States. This systematic review has been perceived as being an integral part of the work of the Interagency workgroup dated to the 2015 ill-conceived proposal to modify the LCD for lower limb prosthesis

AOPA reviewed the draft report published by the EPC and unfortunately did not agree with much in the conclusions, particularly its final abstract conclusion that "there is not evidence to support the selection of specific components for patient subgroups to maximize ambulation, function, and quality of life or to minimize abandonment or limited use." AOPA believes that there is **clear** evidence, apparently not considered by AHRQ or its contractor to support specific components for patient subgroups for maximizing favorable patient outcomes. The draft systematic review did not consider recent research by the RAND Corporation and the health economics firm Dobson DaVanzo that specifically studied both the clinical and cost effectiveness of the provision of higher technology prosthetic limbs but instead focused on the number of unused abandoned prostheses. In addition, the systematic review either ignored or dismissed the vast majority of research identified by AOPA in its December 2016 comments regarding the key questions that would be explored in the systematic review.

AOPA has submitted extensive comments to the AHRQ urging them to continue work on its systematic review and to consider valuable studies such as the RAND study and the Dobson DaVanzo study in their final report. AOPA's comments may be accessed on the AOPA website at bit.ly/ahrqcomments.

AOPA Responds to Veterans Administration Proposed Rule Affecting Provider Choice

The October 16, 2017 *Federal Register* included a proposed rule published by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that intends to "reorganize and update the current regulations related to prosthetic and rehabilitative items, primarily to clarify eligibility for prosthetic and other rehabilitative items and services, and to define the types of items and services available to eligible veterans."

There is a provision in the proposed rule that significantly threatens longstanding VA policy that allows the veteran to decide whether they receive O&P services directly from the VA or from a VA contracted provider. The proposed language states the following:

"VA will determine whether VA or a VA-authorized vendor will furnish authorized items and services under § 17.3230 to eligible veterans. When VA has the capacity or inventory, VA directly provides items and services to veterans. However, VA also may use, on a case-by case basis, VA authorized vendors to provide greater access, lower cost, and/or a wider range of items and services. We would clarify in regulation that this administrative business decision is made solely by VA to eliminate any possible confusion as to whether a veteran has a right to request items or services generally, or to request specific items or services from a provider other than VA, and to clarify for the benefit of VA-authorized vendors that VA retains this discretion as part of our duty to administer this program in a legally sufficient, fiscally responsible manner."

This language, if finalized, is in direct conflict with the current VA policy as well as the Veteran's Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 and will significantly restrict the ability of a veteran to see the VA contracted provider of their choice for prosthetic and orthotic care. AOPA sought, received, and submitted

to VA a legal opinion highlighting the longstanding legal commitment by VA to permit a large number of Vets to exercise the choice for private sector care. AOPA comments on the proposed rule which were due on December 15, 2017 and may be accessed on the AOPA website at bit.ly/vaissue.

AOPA provided a portal for members to submit comments through AOPAvotes (now closed); more than 250 members participated. AOPA also published an ad in *Politico*, a newspaper of legislative and political news that is delivered to Congress and the White House, and read by think tanks, federal agencies, etc and a large number of legislators, to highlight the inconsistency of the proposal with the concept of Veterans choice. The ad may be viewed at the same link as above.

CMS Expands the Target, Probe, and Educate Audit Program

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have expanded a program aimed at narrowing the focus of pre-payment audits performed by Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs). The program, known as Target, Probe, and Educate (TPE), has been expanded to all MACs, nationwide and replaces all previous pre-payment audit programs at the DME MACs.

The purpose of the TPE program, as stated by CMS, is to focus on specific suppliers within a benefit category selected for review that have historically high claim error rates or higher than normal utilization patterns. The TPE program will consist of up to 3 rounds of pre-payment review and supplier specific education based on the results of the review. Suppliers selected for the TPE program will receive a notification letter followed by a sample of 20 to 40 claims that have been selected for audit. Once the supplier submits the requested documentation, the audit will take place and an error rate will be established. The supplier will then have a dedicated education session with the medical review staff to discuss strategies to improve their claim submission process. If the supplier's success rate is not adequate, up to 2 additional rounds of audit and education will take place. If, during any of the three rounds of the TPE process, the supplier's success rate is deemed adequate, the supplier will be removed from the TPE program for up to one year.

RAC Audit Update

The national DMEPOS, Home Health, and Hospice RAC contractor, Performant, was authorized by CMS to begin its audit activity and began auditing claims in March.

Currently the following O&P items/services are listed under the "approved issues on the Performant website and are eligible to be audited: Complex Review of Spinal Orthoses: L0452, L0480, L0482, L0484, L0486, L0629, L0632, L0634, L0636, L0638, L0640, A9270

Complex Review of Ankle Foot Orthoses/Knee Ankle Foot Orthoses: L1900, L1904, L1907, L1920, L1940, L1945, L1950, L1960, L1970, L1980, L1990, L2106, L2108, L4631, L2000, L2005, L2010, L2020, L2030, L2034, L2036, L2037, L2038, L2126, L2128

CMS Withdraws BIPA 427 Proposed Rule

On October 3, 2017, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced that it has withdrawn the proposed rule that represented the first step in creating regulations that would implement the qualified provider provisions for prostheses and custom fabricated orthoses legislated in section 427 of the Benefits Improvement and Protection Act of 2000 (BIPA).

According to the notice published by CMS the proposed rule was withdrawn due to "the cost and time burdens that the proposed rule would create for many providers and suppliers, particularly the cost and burden for those providers and suppliers that are small businesses, and the complexity of the issues raised in the detailed public comments." CMS indicated that they received over 5,000 public comments regarding the proposed rule.

AOPA was disappointed that CMS decided to withdraw the proposed rule that would finally create regulations to implement a law that was passed more than 17 years ago. The withdrawal of the proposed rule once again exposes the Medicare population to no regulation regarding what qualifications are required to provide custom orthotic and prosthetic services. While the proposed rule was far from perfect, as AOPA expressed in its public comments that were submitted to CMS, AOPA believed that issues that were of significant concern to several provider groups, who viewed the proposed rule as a threat to their ability to continue to provide services within their scope of practice, could have been addressed through changes to the final rule rather than through the complete withdrawal of the proposed rule.

The combination of the recent administration change, including the new administration’s philosophy to reduce overall regulatory burden on businesses, the significant opposition from several high profile provider groups, and the restrictive language that would significantly limit certain providers from continuing to provide custom orthoses and prostheses appear to have led directly to the demise and subsequent withdrawal of the proposed rule.

AOPA will continue to make every effort to ensure that all recipients of O&P care receive that care from folks who have been properly educated and trained in the fabrication, fit, and delivery of orthotic and prosthetic devices.

AOPA Healthcare Compliance and Ethics Week

Over 100 AOPA members participated in a very successful AOPA Healthcare Compliance and Ethics Week which was held from November 5-11, 2017. The success of this inaugural event exceeded AOPA’s expectations and next year’s Healthcare Compliance and Ethics Week has already been scheduled for November 4-10, 2018.

HCPCS Code Changes for 2018

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has released the new HCPCS codes for 2018, and there were only a few minor changes. Below is a complete breakdown of the code changes which will be effective for claims with a date of service on or after January 1, 2018.

New Codes

Code	Descriptor
L3761	Elbow orthosis with adjustable position locking joint(s), prefabricated, off-the-shelf
L7700	Gasket or seal, for use with prosthetic socket insert, any type, each

Changes in Code Descriptors

Code	New Descriptor	Old Descriptor
L3760	Elbow orthosis , with adjustable position locking joint(s), prefabricated, item that has been trimmed, bent, molded, assembled, or otherwise customized to fit a specific patient by an individual with expertise	Elbow orthosis, with adjustable position locking joint(s), prefabricated, includes fitting and adjustments, any type

CMS Releases the 2018 Medicare DMEPOS Fee Schedule

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the 2018 Medicare DMEPOS fee schedule effective for Medicare claims with a date of service on or after January 1, 2018. The 2018 Medicare fee schedule for orthotic and prosthetic services will be increased by 1.1% over 2017 rates. The 1.1% increase is a net reflection of the 1.6% increase in the Consumer Pricing Index for Urban Areas (CPI-U) from June 2016 through June 2017, combined with the annual Multi-Factor Productivity Adjustment (MFP) of -0.5%.

The 1.1% increase in the O&P Medicare fee schedule for 2018 represents a 0.4% larger amount than the 2017 increase of 0.7%. Unfortunately, the 2% sequestration based reduction to all Medicare payments remains in effect (currently through 2025) meaning that Medicare fee for service payments will continue to be reduced by 2% due to sequestration. While sequestration continues to impact Medicare reimbursement, it is not cumulative. You will still receive 1.1% more for a service you provide in 2018 than you did in 2017.

Mastering Medicare Webinars

The AOPA Mastering Medicare Webinar series continues to be a useful resource for AOPA members and others in the O&P community. During the one-hour monthly Webinars, AOPA experts provide the most up-to-date information on a specific topic. Webinars are held the second Wednesday of each month at 1:00 PM Eastern. One registration is all it takes to provide the most reliable business information and CE Credits for your entire staff. If you've missed a Webinar, AOPA will send you a recording of the webinar and quiz for CE credits, so you can still take advantage of the series discount and the valuable learning opportunities:

January 10: Lower Limb Prostheses Policy: A Comprehensive Review

February 14: Inpatient Billing

March 14: Medicare Coding Guidelines: MUEs, PTPs, PDAC, etc.

April 11: Enhancing Cash Flow & Increasing Your Accounts Receivable

May 9: Coding: Understanding the Basics

June 13: Audits: Know the Types, Know the Players, and Know the Rules

July 11: Administrative Documentation: What is Always Needed and Sometimes Needed

August 8: Outcomes & Patient Satisfaction Surveys

September 12: Medicare as Secondary Payer: Knowing the Rules

October 10: Year End Review: How to Wrap-Up & Get Ready for the New Year

November 14: Evaluating Your Compliance Plan & Procedures: How to Audit Your Practice

December 12: New Codes, Medicare Changes & Updates

AOPA Coding & Billing Seminar

AOPA experts provide the most up-to-date information to help O&P Practitioners and office billing staff learn how to code complex devices, including repairs and adjustments, through interactive discussions with AOPA experts, your colleagues, and much more. Meant for both practitioners and office staff, this two-day event will feature breakout sessions for these two groups, to ensure concentration on material appropriate to each group. The registration rate is \$525 per attendee for members and \$725 for non-members. For additional attendees from the same office, a discount is offered: \$475 for members and \$675 for non-members. Learn more at bit.ly/2018billing.

February 26 - 27, Atlanta, GA

July 23 - 24, St. Louis, MO

November 12 - 13, Las Vegas, NV

O&P PAC and Capitol Connection Update

The O&P PAC Update provides information on the activities of the O&P PAC, including the names of individuals who have made recent donations to the O&P PAC and the names of candidates the O&P PAC has supported. AOPA would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions in 2017 to the O&P PAC:

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE (\$1,000-\$5,000)

Robert Arbogast

Rick Fleetwood, MPA

Rick Riley

David Boone, BSPO, MPH, PhD

Denise Hoffman

John Roberts Jr., CPO

Jeffrey Brandt, CPO

Aaron Moles, CPO

Bradley Ruhl

J. Martin Carlson, CP

Michael Oros, CPO, LPO, FAAOP

Scott Sabolich, CP

Scott Schneider
Mark Smith, CP

Bernie Veldman, CO
Jim Weber, MBA

SENATOR'S TABLE (\$500-\$999)

Jeffrey Alaimo, CP	Tom Fise, Esq.	Jeffrey Lutz, CPO
Jim Campbell, PhD, CO, FAAOP	Elizabeth Ginzel, CPO, LPO	Martin McNab, CPO
Doyle Collier, CP	Michael Hamontree	Andrew Meyers, CPO
Jeff Collins, CPA	John Kenney, CPO, FAAOP	Walter Racette, CPO(E)
Edward De La Torre	Curt Kowalczyk, CO	Dale Sheen, CO
Thomas DiBello, CO, LO, FAAOP	Teri Kuffel, Esq.	Chris Snell, BOCP
Ted Drygas, CPO	Robert Leimkuehler, CPO	Ronald Snell, CP
A.J. Filippis, CPO	William Leimkuehler, CPO, LPO	Matt Swiggum
K. Michael Fillauer, CPO	Pam Lupo, CO	Frank Vero, CPO

CHAIRMAN'S TABLE (\$100-\$499)

George Breece	Dave McGill
Erin Cammarata	Steve McNamee, CP, BOCO, FAAOP
Rod Cheney, CPO, FAAOP	Wendy Miller, BOCO, CDME
Kenneth Cornell, CO	Catherine Mize, CPO
Joseph DeLorenzo, CP	Jonathan Naft, CPO
Mitchell Dobson, CPO, FAAOP	Chris Nolan
Traci Dralle, CFm	Curt Patton, CP
Arlene Gillis, CP, FAAOP	Ricardo Ramos, CP, LP, CPed
Eddy Gosschalk, CPO	Jack Richmond, CPOA, CFo
Michele Hogan	Ivan Sabel
Ralph Hooper, CPO	David Sisson, CP
Jack Jones Jr., BOCO, CO	William Snell, CPO
James Kaiser, CP, LP	Jack Steele, CO
Jim Kingsley, COO	Jay Wendt, MBA
Alfred Kritter, CPO, FAAOP	Jeff Wensman, CPO
Eileen Levis	Eddie White, CP
Sam Liang	Shane Wurdeman, MSPO, PhD, CP, FAAOP
Anita Liberman-Lampear, MA	James Young Jr., CP, LP, FAAOP
Elizabeth Mansfield	Pam Young

1917 Club (Up to \$99)

Lisa Arbogast	Elizabeth Hammer, BOCO, CFO
Vinit Asar	Steven Herrera, CPO
Gerald Bernar Jr., CP, LP	Betty Leppin
Frank Bostock, CO	Brad Mattear, LO, CPA, CFo
Lauren Anderson	Yelena Mazur
Devon Bernard	Joseph McTernan
William Carver	Kelly O'Neill, CEM
Tina Carlson, CMP	Don Pierson, CO, CPed
Robert Compton, CPed	Dewain Ritchie
Don DeBolt	Duane Romo, CPO
Esperanza Friedman, CO	Ashlie White
Ryan Gleeson	

These individuals have generously contributed directly to a political candidate's fundraiser and/or have donated to an O&P PAC sponsored event in 2017:

Lisa Arbogast	Teri Kuffel, Esq
Vinit Asar	Stephanie Langdon, CPO, FAAOP
Rudolf Becker III	Sam Liang
Jeff Collins, PCA	Pam Lupo, CO
Thomas Costin	Jeffrey Lutz, CPO
Don DeBolt	Michael Oros, CPO, LPO, FAAOP
Traci Dralle, CFm	Rick Riley
Thomas F. Fise, JD	Scott Schneider
Rick Fleetwood	Stephen Schulte, CP, FAAOP
Ryan Gleeson	Chris Snell, BOCP
Lisa Guichet	Clint Snell, CPO
Scott Guichet	Peter Thomas, JD
Maurice Johnson, CO	Jim Weber, MBA
James Kaiser, CP	Shane Wurdeman, MSPO, PhD, CP, FAAOP

The O&P PAC has supported the following members of Congress in 2017:

In 2017 the O&P PAC made contributions to the following members of Congress:

Sen. Tom Carper (D-Delaware)	Rep. Richard Neal (D-Massachusetts)
Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-Louisiana)	Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-Maryland)
Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Arizona)	Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-Pennsylvania)
Rep. Mike Bishop (R-Michigan)	Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-Ohio)
Rep. Brian Mast (R-Florida)	

If you have not already done so, please consider becoming part of the O&P PAC by reviewing and signing an AOPA O&P PAC authorization form. The work accomplished by the O&P PAC cannot be completed without your help. Learn more at bit.ly/oandppac.

Research and Projects

AOPA Co-OP, the Compendium of O&P

The AOPA Co-OP, a reimbursement, coding and policy resource, now has 248 active users. A recent addition to the Co-OP includes Almanac articles on associated topics across the website, which offer CE opportunities for members that may have missed these opportunities in the printed edition. This member-only online resource serves as a collection of concise, but detailed information with links to supporting documentation about the topics most important to our members. The committee of reimbursement content experts, formed at the beginning of the compendium project, which includes Mitchell Dobson, Elizabeth Ginzel, David McGill and Michael Oros, continues to provide guidance on content development for the Co-OP. The level of expertise provided by members of this committee adds tremendous value to this resource as we continuously update the platform with new content relevant to the O&P profession. The platform's key subject areas include: Medicare, Medicaid, VA, DOD, Commercial Payors, Data/Evidence, Compliance, State Matters, Good Practices and Trending Topics. The crowdsourcing component of this project allows AOPA to garner the vast knowledge and experience of the membership body, vet that information and provide updates to the Co-OP on a regular basis. Members can find more information and sign up at www.AOPAnet.org/co-op.

Prosthetics 2020

The AOPA Medical Advisory Board met November 14 and 15 at the AOPA Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. This meeting included a face-to-face joint meeting with the DME MAC/PDAC Medical Directors.

During the meeting the Medical Directors were given a presentation on the first major project from Prosthetics 2020, the RAND study, *Economic Value of Advanced Transfemoral Prosthetics*.

AOPA will continue its commitment to Prosthetics 2020 to ensure that prosthetics are properly positioned for the future value-driven healthcare economy with four key goals – (1) improve the future reimbursement landscape for LEP; (2) match appropriate technology to patient needs instead of payer forced lowest cost technology to all patients; (3) define new patient segments benefitting from LEP technology; and (4) separate the O&P profession from DME in the minds of payers. An outreach to the CMS Center for Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) relating to K-Levels is being planned.

The RAND Study: *Economic Value of Advanced Transfemoral Prosthetics*

The RAND Corporation released its comprehensive, independent, validated study that establishes the value proposition for prosthetic services to amputees in September. A press event was held at the National Press Club on October 19, with a presentation on the findings by Dr. Soeren Mattke. The study focused on advanced prosthetics, including K2/K3 comparisons. Extensive support from experts on both the AOPA Prosthetics 2020 Medical Advisory Board and the Technical Advisory Committee for the Rand Study contributed to RAND's larger research initiative. AOPA also enlisted Dobson | DaVanzo to expand their level of effort in regard to RAND's analytic and data needs. The final report, *Economic Value of Advanced Transfemoral Prosthetics*, has been published on the RAND website and is awaiting publication in the Journal of Neurosurgery.

Orthotics 2020

With the launch of the Orthotics 2020 project, AOPA has initiated a process to secure critical appraisals of the available scientific literature with respect to five topics: (i) osteoarthritis; (ii) stroke; (iii) scoliosis; (iv) traumatic spinal injuries; and (v) plagiocephaly. Stakeholder subgroups have been formed for each of these five categories, and the drafting process for RFPs is underway. AOPA is excited to transition Orthotics 2020 into a vital enterprise to protect the orthotic services upon which patients depend from attack by payers, and to begin populating a stronger research basis around issues on the value of the orthotic services we offer to patients.

Communications and Membership

Subscribe to AOPA in Advance

Subscribe to AOPA in Advance, a bi-weekly snapshot of the most important news for orthotic and prosthetic professionals, featuring news from Reuters, Medscape, the O&P Almanac and other leading sources. The brief also lets you know the latest events and happenings at AOPA headquarters, with constant updates from our coding and billing experts. Summaries are written by expert editors to save you time whilst keeping you informed and prepared. Now you can stay informed without having to sift through the news every day. You do not need to be a member of AOPA to receive this free newsletter. Subscribe at bit.ly/AOPASmartBrief.

2018 AOPA Leadership Conference

AOPA is holding the 2018 AOPA Leadership Conference which will take place at the Breakers, Palm Beach, FL, January 5-7, 2018. Attendance is limited to Owners, CEOs, COOs or other senior leadership of AOPA member companies. The event will feature presentations from Alison Cernich, PhD, Bill Stainton, and former Congressman Jason Altmire.

Mobility Saves

Mobility Saves continues to grow on social media, with over 21,200 likes on Facebook ("like" us at www.facebook.com/mobilitysaves), over 2500 Twitter Followers (www.twitter.com/MobilitySaves), and over 150 connections on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/mobility-saves).

Over the past few months, MobilitySaves.org has been redesigned to include a new homepage slider, with new video content, and new navigation. Included in the video content is Dr. Soeren Mattke's presentation on the results from the RAND study: Economic Value of Advanced Transfemoral Prosthetics. There are also new infographics associated with the data from that study, available on the site. MobilitySaves.org continues to be a tool to communicate to patients, practitioners, and payers that research on orthotic and prosthetic services affirms that mobility saves lives and money.

O&P Almanac

The O&P Almanac featured special Centennial content all through 2017. One 2017 feature, the Global Professional section, will transition to feature O&P researchers throughout 2018. The January issue will kick off the next Centennial with a look at the future for O&P and for AOPA, as well as an article "New Year, New Business Strategies for Profitability."

O&P News

AOPA has purchased the assets of *O&P News* and will be publishing it monthly beginning January 2018. We would like to share all things O&P with our referral community, including therapists, orthopedic and vascular surgeons, rehabilitation physicians, physical medicine, and any and all avenues that surround and affect the education, science, and business of orthotics and prosthetics. The new magazine also taps into a high ongoing demand for O&P research. With each monthly issue of the magazine, O&P News will endeavor to present the public with a hot, controversial, or other topic of bottom-line value, and a perspective from an experienced O&P practitioner. We hope you find it a thought provoking and informative new resource that complements AOPA's flagship publication, the *O&P Almanac*.

AOPA 365

If you haven't already, download AOPA's app, "AOPA 365". Beyond the Assembly, this app is also your source to read the *O&P Almanac*, review membership benefits, get current with Hot Issues, see how Mobility Saves, shop in the AOPA Bookstore, access the AOPA Membership Directory, and connect with AOPA through social media. Search "AOPA 365" in the App store or Google Play today!

Online AOPaversity Learning Center

Need CE Credits? Want to learn some of the state-of-the-art clinical practices advancing the profession? Wanted to attend the World Congress but had to miss out? Visit bit.ly/aopaversity to create an account today and begin your access to distance learning modules to both educate and help you meet your CEU needs! Recently released sessions include:

- Advancements in Osseointegration Technology for Amputees
- Power in Prosthetics
- New Technologies for Prosthetics and Orthotics
- The Triple Aim
- Cyber Security... IS IT SAFE? Be Prepared!!

Membership Update

AOPA welcomes the following new patient care facility members in the fourth quarter of 2017: LeTourneau Lifelike Orthotics & Prosthetics Inc of Beaumont, TX; North Carolina Orthotics & Prosthetics of Goldsboro, NC.

2017 Operating Performance and Compensation Survey Reports Released

Eighty-eight patient care facilities representing 350 full-time facilities and 77 part-time facilities, participated in AOPA's 2017 Operating Performance Survey. Members are encouraged to participate in these benchmarking surveys (FREE) to assist in developing specific strategies to gauge and improve the financial health of their O&P

business. The survey also helps AOPA develop a more accurate picture of the financial trends in the O&P profession.

Published copies of the final 2017 report are available at <https://www.aopanetonline.org/store>.

2017 Operating Performance Report: Member: Electronic Version \$185, Nonmember: \$325.

2017 Compensation & Benefits Report: Member: \$185, Nonmember \$325.

Mark your calendars for May 2018: When you participate in the Operating Performance survey, you receive the final published report (and a customized report for your facility) for FREE. Watch for announcements in the AOPA's online bi-weekly newsletter *SmartBrief*.

AOPA Polo Shirts – Now for Sale

Celebrate AOPA's Centennial with us by ordering AOPA polo shirts for your office! The shirts are black with a white AOPA logo. The material is moisture wicking, 100% polyester, with rib knit collar, hemmed sleeves and side vents. The polos are unisex but the sizes are men's M-2XXL. \$25 plus shipping. Order in the bookstore at bit.ly/aopastore.

AOPA's New Apparel Program

AOPA is partnering with Encompass Group, a leading provider of health care apparel to offer members special prices on customized polos, scrub tops and lab coats. Customized embroidery is available. For more information on products and available colors, go to www.iconscrubs.com. Enter access code: ICON-AOPA. Then enter your AOPA member ID, and create your user profile.

And Finally... It's Membership Renewal Season for 2018

It's membership renewal season for 2018. Your renewal assures that AOPA will continue to be your #1 go-to resource for coding, billing, audit and other regulatory issues impacting your O&P business. We are here to answer your tough questions, and to provide tools that will help improve the fairness of your reimbursements and audit resolutions. Whether your biggest challenge is receiving fair reimbursement, or running a profitable O&P business, AOPA is dedicated to helping you meet and overcome these challenges.

We hope we have, once again, earned the opportunity to prove to you that AOPA membership is one of the best investments you can make for your organization. As always, please let us know if we may be of assistance in any way.

Sincerely,



Thomas F. Fise, JD
Executive Director

2018 Calendar of Events **Learn more at AOPAnet.org**

January 5-7	10.5 CEs	Leadership Conference	Palm Beach, FL
January 10	1.5 CEs	Lower Limb Prostheses Policy: A Comprehensive Review	AOPA Webinar
February 14	1.5 CEs	Inpatient Billing	AOPA Webinar

February 26-27	14 CEs	Mastering Medicare: Essential Coding & Billing Techniques Seminar	Atlanta, GA
March 14	1.5 CEs	Medicare Coding Guidelines: MUEs, PTPs, PDAC, etc.	AOPA Webinar
April 11	1.5 CEs	Enhancing Cash Flow & Increasing Your Accounts Receivable	AOPA Webinar
May 9	1.5 CEs	Coding: Understanding the Basics	AOPA Webinar
June 13	1.5 CEs	Audits: Know the Types, Know the Players, and Know the Rules	AOPA Webinar
July 11	1.5 CEs	Administrative Documentation	AOPA Webinar
July 23-24	14 CEs	Mastering Medicare: Essential Coding & Billing Techniques	St. Louis, MO
August 8	1.5 CEs	Outcomes & Patient Satisfaction Surveys	AOPA Webinar
September 12	1.5 CEs	Medicare as Secondary Payer: Knowing the Rules	AOPA Webinar
September 26-29	30+ CEs	AOPA National Assembly	Vancouver, BC, Canada
October 10	1.5 CEs	Year End Review: How to Wrap-Up & Get Ready for the New Year	AOPA Webinar
November 4-10	Varies	Healthcare Compliance & Ethics Week	
November 12-13	14 CEs	Mastering Medicare: Essential Coding & Billing Techniques	Las Vegas, NV
November 14	1.5 CEs	Evaluating Your Compliance Plan & Procedures: How to Audit Your Practice	AOPA Webinar
December 12	1.5 CEs	New Codes, Medicare Changes & Updates	AOPA Webinar