



**American Orthotic &  
Prosthetic Association**

# AOPA in Advance

Breaking News for O&P Professionals

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## In This Issue

### O&P NEWS:

- [Continuing Haiti Outreach: How O&P Can Help](#)
- [Make Sure Your Company Information in the 2010 AOPA Yearbook is Correct!](#)
- [Kentucky State Senate Passes Licensure Bill](#)
- [PECOS Update: AOPA Writes to CMS About Problems with National PECOS File Access](#)
- [The Role of the SBA Ombudsman in Assisting with Some Types of Medicare Billing Issues](#)
- [Update on Jurisdiction B Post Payment Review Activity for Therapeutic Shoes](#)
- [Results of the December 2009 Business Conditions Survey](#)
- [Final Call for "Advanced Coding & Billing Techniques" Seminar in Atlanta](#)
- [Register for Tomorrow's Audio Conference, "Hints on Passing Your Supplier Standards Inspection"](#)
- [Business Education Award Being Developed](#)

### O&P RESOURCES FROM AOPA:

- [Prepare Yourself with the Best Tools of the Trade: AOPA's 2010 Illustrated Guide](#)
- [Check the AOPA Job Board for New Opportunities](#)
- [Are You Registered for AOPA's 2010 Series of Medicare Audio Conferences?](#)

### O&P INSIDER'S TRACK:

- [People in the News](#)

## Contact Us

or

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### Newsletter Feedback

We invite your comments and questions. Please contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

**Featured Supplier Plus  
Partner of the Week:**

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- [Send Us Your News!](#)

## O&P NEWS

### Continuing Haiti Outreach: How O&P Can Help

**AOPA** and the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists (AAOP) campaign to assist coordination of relief materials and services to the victims of the Haiti earthquake continues. In addition to donating \$15,000 to be distributed among Healing Hands for Haiti, Doctors Without Borders, and the Amputee Coalition of America (to assist with the costs of transferring used prosthetic equipment to Haiti), **AOPA** and AAOP will help coordinate an industry-wide effort by providing both the [AOPA](#) and [AAOP](#) Web sites to help bring together offers of assistance and aid to these amputee patients. This support will occur on multiple levels, including serving as a clearinghouse that will connect Haiti-based prosthetic patients with volunteer professional services and prostheses.

[Please click here and fill out this form to join this much-needed effort.](#)

By completing this form, members can:

- donate money to groups who are currently assisting survivors;
- donate used prosthetic equipment for eventual shipment/availability to survivors;
- patient care providers who are interested and willing to travel to Haiti as a volunteer caregiver may leave information about themselves;
- supplier/manufacturer members may register and indicate materials/equipment that their companies would make available for contribution to Haiti; and
- conversely, non-profit charitable entities providing relief services in Haiti can catalogue their specific needs for equipment and professionals to be matched with available resources offered by volunteers.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

[Back to Top](#)

### Make Sure Your Company Information in the 2010 AOPA Yearbook is Correct!

By now all 2010 **AOPA** members should have received a 2010 Data Verification Form, which displays the information **AOPA** has in its records for your company. *If you have not yet returned this form*, please do so immediately. This is every AOPA member's opportunity to make sure that the company's listing (address, phone and fax, email, Web site, and employees) is complete and correct. Forms were supposed to be returned by January 8, but many are still outstanding. Please make any necessary changes, or indicate that there are no changes at this time, and fax the form to AOPA at (571) 431-0899 as soon as possible.

If you haven't received a Data Verification Form, please call us at (571) 431-0876 to have one sent to you.

[Backto Top](#)

### Kentucky State Senate Passes Licensure Bill

Last week the State Senate of Kentucky voted 36 to 1 to pass SB 60, a bill that establishes licensure requirements for individuals who provide orthotic and prosthetic services. **AOPA** worked to support passage of SB 60 as the creation of standards that recognize appropriate levels of qualification of O&P care providers will help reduce the costs of potential fraud and abuse. As evidenced by a recent report from *60 Minutes*, wherein reporters found billions of dollars of fraud and abuse in South Florida,

enforcement of a strong licensure statute, such as Kentucky's SB 60, help eliminate this type of waste of funds.

[Click here to read a copy of the letter sent by AOPA to the President of the Kentucky State Senate.](#)

[Click here to read SB 60.](#)

The bill's next hurdle is the Kentucky State House of Representatives, where it must receive a majority of votes cast by that legislative body in order to be sent to the Governor of Kentucky to be signed into law.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

[Back to Top](#)

## PECOS Update: AOPA Writes to CMS About Problems with National PECOS File Access

**AOPA** joined with the National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics, the American Board of Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics and the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists (all members of the O&P Alliance) to author a letter to Charlene Frizzera, Acting Administrator of CMS, explaining difficulties with the newly released online PECOS national file. The major problems with the national file pertain to the formatting and presentation of the document. Organizations assumed the registry would have the capability to be searched and updated in real-time. Instead the registry is presented as a single downloadable, 13,000-page document, which cannot be searched unless one has purchased the full-version of Adobe Acrobat. Additionally, the document does not indicate when it will be updated besides a note that says it will be updated "periodically."

[Click here to read the entire letter to CMS.](#)

**AOPA** will continue to provide members updates regarding responses from CMS and, in general, on the status of PECOS implementation.

Questions? Contact Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0854 or Joe McTernan at [jmcternan@AOPAnet.org](mailto:jmcternan@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0811.

[Back to Top](#)

## The Role of the SBA Ombudsman in Assisting with Some Types of Medicare Billing Issues

Perseverance and knowing where to go pays off when disaster "Medicare style" strikes. Christie Michael, CFTs, of Reynolds Prosthetics & Orthotics Inc., in Maryville, Tennessee was aghast when notified their National Supplier Clearinghouse (NCS) number was deactivated. NCS claimed the original re-enrollment package had not been received. Christie resent the package immediately via priority mail so that receipt of the re-enrollment package would be confirmed.

Despite the human error, initial contact with NCS met with frustrating results. They were told it would be 45-60 days before a new NSC number would be issued which meant no way to bill Medicare for patient services. Christie filed a complaint describing her problem with the Office of the National Ombudsman at the Small Business Administration. SBA promptly contacted CMS requesting a high-level review and response. When CMS did not act promptly, Christie re-contacted Esther H. Vassar, the SBA National Ombudsman once again who in turn contacted NSC a second time. After that phone call the Medicare number was reactivated within about a week.

**AOPA** is contacting the Office of the National Ombudsman expressing appreciation and making other top SBA officials aware of our gratitude.

The Small Business Administration Office of the National Ombudsman is available to assist small businesses with issues involving unfair or excessive Federal regulatory actions. The Office of the National Ombudsman was established by Congress through the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act.

If your company has an issue that it believes represents an undue regulatory burden, the Office of the National Ombudsman may be able to help. Contact information for the National Ombudsman is below:

Esther H. Vassar  
National Ombudsman and  
Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Enforcement Fairness  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
409 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, SW  
MC2120  
Washington, DC 20416-005

The toll free number is 888/734-3247 or email: [ombudsman@sba.gov](mailto:ombudsman@sba.gov).

**AOPA** Board member, John R. Reynolds, CPO, is the owner of Reynolds Prosthetics & Orthotics Inc., and shared this "happy ending" story with the **AOPA** Board of Directors during their January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting in Arlington, Virginia.

Questions? Contact Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0854 or Joe McTernan at [jmcternan@AOPAnet.org](mailto:jmcternan@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0811.

[Back to Top](#)

## Update on Jurisdiction B Post Payment Review Activity for Therapeutic Shoes

Over the past 18 months, National Government Services (NGS), the Jurisdiction B DME MAC, has performed several post payment probe audits to ensure that suppliers are obtaining and maintaining proper documentation in their records to support the medical need for therapeutic (diabetic) shoes. In each instance, NGS has determined that the vast majority of claims in the sample they selected were missing vital pieces of documentation and should not have been paid. NGS has published several provider education letters reminding suppliers of the policy requirements for therapeutic shoes and has focused on the need for specific documentation in the referring physician's records.

Jeff Reser, CO, C.Ped. of Lee's Comfort Shoes, an **AOPA** member, has developed a form that may be useful in assisting referral sources in properly documenting the medical need for therapeutic shoes.

[Click here to read the form.](#)

The form has been submitted to NGS for review and NGS has indicated that the form is acceptable for documentation purposes in addition to the required Certifying Statement that must be completed by the physician (M.D. or D.O. only) managing the patient's diabetes and an order for the shoes signed by a physician, podiatrist, or other qualified non-physician practitioner (e.g. Nurse Practitioner, Physician Assistant, etc.). While the form does not replace either of these required documents, it may assist the physician in adequately documenting the medical need for the shoes.

**AOPA** has also written a letter to the National Ombudsman for the Small Business Administration expressing its concern that Medicare's documentation requirements for therapeutic shoes places an

"undue burden" on small businesses that provide O&P services. The Office of the National Ombudsman was established to assist small businesses in obtaining relief from unfair or excessive Federal regulatory actions.

Questions? Contact Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0854 or Joe McTernan at [jmcternan@AOPAnet.org](mailto:jmcternan@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0811.

[Back to Top](#)

## Results of the December 2009 Business Conditions Survey

The Business Conditions Survey for December 2009 revealed a drop in the total number of firms that reported revenue increases from 2008 to 2009 when compared with responses to the November 2009 survey. 64 percent of respondents reported revenue increases in December compared with 77 percent of respondents in November. Of the firms that did report revenue increases in December, 16 percent reported an increase of more than 10 percent; 20 percent reported an increase in 6-10 percent; 28 percent reported an increase of 1-5 percent. 8 percent of participants saw no change in revenues, while 28 percent noted decreases in revenue. Those reporting a decrease in revenue broke down to 4 percent reporting a decrease of 1-5 percent; 8 percent reporting a decrease of 5-10 percent; and 16 percent reporting a decrease of more than 10 percent.

When asked about comparing calendar year 2009 revenues with calendar year 2008 revenues, 68 percent of firms noted an increase in revenue: 36 percent of participants reported a more than 10 percent increase; 12 percent had increases of 5-10 percent; 20 percent reported an increase of 1-5 percent. Those reporting decreases included a bloc of 16 percent of respondents having revenue decreases of 1-5 percent and 12 percent of survey respondents having a more than 10 percent decrease in revenue. Only 4 percent of respondents saw no change in revenues from 2008 to 2009.

Firms responding to the survey also noted that compared with 2008, they did not notice a difference in the time it took to receive reimbursement payments from the federal government through Medicare (56.5 percent reported no change; 25.1 percent thought their payments were received at a slower rate; 17.4 percent thought payments were received at a faster rate) and state governments through Medicaid (68 percent noticed no difference in rate; 16 percent thought they received payments at slower rate; 16 percent thought they received payments at a faster rate).

Finally, when asked to forecast revenue projections for 2010, 20 percent of respondents anticipate a more than 10 percent increase in revenue; 24 percent predict a 6-10 percent increase; 24 percent a 1-5 percent increase; 12 percent predict no change; 12 percent of respondents think their companies face a 1-5 percent decrease in revenues; and 8 percent of respondents think revenues will decrease by more than 6 percent in 2010.

If you are the primary business decision maker at your O&P facility and are not receiving these surveys, please email Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org).

The survey results presented here represent a compilation of information received from responding member firms. It is not a statistical sample and is for use only as a guide. Information is also presented from prior surveys for comparative purposes. It is important to remember that there may be a different mix of firms responding in each survey. This would have some impact on survey averages.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

[Back to Top](#)

## Final Call for "Advanced Coding & Billing Techniques" Seminar in Atlanta

There's still time to register for AOPA's "Mastering Medicare: Advanced Coding & Billing Techniques"

seminar, which will be held in Atlanta at the InterContinental Buckhead Hotel on February 18-19. At this valuable two day course, you will:

- Learn how to code complex devices, including repairs and adjustments, through interactive discussions with AOPA experts and your colleagues;
- Join in-depth discussions on compliance with Medicare billing rules and documentation expectations;
- Learn how to assess compliance risk areas and deal with them;
- Learn successful appeal strategies and hints on avoiding claim denials;
- Join break-out sessions for practitioners and office staff; and
- Get detailed information on hot topic issues in O&P

Plus, attendees can earn 14 credits in two days.

Cost to attend is \$550 for the first attendee from a given location; any additional attendees pay just \$500. (For nonmembers, the cost is \$750 for the first attendee and \$700 for any additional attendees.) This course will also be offered May 24-25 in Pittsburgh and October 14-15 in Las Vegas. If you haven't taken advantage of this terrific learning opportunity yet, plan to join us in 2010, or send the staff member (or members) from your office who works most with coding and billing.

Seminar attendees receive a rate of \$175 per night (single/double occupancy) at the InterContinental Buckhead. Make hotel reservations by calling (800) 496-7621; mention code EU4 to get **AOPA's** group rate. This rate will be available to **AOPA** Members on a space-available basis.

Questions? Contact Erin Kennedy at [ekennedy@AOPAnet.org](mailto:ekennedy@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0876.

[Back to Top](#)

## Register for Tomorrow's Audio Conference, "Hints on Passing Your Supplier Standards Inspection"

February's Medicare audio conference, "Hints on Passing Your Supplier Standards Inspection," will be held on Wednesday, February 10 from 1-2 p.m. Eastern. Join **AOPA's** Medicare experts to learn:

- What questions do auditors always ask?
- What documentation will they want to see?
- What are my options if I fail the inspection?
- How do I prepare my staff for inspections?

Cost is just \$99 per line for member companies and any number of staff may listen on a given line. (Nonmembers pay \$199 per line.) Those needing CE can obtain 1.5 credits by taking the provided quiz and scoring at least 80%. Quizzes must be returned within 30 days.

[Click here to register.](#)

Questions? Contact Erin Kennedy at [ekennedy@AOPAnet.org](mailto:ekennedy@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0876.

[Back to Top](#)

## Business Education Award Being Developed

**AOPA** is developing a business education award to recognize the best business education paper, idea and/or proposal submitted for presentation at the **AOPA** National Assembly each year. This award is envisioned as a counterpart to the Thranhardt Award given each year to the best clinical abstract(s). That award is sponsored by Hanger and honors Howard R. Thranhardt. **AOPA** is looking

for a namesake as well as a sponsor who can make a 30 year commitment to this award. The sponsor should be prepared to contribute \$30,000 to an escrow fund to support this program.

The award will be promoted and presented each year during the **AOPA** National Assembly. The winning paper(s) will be presented during a general education session at the Assembly, and the winner(s) will receive an honorarium as well as an award.

The sponsor as well as the namesake will receive promotion in connection with this Award through extensive press coverage announcing the formation and sponsorship of the award. The sponsor and/or namesake will be invited to present the award each year.

Interested? Have questions? Contact Tina Moran at [tmoran@AOPAnet.org](mailto:tmoran@AOPAnet.org) or (571)431-0808 by March 1, 2010.

[Back to Top](#)

## O&P RESOURCES FROM AOPA

### Prepare Yourself with the Best Tools of the Trade: Pre-Order AOPA's 2010 Illustrated Guide

This easy-to-use reference manual provides an illustrated guide to the coding system in use for orthotics and prosthetics, including an illustration and the official Medicare descriptors for each code. Cost for **AOPA** Members is \$185. Cost to non-members is \$425.

[Click here visit the AOPA Bookstore and order the Illustrated Guide.](#)

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

[Back to Top](#)

### Check the AOPA Job Board for New Opportunities

If you need a position filled at your business or are interested in looking at other job possibilities within the O&P field, check out the [AOPA Online Job Board](#). In the past month the Job Board has been viewed over a thousand times. If you want people to find out about a job opening at your facility or are interested in posting your resume for employers to view for potential openings, visit the [AOPA Online Job Board](#) today.

And remember: if you advertise on the Online Job Board and decide to also advertise in the *O&P Almanac*, then you'll receive a 5% discount on the cost of advertising in the *Almanac* and on the Job Board.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

[Back to Top](#)

### Are You Registered for AOPA's 2010 Series of Medicare Audio Conferences?

Numerous offices have benefited from their participation in **AOPA's** Medicare Audio Conferences. These one hour sessions come to you in the comfort of your office on the second Wednesday of each month at 1:00 pm Eastern. This series provides an outstanding opportunity for you and your staff to stay abreast of the latest hot topics in O&P, as well as gain clarification and ask questions on topics that you may not understand as fully as you would like to.

Seminars are still priced at just \$99 per line for members (\$199 for non-members). Buy the series and get two free; members pay just \$990 and non-members pay \$1990. These convenient one hour telephone seminars are designed to fit easily into your busy schedule. Any practitioners needing

credit can get 1.5 per audio conference by returning the provided quiz within 30 days and scoring at least 80%. Billing staff and others who don't need credit nonetheless can gain information they will use right away. The topics for 2010 are:

- February 10: Hints on Passing Your Supplier Standards Inspection
- March 10: Billing for Refused/Returned Devices and Deluxe Features
- April 14: Documenting for Success: Chart Notes, Prescriptions and Physicians' Records
- May 12: New Rules for HIPAA: Are You Still Compliant?
- June 9: When Disaster Strikes: Implementing a Contingency Plan
- July 14: Medicare Appeals Strategies
- August 11: Medicare's Knocking: How Good Is Your Compliance Plan?
- September 8: Missed Billing Opportunities: Are You Billing Everything You Can?
- October 13: You're Going To Pay Me WHAT?...Hints on Managed Care Contracting
- November 10: The Ins and Outs of Billing in a Part A Setting: Hospital, SNF and Hospice
- December 8: 2011 New Codes and Medical Policies

If you miss an audio conference, it will be available on CD after the fact. Cost is the same as if you participate live (\$99/\$199). We hope you'll be able to join us for this year's series.

[Click here to register for any or all of the 2010 AOPA audio conferences.](#)

Questions? Contact Erin Kennedy, [ekennedy@AOPAnet.org](mailto:ekennedy@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0876.

[Back to Top](#)

## O&P INSIDER'S TRACK

*The Only Up-to-the Minute O&P Newsline*

### People in the News

Amputee athlete [Jothy Rosenberg](#) will donate \$100 to Haitian earthquake relief efforts for every 1000 fans on Facebook.

[Back to Top](#)

### Businesses in the News

[Ability Prosthetics and Orthotics](#) will be collecting devices for victims of the earthquake in Haiti at their Frederick, Hagerstown, Gettysburg, Allentown and Exton, PA offices.

[Essentially Women](#) will host its "Focus on the Future: 2010 Educational Conference and Tradeshow" in Louisville, Kentucky from April 19 - 21.

[Mountainview Prosthetics Inc.](#) announced the addition of CAD/CAM services to their fabrication services.

[Orthocare Innovations](#) announced its equity investment with [Schooner Capital, LLC](#).

[Ossur](#) announced its contribution of orthopedic products through [AOPA](#) and [Project Medishare](#).

[Back to Top](#)

### Send Us Your News!

The next **AOPA in Advance** will arrive in your inbox on February 23. So if you have a new employee or a new office, tell us! Share your news with the over 15,000 readers of the *O&P Almanac* and **AOPA In**

Advance newsletter. Contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org).

[Back to Top](#)

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