



## A TOPIC AOPA IS WORKING ON THAT IS IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF YOUR BUSINESS

### Aggressively Intervening in States to Counter Moves to Eliminate Coverage for Orthotics and/or Prosthetics to Medicaid Beneficiaries

#### The Core of the Issue:

Deteriorating economic conditions have reduced state tax revenues, triggering state budget problems that have put the major squeeze on state budgets. In turn, in several states Medicaid is one of the key areas that Governors and legislatures are targeting for savings. Medicaid represents a large portion of state expenditures, and assuming that the federal health care reform law is implemented in 2014, it is likely to double the number of Medicaid beneficiaries on state rolls. Multiple states have enacted, or are considering bills to eliminate orthotic and prosthetic coverage for Medicaid beneficiaries over the age of 21. Other states are considering broader reforms—shifting all Medicaid to managed care, and there are federal proposals to shift Medicaid to block grants with no parameters on what care needs to be included. All of these options threaten O&P businesses and the patients we serve.

#### Why Is It Important to You?

If Medicaid stops paying for orthotics and prosthetics, it would hurt the bottom line of most O&P businesses! Medicaid is typically considered the “low-pay” end of the payment scale (although interestingly, some recent AOPA-collected data shows several instances where, in specific states, Medicaid is paying more than Medicare for some selected services). There may be some folks who would not consider the loss of these payments as major, but we’re betting that’s the minority.

#### What Is AOPA Doing About This?

AOPA has been working very hard, both on the ground locally in states where these efforts are underway, and more broadly as a national initiative. AOPA has coordinated with local O&P leaders in Arizona, Nevada and Minnesota. We have used our PR contacts, placed newspaper ads, assisted with getting articles into newspapers, and in Nevada even placing a billboard urging protection for O&P patients. As the issue has gotten broader nationwide, AOPA has committed to a strong national message to underscore the devastating real-world impact these proposed Medicaid cuts impose on individual patients with limb loss or chronic limb impairment. Last month, we launched a new public service announcement on TV stations around the country that brings home the

message of the lost mobility. We hope that it hammers home to ordinary citizens the message, “I knew the economy is bad, and that our states have been in serious budgetary crisis...I just didn’t know that things have gotten SO BAD that states are talking about taking artificial limbs away from amputees!” The ad, which was funded by AOPA and released jointly by AOPA and the Amputee Coalition, is now posted on the AOPA website, and will hopefully be picked up in placements by major cable channels across the country. You can view it now by clicking through to (insert). Folks who respond are directed to the opportunity to send a letter to their state and federal legislators, urging them to act to protect these vulnerable patients with mobility impairments.

#### The Bottom Line:

So far, we have seen efforts to cut Medicaid payments to O&P patients withdrawn in Nevada and Minnesota. In Arizona, the legislature enacted a new statute to eliminate payment for: (a) orthotics for Medicaid beneficiaries over the age of 21; and (b) eliminate payment for microprocessor prosthetics for Medicaid beneficiaries. In Arizona, we continue to support a strategic effort to repeal their statute. Meanwhile, our TV PSA has seeded plenty of grass roots communications to legislators, the magnitude of which we are still compiling.

In closing, carrying forward the fight to assure that states don’t cut Medicaid payments for O&P patients is one of the many ways AOPA has allocated the resources provided by your dues investment to try to protect the the vital efforts of O&P for our members and their patients. We’re proud to fight these battles every day, and we work very hard to win the cause for you—it’s the right thing to do!

Very truly yours,

Thomas F. Fise, JD  
AOPA Executive Director