



AOPA In Advance SmartBrief

Breaking News

February 20th, 2014

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Spin the Wheel of Prizes at the AOPA booth in Chicago!

Will you be at the Academy meeting next week in Chicago? If so, be sure to visit the AOPA Booth #227 and spin the "Wheel of Prizes".

Prizes include: 2014 Quick Coders & Coding Pros, iTunes & Amazon Gift Cards, Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino Goodies, Complimentary registration to an AOPA Audio Conference and Discounts on AOPA Products... including the new **2014 Coding Products!**

Don't forget the Grand Prize! Each day one lucky winner will win a complimentary registration to the 2014 AOPA National Assembly.



CMS Announces RAC Transition & Refinements

On February 18, 2014, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that due to the upcoming transition of contractors responsible for performing Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) duties, providers may see a pause in RAC activities. As the initial RAC contracts are reaching the end of their term, CMS is in the process of reviewing responses to a request for proposals (RFPs) which will ultimately result in the award of new RAC contracts in the next few months. As part of this process, CMS will be consolidating the RAC contract for DMEPOS, Home Health and Hospice services into a single RAC contract that will provide all RAC services nationwide for these three benefit categories. Previously these services were performed by all four RAC contractors under the current contract model. CMS has stated that the reason for the pause in RAC activities is to allow the current RAC contractors to complete any audits already in process before the expiration of their contract.



In its release, CMS indicated that the last day a RAC contractor may send an additional documentation request (ADR) to a provider is February 21, 2014. The last day a RAC may send an overpayment notice to a Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) for purposes of collection is June 1, 2014.

While it is important to understand that this pause in no way reduces a provider's financial liability for RAC identified overpayments, as the new contractor will be able to review claims submitted during the transition period, it is important to remain cognizant of these dates. Any ADR requests received after February 21, 2014 from existing RAC contractors should be questioned as CMS has instructed the RACs not to send any new ADRs past this date. Providers should use the 30 day discussion period to challenge any ADRs received after February 21st. Remember the currently applicable limits of ADR requests for O&P, namely—we will be watching this limit closely for compliance once there is a new national RAC contractor announced.

Unfortunately, we do NOT know either the target date for the announcement and implementation of the new national RAC contractor. We would not expect that the delay between June 1 deadline for sending an overpayment notice and the effective date for the new RAC contractor will be a long one. We would also urge members to be prepared for the onset of some transitional SNAFUs and for the new RAC contractors to be very vigilant in eventually asserting its role as the “new sheriff.”

In addition to the announcement regarding the pause in RAC activities during the transition between contractors, CMS also announced several refinements to the RAC program that it intends to implement with the new contract awards. AOPA, and other provider groups have been continually pressing CMS regarding the need for major reform to the unfair, prejudicial, and unreasonable RAC program. While the refinements in the chart below represent only a small part of the reform that is necessary to fix the broken RAC system, it is encouraging to know that CMS has at least heard the concerns of AOPA and other affected groups and is willing to refine the RAC system in response to those concerns. The chart below is reproduced from and is also available on the CMS website:

Concern	Program Change
Upon notification of an appeal by a provider, the Recovery Auditor is required to stop the discussion period.	Recovery Auditors must wait 30 days to allow for a discussion before sending the claim to the MAC for adjustment. Providers will not have to choose between initiating a discussion and an appeal.
Providers do not receive confirmation that their discussion request has been received.	Recovery Auditors must confirm receipt of a discussion request within three days.
Recovery Auditors are paid their contingency fee after recoupment of improper payments, even if the provider chooses to appeal.	Recovery Auditors must wait until the second level of appeal is exhausted before they receive their contingency fee.
Additional documentation request (ADR) limits are based on the entire facility, without regard to the differences in department within the facility.	The CMS is establishing revised ADR limits that will be diversified across different claim types (e.g., inpatient, outpatient).
ADR limits are the same for all providers of similar size and are not adjusted based on a provider's compliance with Medicare rules.	CMS will require Recovery Auditors to adjust the ADR limits in accordance with a provider's denial rate. Providers with low denial rates will have lower ADR limits while provider with high denial rates will have higher ADR limits.

[A link to the full announcement on the CMS website can be found here.](#)

AOPA will continue to monitor developments regarding changes to the RAC program and communicate any updates to AOPA members in an efficient manner.

Questions regarding this issue may be directed to Joe McTernan at jmcternan@aopanet.org or Devon Bernard at dbernard@aopanet.org.

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AOPA 2014 POLICY FORUM

APRIL 2-3, 2014
Special Extended Program April 3-4

▶ You can make a difference.



RENAISSANCE HOTEL
WASHINGTON, DC





Policy Forum attendees will participate in enlightening sessions on topics such as:

- The Horrific RACs Era for Prosthetics, Where Are We, and Where/When (If Ever) Might It End?
- Emerging RAC Fairness Legislation
- Appeals to the ALJs
- AOPA's Litigation
- Research and Education—Appropriations, VA, DOD—Where Are We Now?
- Competitive Bidding—Off the Shelf (OTS), New HCPCS Codes—How Does It All Make Sense?
- Post Acute Care Bundling—Risk of O&P Being "One of the Many"
- Medicare O&P Improvements Act, H.R. 3112—curbing fraud and abuse
- Appropriations, Funding for Research & Education, S 521/S.522

Registration is open.
Make your plans now to attend the 2014 AOPA Policy Forum.
Meet your member of congress and tell them how:

Orthotics & Prosthetics *Mobility Saves Lives (and Money)*

April is Limb Loss Awareness Month

What better way to support the profession than to participate in the annual Policy Forum, April 2-3 at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC, with extended educational programs offered April 3-4.

www.AOPAnet.org

AOPA Hosts O&P Research Funding Briefing Webinar

Today at 1 p.m., AOPA hosted a briefing Webinar for nearly sixty researchers and AOPA members on the recently passed Appropriations bill that instructed the Department of Defense to invest \$10,000,000 in O&P clinical outcomes research. AOPA's consultant on appropriated research funding, Linchpin Strategies, LLC, headed by Catriona Macdonald, has been working on this funding effort for more than four years. Sen. Richard Durbin introduced the AOPA backed S. 521 – the Wounded Warriors Enhanced Research Act which contained the funding recommendations Sen. Durbin was able to include in the DoD Appropriations provision.

The Webinar, led by Ms. Macdonald, provided interested parties with information about the various research arms of DoD that might be in line to administer the funding and be responsible for identifying the specific research projects eligible for funding and selecting grant recipients. AOPA and other O&P industry sources expect to play a role in helping identify the most pressing and promising research opportunities. Sen. Durbin has emphasized how critically important it is that these precious research dollars help to answer the most important questions asked by clinicians in caring for persons with limb loss and limb impairment, and that the findings generated have a positive impact on patient care.



AOPA and Linchpin Strategies will work with Chairman Durbin and his staff to ensure that the funding announcement is issued, and grants are awarded in a timely manner before the end of the federal fiscal year on September 30, 2014.

The House and the Senate have adopted the essence of S. 521 when they accepted the proposal by Senator Durbin, and included in the defense portion of the budget bill a provision instructing DoD to invest

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Spotlight on Master's O&P Education

Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), at his press conference on February 17th, threw a spotlight on O&P Education and its crucial contribution to veterans care school of Prosthetics and Orthotics at the University of Hartford. The school is one of nine institutions offering a Master of Science in Prosthetics and Orthotics that is eligible for grant money for expanding their O&P programs. Senator Blumenthal became an original co-sponsor of legislation (S. 522) introduced by Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL), which provided funding opportunities for O&P teaching institutions. This bill has been in the works for four years under the direction of AOPA's consulting firm, Linchpin Strategies headed by Catriona Macdonald. Provisions of S. 522 (\$10 million in grant money) were subsequently included in the VA Appropriations bill, S. 1950, now pending in the Senate. AOPA members have been urged to contact their Senators and Representative urging passage. ([Read about the press conference here](#))



Go to [AOPAVotes](#) and [Contact your Senators or Representative to support expansion of advanced education in O&P!](#)

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2014 AOPA Policy Forum Dates have been Announced – *Make a Difference!*



April 2-3, 2014

Special Extended Programming Available April 3-4, 2014

Renaissance Hotel – Washington, DC

April is Limb Loss Awareness Month, what better way to support the profession than to participate in the Annual Policy Forum, April 2-3 at the Renaissance Washington DC Hotel, with extended educational programs being offered April 3-4.

The Policy Forum is your best opportunity to learn the latest legislative and regulatory happenings and how they will affect you, your business and your patients. Once you are armed with the facts, we as a profession will educate our Members of Congress to offer common sense solutions and share how the O&P profession restores lives and puts people back to work. Your Congressional appointments will be organized by AOPA staff and lobbyist.

Policy Forum attendees will participate in enlightening sessions, such as:

- *The Horrific RACs Era for Prosthetics, Where Are We, and Where/When (If Ever) Might It End?*
- *Hear the latest on CMS, OTS Orthotics, What the Statute Says on Minimal Self-Adjustment, What CMS Says, Competitive Bidding and/or Other Directions for OTS Orthotics*
- *Competitive Bidding—Off the Shelf (OTS), New HCPCS Codes—How Does It All Make Sense?*
- *Medicare O&P Improvements Act, H.R. 3112*
- *Appropriations, Funding for Research & Education, S 521/S.522*
- *Emerging RAC Fairness Legislation*
- *Amputee Veterans Bill of Rights, H.R. 3408*
- *Federal Insurance Fairness for Amputees Bill (H.R. 3020)*

Quick Links

- [About the Policy Forum](#)
- [Extended Education Modules](#)
- [Registration](#)
- [Location & Hotel Reservations](#)
- [Schedule](#)



The Policy Forum ends on Thursday, April 3rd with advocacy visits with elected representatives and their staffs. AOPA's staff and lobbyists schedule these meetings for attendees.

The low registration fee of \$150 and a location close to Capitol Hill make it easy and convenient to participate. Join us in 2014 to make a difference for the entire profession and, visit the monuments, the museums and all the attractions our nation's capital has to offer – all just minutes from the hotel.

[Register Now!](#)

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Extended 2014 Policy Forum – Education Modules on April 3-4!

To maximize your time away from the office, the Policy Forum has been reformatted for 2014 to offer you additional learning opportunities on important and pertinent topics. To make this experience even more beneficial, you can customize your schedule and register for the additional modules you are most interested in.



Module I, Thursday, April 3, 5:00 – 8:00 PM

A Closer Look at How Washington WILL Impact your Business. (Includes dinner)

- Understanding Congressional Appropriations, How Does Money Get Out of Washington for Research, Educational & Other Programs
- CBO — What is the Congressional Budget Office, How Does It Work and Why is It Important?
- Special Programs That Will Impact Your Future: ACOs, DRGs, Post Acute Care Bundling & CMS's Office of Innovation
- Let's Sue the Bastards: A Primer About Suing the Medicare Program

Module II, Friday, April 4, 2014, 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Special Business and Clinical Educational Program Begins: Coding, RAC, OTS Coding, Appealing to the ALJ & FDA Educational Program Segments (Includes breakfast and lunch)

- Coding and Reimbursement Segment (2 hours)
 - o Primer: Steps You Can Take to Avoid RAC/Pre-Payment Audits and Succeed If You Get Them
 - o New Off-the-Shelf Orthotic Codes—Guide to Avoid Becoming a Witness Against Yourself.
- Taking Your Claims All the Way to the ALJ: How to Do It, and Win (1 hour)
- FDA: Has O&P Awakened a Sleeping Regulatory Giant—Overview of GMPs, Unique Device Identifiers, Complaint Files and Central Fabrication Compliance issues (1-1/2 hours)

[Registration is available by clicking here!](#)

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Distance Learning Opportunities Through AOPA

Webcasts – AOPA offers two webcast series:

1. *Mastering Medicare: Coding & Billing Basics and Principles* contains nine modules is a recommended prerequisite to the Advanced Coding and Billing Techniques Seminar.
2. *Practice Management: O&P Administration Services* contains three modules, 1. Establishing an O&P Practice; 2. Acquiring an existing O&P Practice; and 3. Enrolling in Medicare and Medicaid.



Learn more at <http://www.aopanet.org/education/webcasts/>

Audio Conferences – During these one-hour sessions, AOPA experts provide the most up-to-date information on a specific topic. Perfect for the entire staff--one fee per conference, for all staff at your company location (\$99 Member/\$199 Non-Member). A great team-building, money-saving, educational experience! Sign up for the entire series and get two conferences FREE. Entire Series (\$990 Members/\$1,990 Non-Members). The fee is per location and there is no limit on the number of staff you can assemble in one location.

Learn more at <http://www.aopanet.org/education/audio-conferences/>

Video Learning Library – AOPA’s video learning library offers many different types of high level education. Clinical, business, motivational and more. Many of the videos have been approved for CE credits. After viewing the educational video in its entirety, complete and submit the quiz continuing education (CE) credits. On a quarterly basis AOPA will transmit the information to both ABC and BOC for those with passing grades of 80% or higher. Those not passing the quiz will be notified.

Peruse the complete library at <https://www.aopanetonline.org/education>

O&P Almanac – AOPA is pleased to announce that beginning with the January 2014 edition of the *O&P Almanac* you can earn CE credits associated with the monthly Reimbursement Page and the Quarterly Compliance Corner. Because of the highly educational content of the *O&P Almanac’s* Reimbursement Page and Compliance Corner, *O&P Almanac* readers can now earn 2 Business Continuing Education (CE) Credits each time you read these articles and pass the accompanying quiz.



Peruse the online 2014 Almanac Library here: <http://bit.ly/2014OPalmanac>

Take the quizzes here: <http://www.aopanet.org/publications/op-almanac-magazine/>

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Businesses in the News: OPAF Welcomes BOC as 2014 Silver Level Sponsor

OPAF, the Orthotic & Prosthetic Activities Foundation welcomes **BOC - Board for Certification/Accreditation** as a 2014 Silver Level Sponsor. This is the fourth year in a row that BOC has renewed their sponsorship for OPAF & The First Clinics.



“BOC is devoted to improving the lives of O&P patients. Sponsoring OPAF is a natural extension of our mission, as OPAF employs an innovative approach to reach this same goal,” said BOC’s President & CEO, Claudia Zacharias, MBA, CAE.

“OPAF truly appreciates all our sponsors as they make it possible for us to continue the good work that we do through the First Clinics. BOC understands that we are making a difference in people’s lives affected by physical and mobility challenges through adaptive recreation opportunities and possibilities” said Robin Burton, OPAF’s Executive Director.

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2014 AOPA Quick Coders Are Available!

With the vast changes, over 80 plus changes, to the 2014 Medicare codes, don't be left out in the cold!

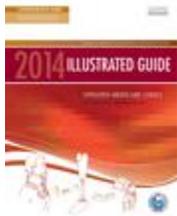
The 2014 AOPA Quick Coders are now available for purchase. The 2014 Quick Coders are new and improved. With the new and improved Quick Coder there is no more need to search through numerous pages of HCPCS codes and modifiers. All the codes and modifiers used by O&P practitioners can be located in a single compact format. The color coded sections allow you to rapidly find an orthotic code or a prosthetic code. The 2014 Quick Coder also includes a quick reference page for modifiers, each prosthetic code has its appropriate K-level functional modifier indicated, **indicates what items require PDAC coding verification and has the added feature of a quick reference tool for inpatient billing.**



The laminated pages ensure that the Quick Coder will hold up to everyday use and abuse. Its durability and size mean it can easily be stored on a clipboard, in an examining room or the front desk. To order your 2014 AOPA Quick Coder, [visit the AOPA Bookstore!](#)

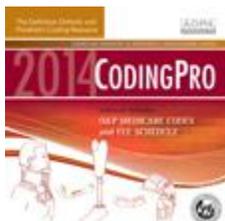


Pre-order other 2014 Coding Products Today



2014 Illustrated Guide

This easy-to-use reference manual provides an illustrated guide to the coding system in use for orthotics, prosthetics, and shoes, including the HCPCS code, the official Medicare descriptor and an illustration for each code.



2014 Coding Pro Software SU/NV

The Coding Pro is O&P's comprehensive guide to Medicare codes, reimbursement, and medical policies. This is the single-source reference for all your coding needs! The Coding Pro CD-ROM provides updated Medicare fee schedules for all 50 states and allows you to customize and import other fee schedules used by your office. Illustrations of the codes allow you to quickly sort codes. And writing prescriptions just got easier with the prescription writing tool. Network Version for use on multiple office terminals.

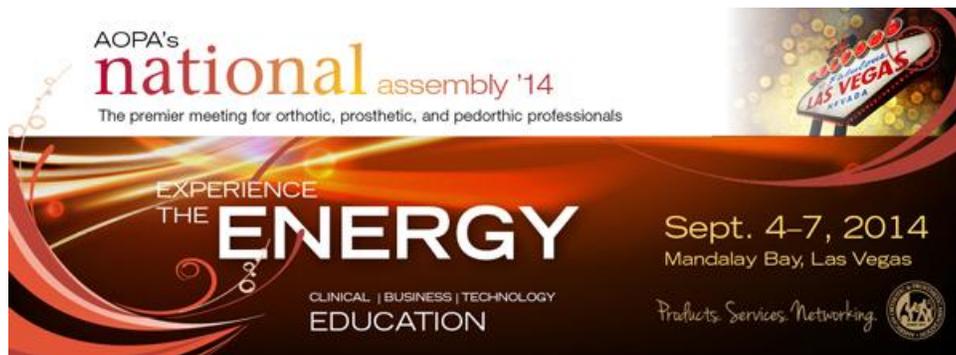
(Anticipated Delivery is March 1st, 2014)

[Visit the AOPA Bookstore and order your 2014 Coding Products today!](#)

[Click here to go back to the top of the newsletter.](#)

Exhibit at the 2014 AOPA National Assembly!

Share Your Expertise ▪ Advance Your Career ▪ Improve Patient Care



SIGN UP TODAY to exhibit at the 2014 AOPA National Assembly which takes place at the beautiful Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, NV September 4-7, 2014.

The AOPA National Assembly is the country's oldest and largest meeting for the orthotic, prosthetic, and Pedorthic profession in the United States. Expand your knowledge, grow your market presence, and advance your career skills at this unique gathering of high visibility and importance.

Exhibiting at this important event will give you the opportunity to:

- 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 U.S. health care reform, Medicare, and other 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.
- Learn how to participate in humanitarian efforts.
- Speak to AOPA coding experts to learn what happening with U.S. government has sponsored healthcare programs and what you need to do to sell your products in the U.S.
- Hear from top researchers and clinicians to learn what products and support is needed from manufacturers.
- Participate in key education programs and plenary sessions.

[Information on becoming an exhibitor can be found here.](#)

ALSO BE SURE TO STOP BY BOOTH #227 AT THE ACADEMY MEETING NEXT WEEK IN CHICAGO AND SAY HELLO TO KELLY O'NEILL.

Questions? Please contact Kelly O'Neill at koneill@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0852.

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The ABC's of Audits: What to Expect & How to Respond
March Audio Conference



Audits have arrived and they are here to stay. An auditor's job is to seek out questionable Medicare payments made in the past and recoup as much money for the Medicare program as they can. But where did they come from? How do they work? To answer these questions and many more, including how to prepare for an audit, attend the audio conference. Join AOPA on March 12th for a Mastering Medicare Audio Conference that will focus on the following issues:

- Learn who is auditing your claims and why
- How do audits work
- What restrictions do the auditors have
- How to identify potential problems
- How to handle an audit (documentation, timely responses, etc.)

The cost of participating is always just \$99 for AOPA members (\$199 for nonmembers) and any number of employees may listen on a given line. Listeners can earn 1.5 continuing education credits by returning the provided quiz within 30 days and scoring at least 80%.

[Register online here!](#)

Contact Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org or 571/431-0854 with content questions.

Contact Betty Leppin at bleppin@AOPAnet.org or 571/431-0876 with registration questions.

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Upcoming Events

March 2014

Mar 12 *The ABC's of Audits: What to Expect and How to Respond*
 Telephone Audio Conference
[Learn more or register online here](#)

Apr 2-4 *2014 AOPA Policy Forum*
 Renaissance Hotel
 Washington, DC
[Learn more or register online here](#)

Apr 7-8 *Mastering Medicare: Adv. Coding & Billing Techniques Seminar*
 Las Vegas, NV
[Learn more or register online here](#)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Get the AOPAversity Advantage!

AOPAversity



Distance Learning Opportunities Through AOPA

New!

O&P ALMANAC

EARN CREDITS
2.0 CE
PER MODULE

Because of the highly educational content of the O&P Almanac's Reimbursement Page and Compliance Corner, O&P Almanac readers can now earn two business continuing education (CE) credits each time they read these articles and pass the accompanying quiz.

IT'S EASY AND IT'S FREE!



Read and learn from O&P Almanac's monthly reimbursement column and quarterly compliance corner—you will now not only gain knowledge, but also can earn CE credits by taking a short quiz and receiving a passing grade of 80 percent or higher. AOPA will automatically transmit the information to the certifying boards on a quarterly basis.

The print version of the O&P Almanac is delivered to all AOPA members, ABC certified practitioners, BOC certified practitioners as well as subscribers. Additionally the electronic version of O&P Almanac is available online at www.aopanet.org/publications/digital-edition/.

Learn more at:
www.aopanet.org/publications/op-almanac-magazine/

AOPAVERSITY WEBCASTS

EARN CREDITS
1.5 CE
PER MODULE

AOPA offers two webcast series:

Series 1 > Mastering Medicare: Coding & Billing Basics and Principles contains nine modules is a recommended prerequisite to the Advanced Coding and Billing Techniques Seminar.

Series 2 > Practice Management: O&P Administration Services contains five modules, including topics such as Establishing an O&P Practice, Acquiring an existing O&P Practice, and Enrolling in Medicare and Medicaid.

Learn more at:
www.aopanet.org/education/webcasts/

AUDIO CONFERENCES

EARN CREDITS
1.5 CE
PER CONFERENCE

During these one-hour sessions, AOPA

experts provide the most up-to-date information on a specific topic. Perfect for the entire staff—one fee per conference, for all staff at your company location (\$99 Member/\$199 Non-Member). A great team-building, money-saving, educational experience! Sign up for the entire series and get two conferences FREE. Entire Series (\$990 Members/\$1,990 Non-Members). The fee is per location and there is no limit on the number of staff you can assemble in one location.

Learn more at:
www.aopanet.org/education/audio-conferences/

VIDEO LEARNING LIBRARY

EARN CREDITS
1.5 CE
PER VIDEO

AOPA's video learning library offers many dif-

ferent types of high-level education—clinical, business, motivational, and more. Many of the videos have been approved for CE credits. After viewing the educational video in its entirety, complete and submit the quiz continuing education (CE) credits. AOPA will automatically transmit the information to the certifying boards on a quarterly basis for those with passing grades of 80 percent or higher. Those not passing the quiz will be notified.

Peruse the complete library at:
www.aopanetonline.org/education



AOPAversity

AOPAversity is your one-stop resource for quality O&P education, developed explicitly for orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic professionals. Most education has been approved for continuing education (CE) Credits. Learn on your terms with one of our opportunities listed above!

Earn CE credits accepted by certifying boards:



Visit www.AOPAnetonline.org/education today!