



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

# AOPA's 2014 Policy Forum—April 2-4—Invest in Your Future...A Most Important Value for YOU!



**Y**ou are being sold down the river and you may think nobody cares. At least that what it may seem like sometimes when another RAC audit, another claw back of your hard earned money over the failure of a physician notation to dot an "i" or cross a "t" or the failure of an auditor to exercise common sense in reviewing your claim before denying it ruins your day. Never mind that it's now two years or more before you can get an ALJ hearing or decision. Never mind that patients who are used to timely service now have wait times that would have embarrassed us all three years ago.

Why is that? In part it's because O&P still has a huge amount of work to do so Congress and other policy makers understand the severe challenges O&P patients and providers are facing. The Affordable Care Act is prompting actions by CMS that are designed to find \$750 billion over the next ten years to pay for the Act's implementation and the expanded healthcare coverage for the millions of newly insureds. AOPA is fighting for you, for every member, every day, but now we need your help and your voice. AOPA needs strong representation from your company at the 2014 AOPA Policy Forum.

### The Core of the Issue

Medicare is threatening to put you and your colleagues/customers in O&P out of business. *If this isn't a fight worth showing up for, what is?* In a way it's like the teacher who keeps the whole class after school because the culprit who wrote those nasty words on the blackboard won't fess up. O&P is caught in the dragnet of draconian cost savings that are often being applied without regard to the law, the patient's welfare or the long term consequences of driving providers out of business. AOPA funded the study commissioned by the Amputee Coalition conducted by the respected healthcare consulting firm, Dobson DaVanzo, headed by former CMS official, Allen Dobson, which found timely O&P intervention doesn't cost. In fact it saves payers money. The study shows that over the long run by avoiding other conditions that often run up a huge healthcare tab, O&P care is cost effective. But, someone has to tell the story, someone has to demonstrate these results and someone has to convince the decision makers that getting people back to work, retrieving their quality of life and restoring their self esteem along with their functioning ability is truly a wise investment. That truly is the "care" in healthcare.

### Why Is It Important To You?

You and your peers along with your patients are the only ones who can really tell the story effectively and that's why the annual AOPA Policy Forum is the most important value for you. Each year AOPA members from all over the country come together for an intensive education effort directed at Members of Congress and their staff. The AOPA staff and lobbying team typically schedule more than three hundred appointments with policy drivers each year during the Policy Forum. You will find yourself being able to forge relationships with your two Senators, your Representative and their staff because you and other O&P professionals and patients make this day happen and you have the facts. AOPA and its lobbying team can provide all the briefings in the world and make all those Hill visits during the year. But, you are the voter, the constituent, the only one who REALLY counts. Only YOU can bring that final authenticity to the conversation, that convincing authenticity that helps make just one more person a believer in preserving the opportunity for the wounded warriors and other limb loss and limb impaired human beings to have a second chance at a greater life.

### What Is AOPA Doing About This?

January's Executive Director Letter outlined the "Mobility Saves" awareness program that is a building block to educating all O&P audiences based on the Dobson DaVanzo cost effectiveness study. It's aimed at patients, providers, referral sources, payers and policy decision makers. But also critical is the need to educate AOPA members and all O&P providers.

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That's why this year's Policy Forum has added solid educational programming that creates more reasons for you to make this trip to Washington. The traditional day of briefings on Wednesday, April 2nd will prepare you for your appointments with Members of Congress and their staff scheduled for Thursday, April 3rd. The visits will follow the Thursday 8:30 a.m. final briefing which will include a "Mock Hill Visit." A much requested 3:15 p.m. – 4:40 p.m., debriefing session will offer an opportunity to share results of your visits and identify any needed follow up.

But then, a special, separate 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Extended Management and Clinical Education Session will give you a closer look at how Washington will impact your business. You'll find out how money gets out of Washington for O&P research, education and other needed programs. Few understand the role and significance of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) but this special session will put you in the know. Then you'll get an inside glimpse at specific healthcare programs under the Affordable Care Act that will have a huge, bottom line, dollars and cents impact on your future: ACOs, DRGs, Post Acute Care Bundling and CMS' Office of Innovation. The final session that day is titled "Let's Sue the Bastards: A Primer About Suing the Medicare Program." This Extended Program requires a separate registration fee and includes a buffet dinner.

Another block of solution oriented programs beginning Friday morning, April 4th at 8:30 a.m., will certainly make your trip truly worthwhile. A two hour session on steps you can take to avoid RAC and pre-payment audits and how to succeed if you do get them is a take-away you can't afford to miss.

Then you'll learn how to avoid the trap in not understanding the implications of short cuts in using the new HCPCS codes applying to what CMS now deems off-the-shelf orthotic devices. One hour devoted just to the ALJ appeals route—how to do it and win, delivers another piece of this value pie. Finally, few understand and know how FDA has become a serious and threatening regulator to those providers not familiar with the Unique Device Identifier system, how to maintain complaint files and the know how for dealing with central fabrication compliance issues. This one and one-half hour primer will help you avoid serious harm. This Extended Program concluding at 1 p.m. also requires a separate registration fee and includes breakfast.

**The Bottom Line**

Self interest alone should convince you to be part of this upcoming AOPA Policy Forum event April 2-4. The expanded benefits of not only carrying your case to Congress but also to gain needed "how to" solutions for your every day challenges makes this an absolute "must do." Do yourself and our O&P community a huge service by registering today. Just go online to [www.AOPAnet.org](http://www.AOPAnet.org), click on the Legislative and Regulatory menu and select Policy Forum.

Very truly yours,



Thomas F. Fise, JD  
AOPA Executive Director



*You can make a difference.*

**AOPA 2014  
POLICY FORUM**

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



**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 Hotel in Washington, DC, with extended educational programs offered April 3-4.

Meet your member of congress and tell them how Orthotics & Prosthetics *Mobility Saves Lives (and Money)*

[www.AOPAnet.org](http://www.AOPAnet.org)

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

**WEDNESDAY April 2**

11:45 AM	O&P PAC Fundraiser <i>(optional event)</i>
12:30 PM	Policy Forum General Sessions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Horrific RACs Era for Prosthetics, Where Are We, and Where/When (If Ever) Might It End?</li> <li>• Emerging RAC Fairness Legislation</li> <li>• Appeals to the ALJs and AOPA's Litigation</li> <li>• Research and Education-Appropriations, VA, DoD—Where Are We Now?</li> <li>• Competitive Bidding—Off the Shelf (OTS), New HCPCS Codes—How Does It All Make Sense?</li> <li>• Post Acute Care Bundling—Risk of O&amp;P Being "One of the Many"</li> <li>• Medicare O&amp;P Improvements Act, H.R. 3112—curbing fraud and abuse</li> <li>• Appropriations, Funding for Research &amp; Education, S 521/S.522</li> </ul>	
4:45 PM	O&P PAC Fundraiser <i>(optional event)</i>
6:30 PM	Reception and Dinner <i>(included)</i>

**THURSDAY April 3**

7:30 AM	Breakfast and General Session
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Talking Points</li> <li>• Mock Congressional Visit</li> </ul>	
8:30 AM – 3 PM	Congressional Visits
Noon	Lunch
3:15 PM	Debriefing Session

**EXTENDED VALUE PROGRAMMING**

**THURSDAY April 3**

5 – 8 PM	Extended Value Bottom Line Programming/Dinner
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**FRIDAY April 4**

8 AM – 1 PM	Solutions to RAC, HCPCS Coding, ALJ Appeals and FDA/Breakfast & Lunch
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**Registration is open.** Register at [www.AOPAnet.org](http://www.AOPAnet.org). Make your plans now to attend the 2014 AOPA Policy Forum.