



AOPA In Advance SmartBrief

Breaking News

July 15th, 2014

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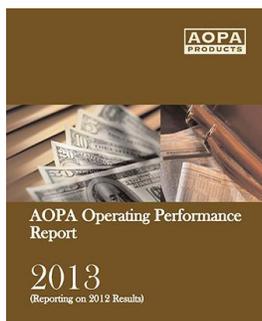
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Deadline Extended: Take the Survey & Get Your AOPA Operating Performance Report!



We know that we still have members who would like to participate in AOPA's annual Operating Performance Survey so we have extended the deadline to July 15. You should have received a copy in the mail from Industry Insights, or you can also fill it out online at www.AOPA-survey.com

All AOPA member facilities who participate will receive an individual, confidential Company Performance Report FREE that will compare your facility's operating performance against other O&P facilities of a similar size and location.

This individual company report, assessing the financial health of your facility, would cost several hundred dollars if prepared by an outside consultant. The individual report is AOPA's way of saying "thank you" for being a member and participating in the survey.

[You can purchase a copy of last year's survey for \\$185 \(for AOPA members, \\$325 for non-members\) at our online bookstore.](#)

Order Now

Oversight and Government Reform Committee Hearing on Medicare Appeals Reform



On July 10, 2014, the House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Energy Policy, Health Care and Entitlements held a hearing entitled “*Medicare Mismanagement Part II: Exploring Medicare Appeals Reform*”. The sole witness for the hearing was Nancy J Griswold, Chief Administrative Law Judge (ALJ), Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals (OMHA), US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). OMHA administers the nationwide Administrative Law Judge hearing program for Medicare claims and entitlement appeals under sections 1869 and 1155 of the Social Security Act.

In January of this year, OMHA announced that it had suspended action on new requests for hearings filed by hospitals, nursing homes, and providers. In a memo to appellants detailing the decision, OMHA estimated that the suspension would last approximately two years, but clarified that claims filed directly by beneficiaries would continue to be reviewed.

Griswold, explained that OMHA was established to improve service to appellants and to reduce the average waiting time for a hearing decision to the 90-day timeframe established in the *Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Benefits and Improvement Act of 2000* (BIPA). She said that OMHA was, for the most part, able to meet the 90-day timeframe that Congress contemplated for most appeals until fiscal year (FY) 2010, when the agency began to experience an upward trend in the number of requests for hearings. From FY 2011 through FY 2013, she said, the upward trend took an unexpectedly sharp turn; specifically, OMHA experienced an overall 545% growth in appeals.

In the hearing’s Q&A, **Representative Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)** suggested that Medicare audits have been disproportionately unfavorable to the orthotics and prosthetics (O&P) industry, particularly because reviewers at the lower levels do not consider an O&P professional’s notes in their determinations. She said that in many cases reviewers at pre-ALJ levels make invalid determinations because the notes of O&P professionals are not recognized as a legitimate part of the medical record. Griswold replied that “as a general rule”, OMHA reviews the same documentation as lower-level reviewers. Duckworth asked whether CMS and OMHA reviewers are communicating and sharing best practices when they identify trends, such as the consistently high rate of sustained O&P-related appeals. Griswold suggested she was not aware that O&P providers were unfairly treated as a group. Duckworth replied that over 100 industry professionals have been put out of business while “waiting to be reimbursed”.



[Click here to see Congresswoman Duckworth and Congressman Meadows question Chief ALF Judge Griswold at OGR Hearing on July 10, 2014](#)



Sign Up For The Final AOPA Prior Authorization Webinar Today!



Can You Spare 2 Minutes to Save Your Business? Send Your Comments to CMS and Sign up for the final AOPA Webinar on Prior Authorization! Hundreds of Your O&P Colleagues Have!

Reserve your place in the last FREE AOPA Prior Authorization Webinar and get the latest information on the Pros and Cons under the pending CMS Proposed Rule and how the proposal would need to change to have any prospect of being workable for O&P and our Medicare amputee patients. Find out what Prior Authorization means for prosthetic patients TODAY!

Excerpts From What Over 100 O&P Practitioners Learned On The July 8th Webinar:

- Q. **What about emergency situations, will you still have to receive a prior authorization?**
A. *Yes. The proposed rule does address emergency situations. You must still receive a prior authorization but the timeframe for a response is shortened to 48 hours.*
- Q. **What are some reasons that Medicare could deny a claim, even after I have received a successful prior authorization?**
A. *Medicare could still deny your claim based on technical reasons or information that was not present during the initial prior authorization review. An example of this would be not having a valid proof of delivery.*

Quote from presenter, Devon Bernard, AOPA: *"...the best and perhaps only way that Prior Authorization can be considered acceptable is if the final rule provides a guarantee of claim payment for affirmative prior authorization requests, an immediate cessation of audit activity, no delay in patient care, recognition of prosthetists notes as part of the medical record, and a timeframe reduction for communication of prior authorization to a maximum of 5 days for new requests and resubmissions.*

[Voice your position and send CMS your comments by the July 28th deadline by clicking here!](#)

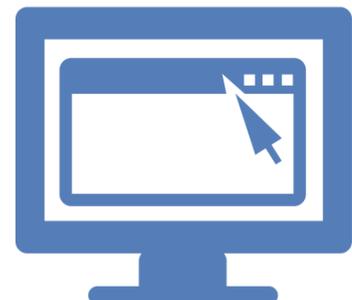
Don't miss out... A free AOPA educational webinar on this critical topic!

The last remaining webinar is scheduled for July 22nd at 1:00 PM Eastern Time. The content of this session is identical to the July 8th webinar, so no need to attend if you were on the July 8th Call. There is no registration fee, however we ask that you sign-up to participate so you receive the agenda, call-in information, & background materials prior to the webinar.

The GoToMeeting presentation sharing platform will allow you to view the speakers' presentations on your computer, smartphone, or tablet, and you can call in (and ask questions) with your telephone for audio (or use your computer's microphone and speakers). [Click here or below to RSVP!](#)

If you have questions, please contact us at (571) 431-0876 or landerson@AOPAnet.org.

[**Click Here to RSVP Now**](#)



Energy Level 110 – Over 110 Unique Presentations at the AOPA National Assembly



Energy Level 110! Over 110 unique presentations featuring hot topics for orthotists, prosthetists, pedorthists, technicians and business managers. Register today to participate in the country's oldest and largest meeting for O&P.

Learn from the best speakers from around the world, a sampling includes:

- Cordell Atkins, PT, DPT, CWS, CDE, CPed is director of the Diabetic Foot Clinic.
- Nicoleta Bugnarlu, PT, PhD is Assoc Prof, Dept of PT at UNT Health Science Center.
- Mark Bussell, MD, CPO is a Physiatrist and ABC Certified practitioner.
- Stefano Brunelli, MD is a Physiatrist at the Scientific Institute for Research, Hospitalization and Health Care (IRCCS) in Rome, Italy.
- Lori A. Dolan, PhD serves as Assist Research Scientist, Dept of Orthopaedics and Rehab at the Univ of Iowa where she is well-known for adolescent idiopathic scoliosis research.
- Marny Eulberg, MD has treated over 1,500 polio survivors with various orthotic needs and using various orthotic devices.
- Dr. Janos Ertl, MD specializes in Adult Orthopaedic Trauma and Sports Medicine/Arthroscopy.
- Andrew Hansen, PhD is actively developing rehabilitation technologies and performing research studies to evaluate effects of medical device user performance.
- Hugh Herr, PhD – a double amputee, is responsible for breakthrough advances in bionic limbs that provide greater mobility and new hope to those with physical disabilities.
- Jason Highsmith, PhD, CP, PT is a dual licensed prosthetist and physical therapist with a PhD in Medical Science from the USF Morsani College of Medicine.
- Troy S. Watson, MD is a board certified orthopaedic surgeon specializing in the treatment of foot and ankle disorders and arthroscopy.

Quick Links:

- [Registration](#)
- [Preliminary Program](#)
- [Hotel Reservations](#)
- [Questions?](#)

REGISTER NOW

Experience the Energy!

September 4-7 at the Mandalay Bay Resort in Las Vegas



New Dobson-DaVanzo Study with Amputee Coalition: Rehabilitation Hospitals Deliver Higher Quality Care, Better Results



A new study released on July 10th at a Congressional briefing hosted by Senators Tim Johnson (D-SD) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) shows that people with limb loss treated in inpatient rehabilitation hospitals and units had better long-term clinical outcomes than those treated in nursing homes.

“As this study shows, the timely, intensive and coordinated services provided in a rehabilitation hospital or unit help those with limb loss return to their homes and communities faster than skilled nursing facilities,” said Susan Stout, interim president & CEO of the Amputee Coalition. “Policy makers and regulators should consider this study as they make future decisions that could impact where those with limb loss receive care. Decisions should not be made based on short-term cost, but on where patients can most quickly improve their health and regain the functional skills they need to return home, to work, school or community activities.”

The study is the most comprehensive national analysis to date examining the long-term outcomes of clinically similar patient populations treated in inpatient rehabilitation hospitals/units versus nursing homes. [Click here to view the study, *Assessment of Patient Outcomes of Rehabilitative Care Provided in Inpatient Rehabilitation Facilities and After Discharge*, conducted by Dobson DaVanzo & Associates, LLC.](#)

Key Findings

Limb loss survivors treated in inpatient rehabilitation hospitals and units compared to those treated in skilled nursing facility patients, on average:

- o Returned home from their initial rehabilitation hospital stay **16 days earlier**
- o Remained home nearly **three months longer**
- o Stayed alive more than **2 1/2 months longer**.

Individuals with limb loss treated in inpatient rehabilitation hospitals and units also showed:

- o **12 percent lower mortality rate** than skilled nursing facility patients
- o **16 percent fewer emergency room visits per year** than skilled nursing facility patients
- o **43 percent fewer hospital readmissions per year** than skilled nursing facility patients.

“When considering rehabilitation programs, limb loss patients should carefully consider the results of this study to determine which setting is best for them,” said Dr. Terrence P. Sheehan, medical director for the Amputee Coalition and at Adventist Rehab Hospital of Maryland. “It is also important to make policy decisions based upon factual data about the value of the service to the consumer and to the public. This research study is important for policy makers to understand, because it clearly articulates the value of the care provided in rehabilitation hospitals for people with limb loss as well as those with other conditions. And every patient should be ensured access to the most appropriate setting that will provide them with the best possible outcome.”

NCOPE Seeks Nominations To Its Board of Directors



The National Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education (NCOPE) announced that it is seeking nominations to its board of directors. The term commences January 1, 2015, and expires December 31, 2017. Nomination forms are due by August 31.

For more information, including the duties and responsibilities, nominee criteria, and nomination package, visit the [NCOPE website](#).

Last Call For Technical Fabrication Contest Registration!

Gain recognition for technical fabrication skills by entering the third annual technical fabrication contest to be held at the 2014 National Assembly.

Compete with your counterparts from around the United States to fabricate a lower extremity orthosis or prosthesis that best reflects your interpretation of “energy” as it applies to prosthetics or orthotics. The projects submitted will be judged on ingenuity, design, finish and function.

Contest registration is required along with a \$25 entry fee. One winner and one runner-up will be selected in each of the three categories: Practitioner, Technician, and Student. All three categories will also be entered into the People's Choice Award--where Assembly attendees will vote and select their favorite prostheses.

- First Place Winners receive a \$500 Cash Prize
- Runners up receive a \$200 Cash Prize
- The People's Choice Award recipient will receive \$300
- A Trophy and Press Release announcement will be awarded to the school representing the winning students.

It's not too late to enter! Register today:

<https://aopa.wufoo.com/forms/2014-aopa-opta-technical-fabrication-contest/>.

To learn more visit <http://www.aopanet.org/education/2014-assembly/contests/> or contact Steve Custer at scuster@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0810.



*Get Involved and Spread the Word About
The Valuable Benefits of O&P Care*

You Know *Mobility Saves*—But How
Do You Spread The News?
Simple! Visit *MobilitySaves.org*.





Introducing The New & Improved O&P Almanac - Your Connection to Everything O&P!

O&P Almanac, The flagship publication for Orthotics & Prosthetics since the 1950s, turns a new page as the American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association reveals the new July 2014 issue.

[Dive inside today!](#)

Inside you'll find:

- New Departments
- Superior Education
- Best Practices
- New Member Spotlight
- Current Events
- Updated O&P News
- Earn CE Credits
- Key Information For Your Success!

Relaunch ▪ Redesign ▪ Renew

***QUIZ ME!* Earn 4 CE Credits on Pages 17 & 34**

Take the quiz here: <http://bit.ly/OPalmanacQuiz>

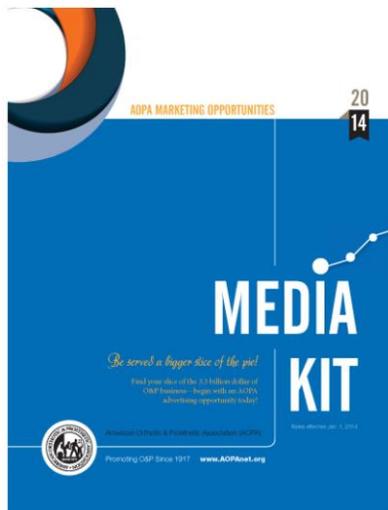


ADVERTISE WITH THE O&P ALMANAC!

Let AOPA’s variety of marketing opportunities help meet your company’s marketing goals. Each month, reach more than 15,000 O&P professionals, facility owners, and industry personnel!

GET CONNECTED TO EVERYTHING O&P

[Review the AOPA 2014 Media Kit here](#) or contact AOPA’s Director of Ad Sales, Bob Heiman, at 856/673-4000 or bob.rhmedia@comcast.net.



Last Call – Donate and Attend the 7th Annual Wine Tasting & Auction



Join the fun, the "good cause" and add to the continued success of the Wine Tasting & Auction by donating something special today! So, please take a look in your wine cellar for that special bottle or bottles of wine, which may be collecting dust, to consider as a donation for the 7th Annual Wine Tasting & Auction.

Don't want to part with your wine? We welcome other items of interest, such as jewelry, wine glasses, artwork, cigars, other spirits, etc. You may also make a monetary contribution (from a personal or business account) and one of our personal shoppers will make a wine purchase on your behalf, and our shoppers do take suggestions

[Please consider donating today! The donation form is available here.](#)

Thomas Jefferson said: "**Good wine is a necessity of life for me.**" and you are a necessity for this event. We cannot make it happen without your help! This exciting event provides attendees with a unique opportunity to mingle, network, learn about and taste a variety of wines, but most importantly raise awareness of and funds for AOPA's Government Relations outreach.

Why Attend the 2014 Wine Tasting & Auction?

For the FUN:

The auction includes lots of fabulous items – cigars, jewelry, vacations... *It's not just wine!* Increase your wine IQ during the wine tasting!

For the GOOD DEAL:

\$100 of the \$150 entrance fee is credited towards your first winning bid.

For the IMPORTANT CAUSE:

The wine auction is *the* annual fundraiser for the O&P PAC, the *only* PAC representing our profession on Capitol Hill. The O&P PAC contributes to the campaigns of members of Congress who share our concerns and support the future of O&P. The PAC provides increased access to members of Congress so we can tell our story and make a difference in the legislative and regulatory arena.



What can you do to make a difference?

Attend the 2014 Wine Auction, have some fun with your O&P colleagues and bid on some fabulous prizes, knowing that you're making a difference in helping the industry with its important legislative and regulatory agenda.

WHEN?

The Wine Tasting/Auction PAC Fundraiser is Friday, September 5th from 6:30 – 8:00 PM at the Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas during the 2014 Assembly.

HOW?

When you [register](#) for the 2014 Assembly, be sure to include the 2014 Wine Tasting and Auction Fundraiser special event in your registration and we will see you in Las Vegas!

**AFO/KAFO Policy: Understanding the Rules
August Webinar**



Obtaining Medicare reimbursement for AFOs and KAFOs can sometimes be a challenging and often frustrating experience. Join AOPA for an AOPAversity Mastering Medicare Audio Conference that will focus on the nuances of AFO/KAFO LCD and Policy Article and help you to better understand the rules. Attendees will learn:

- What documentation must exist in order to use the KX modifier on your claim
- What are the coverage rules for AFOs with ambulatory vs. non-ambulatory patient
- How to bill for repairs to AFO's and KAFO's
- When is it okay to use a custom fabricated AFO/KAFO
- Basic review of the major component of a Medicare medical policy



The cost of participating is 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.



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

Upcoming Events

July 8 & 22 *AOPA Prior Authorization Webinars*
Webinar Conference
[Learn more or register online here](#)

August 13 *AFO/KAFO Policy:
Understanding The Rules*
Webinar Conference
[Learn more or register online here](#)

Sept 4-7 *AOPA 2014 National Assembly*
Las Vegas, NV
[Learn more or register online here](#)

July 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	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!