AOPA In Advance SmartBrief

Breaking News
July 17th, 2014

AOPA Headlines:

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

Senate Aging Committee Urges Changes to RAC Payment Structure

Oversight and Government Reform Committee Hearing on Medicare Appeals Reform

Sign Up For The Final FREE AOPA Prior Authorization Webinar Today!

Energy Level WOW – High Level Prosthetic Education at the AOPA National Assembly

Last Call For Technical Fabrication Contest Registration!

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

OPAF Seeking Nominations for Board of Directors

Ottobock Announces Winner of C-Leg 15 Year Anniversary Photo Contest

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

Upcoming AOPA Events

DEADLINE TOMORROW: Take the Survey & Get Your FREE 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.
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:
- Returned home from their initial rehabilitation hospital stay **16 days earlier**
- Remained home nearly **three months longer**
- Stayed alive more than **2 1/2 months longer**.

Individuals with limb loss treated in inpatient rehabilitation hospitals and units also showed:
- **12 percent lower mortality rate** than skilled nursing facility patients
- **16 percent fewer emergency room visits per year** than skilled nursing facility patients
- **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.”
Senate Aging Committee Urges Changes to RAC Payment Structure

The Senate Special Committee on Aging on July 9 released a staff report on improving Medicare audits that recommended changing the way Recovery Audit Contractors are paid.

The report said the RAC payment structure is based on identifying and recovering past improper payments, rather than on reducing future improper payments, which “could be viewed as providing an incentive to keep improper payment rates high.”

To remedy this, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services could “explore ways to incorporate a RAC's effectiveness at reducing improper payment rates over time into financial incentive structures, rather than relying solely on the amount of improper payments identified by a RAC,” the report said. The panel issued the report in advance of a July 9 round-table on Medicare audits.

Click here to review the recommended changes to the RAC Payment Structure.

Oversight and Government Reform Committee Hearing on Medicare Appeals Reform


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
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.
Energy Level WOW! Experience the Energy in Las Vegas, on the strip and inside the Mandalay Bay, with speakers and topics such as:

**Advancing Prosthetic Care**
Friday, Sept. 6 at 3:30 – 5:00 PM

Differences in Energy Storing and Shock Adapting Prosthetic Feet in High Performing Transtibial Amputees: A Randomized Control Trial (C10A)
Jason Highsmith, DPT, PhD, CP, FAAOP and Jason Kahle, CPO, MSMS, FAAOP
Hear a unique, randomized, double-blinded study of prosthetic feet in a high-functioning group of unilateral transtibial amputees, many of whom are active duty military or recently separated veterans from OEF/OIF. Control subjects were local SWAT law enforcement officers. All subjects completed a military equivalent obstacle course to determine differences between prosthetic feet (functionally and subjectively) as well as differences with non-amputees.

Design and Clinical Impact of a Powered Ankle Prosthesis (C10B)
Hugh Herr, PhD and Mike Corcoran, CPO
Normalization of prosthetic ankle mechanics solves critical gait abnormalities experienced by amputees walking on level surfaces using non-robotic ankle prostheses. This presentation discusses the design of a robotically-powered ankle system, and its peer-reviewed clinical impact. The presentation also includes patient case studies to underscore the potential of powered ankle prostheses on amputee patient care. The case studies were conducted at the most experienced facility with fitting powered prosthesis, Walter Reed.

Weight-Bearing Pressure and Pain Outcomes Are Better in Lower Extremity Amputees Undergoing an Ertl Amputation Versus a Traditional Amputation (C10C)
Janos Ertl, MD
The Ertl Osteomyoplastic (Ertl) Amputation is designed to improve patient functionality and mitigate potential long-term complications following lower-extremity amputation. By sealing the medullary canal, the Ertl Amputation aims to re-establish intramedullary pressure and restore endosteal blood supply gradients in order to limit painful gait mechanics, improve end-bearing capability, and facilitate prosthetic use. In contrast, the traditional myofascialcutaneous amputation does not address bony stability.

**Quick Links:**
- [Registration](#)
- [Preliminary Program](#)
- [Hotel Reservations](#)
- [Questions?](#)
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.
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

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](mailto:bob.rhmedia@comcast.net).
The Orthotic & Prosthetic Activities Foundation (OPAF), serving as the philanthropic arm of the US Orthotic & Prosthetic Community has begun its annual search for individuals who would like to participate within the O&P community through service on the OPAF Board of Directors. Board members serve a three year term and are required to attend at least one of the two face to face board meetings held in conjunction with the AOPA and Academy national meetings. Additionally, directors are expected to be vitally involved in the ongoing work of OPAF & First Clinics with adaptive recreation and to take an active role with all of our fundraising efforts.

Nominees are needed at this time for at least two and up to four seats on the Board of Directors. More information and all nomination materials and instructions can be found on the OPAF website at: http://opafonline.org/about

Nominees should have an appropriate background, a history of 501(c)(3) nonprofit committee/volunteer work (preferred, but not required) alongside a familiarity with and dedication to fundraising, and a strong commitment to the primary mission of the Fund: to enable individuals, especially those served by members of the orthotic and prosthetic community-to enjoy the rewards of personal achievement, physical fitness and social interaction.

Nomination materials are due into the OPAF office by August 1, 2014. Please contact OPAF Executive Director, Robin Burton, or any OPAF Board Member with questions or comments about the nomination process and serving on the Board.

Kevin Flatt of Cookeville, Tennessee, has been chosen as the first winner of Ottobock's "C-Leg 15 Year Anniversary Photo Contest". Ottobock implemented the contest as part of the celebration taking place to mark the arrival of the C-Leg in the US in 1999.

The contest asks users of C-Legs or another prosthetic product to submit photos or videos showing how it has changed their lives. One winning photo or video will be chosen each month through November 2014 with the typical prize being an iPad or GoPro camera, and a grand prize of $1,000 will be awarded in December.

Kevin's winning photo captures him taking on the challenge of a rock climbing wall with his young daughter, Kaitlyn. A C-Leg user since the loss of his leg as a result of a dirt bike accident nearly four years ago, he shares why he is especially thankful for its technology and the effect it's had on his life.

"I was on a mechanical knee for a month following my amputation and suffered several falls. At the time, I had two young children and a third due in a matter of weeks and the thought of carrying any of them was out of the question. That changed after I was fit with my C-Leg and I knew I could trust its knee stability and stumble recovery. Now, not only am I able to safely carry my kids, we take on all types of adventures in the outdoors. I truly feel I can confidently do anything I did before my amputation."
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.
Distance Learning Opportunities Through AOPA

New!
O&P ALMANAC

Read and learn from O&P Almanac’s monthly reimbursement column and quarterly compliance corner—you will now not only gain knowledge, but also 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

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.AOPAonline.org/education today!