



American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association

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AOPA In Advance SmartBrief

Breaking News

March 26, 2015

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A Resounding Thank You to the Policy Forum 2015 Sponsors!



Policy Forum Scores Big “Ten”

AOPA’s 2015 Policy Forum broke attendance records, built stronger legislative relationships, marked the event with introduction of critical O&P legislation in the House and Senate and generated 696 member encounters with their legislators and staff. What a rousing success on all counts!

Breaking the 120 mark for member attendance represented a 20% increase over recent years and brought that much more energy and expertise to O&P’s efforts to get pressing patient care and provider issues in front of the people who can help make a difference. Those who attended did the O&P community of patients and their colleagues a huge service in moving the legislative agenda front and center.

Three fundraiser events for Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY), Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC) and Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA) offered an opportunity to thank each for their understanding and support for AOPA’s legislative agenda. All three gave strong messages in their presentations generating a more hopeful feeling in those attending about the future of O&P and possible solutions to the challenges encountered the past few years.

The briefing sessions on Monday prior to the Tuesday Congressional visits set the stage with the Rep. Brett Guthrie keynoting the opening session followed by a Mobility Saves presentation by Tom Kirk, Ph.D showing how tools on www.mobilitysaves.org can advance the message of saving lives and money. Allen Dobson, Ph.D., principal of the respected research firm Dobson DaVanzo, briefed the audience on the importance of Medicare’s own data proving the savings of O&P care offers the Medicare program, followed by a panel on VA issues, competitive bidding outlook and the role of post acute care bundling in Medicare’s quest to save money.

Another panel focused on RAC and pre-payment audits, ALJ issues, including a session on delaying CMS recoupment until a denied claim had an ALJ hearing affirming the denial. Only then could CMS reach into your pocket to recover an improper reimbursement.

Panel three covered pending legislation and offered a patient perspective from the Amputee Coalition and preparation for the Congressional visit. A video of an actual meeting with the key staff person for Rep. Ruppertsberger (D-MD) with AOPA president Charles H. Dankmeyer, Jr., CPO and executive director, Thomas F. Fise, JD was shown, followed by a another powerful video featuring a visit filmed that morning to Rep. Erik Paulsen’s (R-MN) office by AOPA members Teri Kuffel, Esq., and Rick Miller, CO accompanied by an amputee and an O&P student recruited by NCOPE. Twelve students attended the Policy Forum through a collaborative AOPA, ABC, BOC, NAAOP and NCOPE effort joined by another two student representatives sponsored by AAOP.

The Tuesday morning breakfast finale and preparation for Hill visits featured Sen. Charles Grassley underscoring the importance of the visits and his belief in the importance of the Medicare O&P Improvement Act.

Repeating the added value of making the trip to Washington inaugurated at last year’s Policy Forum was an extended clinical and business educational program key issues affecting clinical and business management in O&P. A special highlight was the Francis X. McGuigan, MD surgeon’s perspective on O&P and a session on who are your friends and enemies in the business context of partners and competitors. Wednesday morning wound up the education

portion with a coding and reimbursement segment presented by AOPA insiders, Joe McTernan and Devon Berenard, and an FDA and your business presentation by FDA expert, Pam Forrest, Partner, King and Spaulding. A final presentation by AOPA executive director, Tom Fise provided a five year look ahead and how we get the answers needed to preserve and grow versus de-valuing the core of O&P.

For Issue Papers, Talking Points, photos and other information related to the Policy Forum including templates for letters of follow up to their legislators for those attending or more general templates on O&P issues that can be quickly sent by any member to their legislators [click here](#).

Renewed Hope for Relief from Recent O&P Challenges – Medicare O&P Improvement Act

Seldom does a single piece of legislation do so much for a vital segment of patients and healthcare providers as does the new version of the Medicare O&P Improvement Act of 2015 introduced by Sen. Grassley (R-IA) and Sen. Warner (D-VA) in the Senate (S. 829). The House bill (H.R. 1530) was introduced by Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-PA) and Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA). Three of the four have previously sponsored versions of the bill and adding Sen. Warner continues the bipartisan support this legislation has always generated.

Introduction of the bills on March 23, 2015, on the opening day of AOPA's Policy Forum, paves the way for O&P's relief from the following patient care and business disruptions experienced over the past five years by:

- Curbing overzealous audits
- Denying payments to unlicensed/unqualified providers
- Recognizing orthotists' and prosthetists' notes by stating that they "shall be considered part of the medical record"
- Separating orthotics and prosthetics from durable medical equipment
- Resolve the illegal delays for appealing denied claims to the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ), by adjustments to the recoupment policy
- Offering voluntary negotiation process to provide a prompt equitable settlement such as made available to hospitals
- Requiring CMS to separate appeals process data so O&P claim outcomes are tracked and reported separately from other DME claims
- Mandating CMS to adhere to the statutory definition of off the shelf orthotics eligible for competitive bidding as only being those needing "minimal self adjustment" by the patient, and no other person.

[Click here](#) to view the bills and talking points.

But That's Not All – Rep. Meadows (R-NC) introduced H. R. 1526 – The Medicare Audit Improvement Act of 2015!

Improvements to the existing chaotic RAC audit situation is exactly what Rep. Meadows' bill accomplishes through provisions that recognize that the orthotists' and prosthetists' notes

“shall be considered as part of the medical record of the individual.” The bill also requires CMS to separately report determinations made on O&P claim denials/appeals as well as the HCPCS codes accounting for the greatest number of determinations and the total dollars involved. Under the bill no more than “half of the amount of any payments made” to a qualified supplier may be recouped before that appeals process for such a claim is treated as exhausted.

Joining as a co-sponsor of the Medicare O&P Improvement Act (S. 829) should be the “ask” to your Senator and joining as a co-sponsor for the House version (H.R. 1530) and the Medicare Audit Improvement Act of 2015 (H.R. 1526) should be the “ask” to your representative. [Click here](#) to access template letters for all three bills, and talking points.

ABC Introduces Digital Credentialing for All Certifees

The American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics, Inc. (ABC) is now providing its certified individuals with a new way to electronically communicate their ABC certification through the use of digital badges. ABC has made this service available at no cost to its certifees in hopes that it will help individuals promote their accomplishments and the value of their ABC credential.

Digital badges have emerged as the newest method of communicating achievements and capability on social media, emails, websites and electronic resumes. In addition, digital badges protect the integrity of the credential by providing a link to verified and secured data from ABC that cannot be falsified.

HOPE Careers Consortium Curriculum Review Program

The HOPE Careers Consortium is a partnership of five US colleges and universities whose mission is to create significant academic contributions to the field of orthotics and prosthetics. The Consortium is the recipient of an \$11.1M TAACCCT (Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training) grant through the US Department of Labor.

The HOPE Careers Consortium is searching for professionals who work in the field of orthotics and prosthetics to review curriculum for its federally funded program.

For more in depth details, [click here](#).

AOPAversity

The AOPA Coding Experts are Coming to Seattle April 13-14!

The world of coding and billing has changed dramatically in the last few years. The AOPA experts are here for you! The Coding & Billing Seminar will teach you the most up-to-date information to advance your O&P practitioners' and billing staff's coding knowledge.

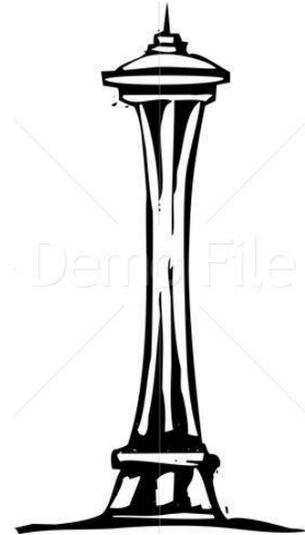
The seminar includes hands-on breakout sessions, where you will practice coding complex devices, including repairs and adjustments. Breakouts are tailored specifically for practitioners and billing staff. Start the year off right for your business, staff, and patients!

Join your Colleagues April 13 & 14 in Seattle, WA!

Top 10 Reasons to Attend

1. **Get Your Claims PAID**
2. **Increase Your Company's Bottom Line**
3. **Stay Up-To-Date On Billing Medicare**
4. **Code Complex Devices**
5. **Earn 14 CE Credits**
6. **Learn About Audit Updates**
7. **Overtturn Denials**
8. **Submit YOUR Specific Questions Ahead of Time**
9. **Advance Your Career**
10. **AOPA Coding & Billing Experts with over 70 Years of Combined Experience**

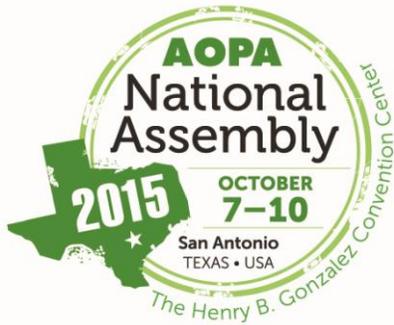
Don't miss the opportunity to experience two jam-packed days of valuable O&P coding and billing information. [Learn more and see the rest of the year's schedule here.](#)



Seattle is two cities in one—it combines a world-class metropolis within wild, beautiful, natural surroundings. Visitors and Seattleites enjoy Seattle's lively downtown, great shopping, wonderful restaurants, espresso carts on every corner, and thriving community full of live theatre and museums.

Seattle, Washington
April 13-14

National Assembly 2015 Paper Deadline Monday!



Become a Presenter at the 2015 AOPA National Assembly
Share Your Expertise * Advance Your Career * Improve
Patient Care

Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas
October 7-10, 2015

The submission deadline ~ Monday, March 30.

AOPA is seeking high-quality education presentations for the 98th Annual AOPA National Assembly. Share your expertise and advance your career by being part of the country's oldest and largest meeting for the orthotic,

prosthetic and pedorthic profession.

Your submissions, based on sound research and strong empirical data, will set the stage for a broad curriculum of highly valued clinical and scientific offerings at the 2015 AOPA National Assembly. All free paper abstracts for the 2015 AOPA National Assembly must be submitted electronically. Abstracts submitted by e-mail or fax will not be considered. All abstracts will be considered for both podium and poster presentations. The review committee will grade each submission via a blind review process, based on the criteria below and reach a decision regarding acceptance of abstracts.

- Relevance, level of interest in topic
- Quality of Scientific Content
- Quality of Clinical Content
-

Clinical Free Papers – Those wishing to present an Orthotic, Prosthetic or Pedorthic Free Paper should [submit here](#) to have their paper considered for presentation at the 2015 Assembly. The top scoring papers will compete for the prestigious Thranhardt Award.

Technician Program – If you would like your Technical education paper considered for submission in the Technical Track, please to [submit your paper here](#).

Business Education Program – Please [submit your business education paper here](#). The top papers will be considered for the prestigious Sam E. Hamontree, CP (E) Business Education Award.

Symposia – If you are interested in organizing a Symposium, then please [submit here](#).

For further information, contact Tina at (571) 431-0808 or tmoran@AOPAnet.org

Exhibit at the 2015 AOPA National Assembly in San Antonio, TX

AOPA is currently accepting exhibit applications for the 2015 AOPA National Assembly, which is due to take place in San Antonio, TX on October 7-10, 2014. The Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center will serve as the event's venue. This event, the oldest and largest of its kind in the United States, will feature dedicated tracks of the most relevant education for prosthetists, orthotists, technicians, pedorthists and business managers.

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

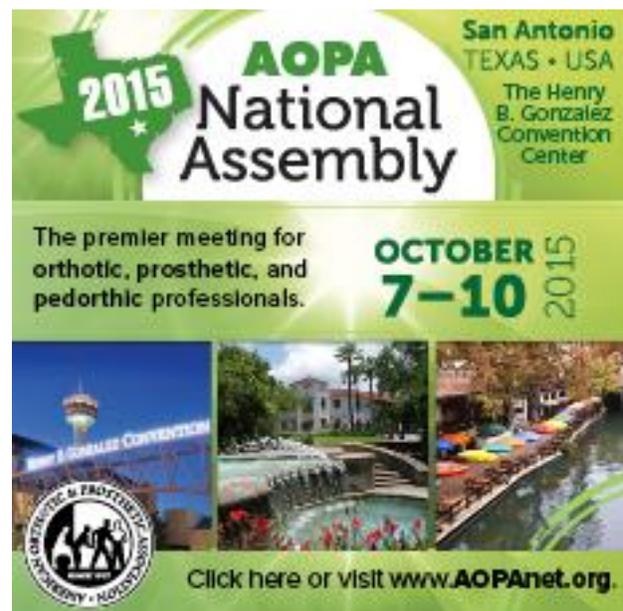
- Build your customer base and increase sales by meeting with Owners who actually make the final decisions on purchases.
- Experience face-to-face time with existing customers to answer questions and build new relationships.
- Enjoy sponsored networking opportunities, including an opening reception in the exhibit hall.
- Take advantage of fun traffic-building opportunities.
- Take advantage of education sessions to learn what's happening with 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.
- Speak to AOPA reimbursement experts, who can answer all your O&P coding, reimbursement and compliance questions.
- Hear from top researchers and clinicians to learn what products and support is needed from manufacturers.
- Participate in key education programs and plenary sessions.

Who Attends? Obtain access to key decision makers:

O&P Practitioners, pedorthists, physicians, technicians, fitters, students, educational instructors, facility owners, marketing personnel, physical therapists, residents, office managers, billing specialists, occupational therapists, researchers, engineers, manufacturers, distributors and suppliers of O&P products and services.

As an exhibitor you will receive:

- 24 hour perimeter security guard service.
- FREE breakfast and lunch.
- Exhibitor Service Kit—Exhibitors will receive two sets of information. The first will be the Exhibitor Confirmation Packet that contains your booth assignment, payment confirmation, and additional materials. The second set of information is the Exhibitor Service Kit which is an online guide provided by Freeman Decorating that includes all information and order forms you need to plan a successful trade show event; to include shipping



information, booth rental, electric and internet needs.

- Exhibitor Newsletters—provide you with up to date information regarding the show.
- Complimentary exhibitor company listing on the National Assembly website, O&P Almanac, show APP and 2015 National Assembly Preliminary Program.
- Opening night reception for all attendees held in the exhibit hall
- Post-event registration mailing list of all National Assembly attendees.
- Two exhibitor full conference badges (per 10x10 exhibit space) which include: admission to all education sessions, CE credits, meeting materials, social functions, and lunch tickets.
- Private lounge area exclusive to exhibitors.

Sign up today to exhibit at the 2015 AOPA National Assembly!

Upcoming AOPA Events

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| March 30, 2015 | <i>Deadline for National Assembly Call for Papers</i>
Learn more and apply online here |
| April 8, 2015 | <i>Lower-Limb Prosthesis Policy: Learn the Policy Inside and Out</i>
Webinar Conference
Learn more or register online here |
| April 13-14 | <i>Essential Coding & Billing Techniques Seminar</i>
Seattle, WA
Learn more or register online here |
| May 13, 2015 | <i>The New Player In Town: Understand How the RAC Contract Works</i>
Webinar Conference
Learn more or register online here |