



American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association

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AOPA In Advance SmartBrief

Breaking News

July 21, 2016

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RAC Audits Placed on Hiatus Again

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have notified the four existing RAC contractors that as a result of the upcoming award of new RAC contracts, current RAC audit activity will be placed on hiatus to allow the RACs to complete their open audits prior to the completion of their contracts. CMS has provided the following dates to the RAC contractors regarding current audits.

- May 16, 2016 - the last day that a Recovery Auditor could send Additional Documentation Request (ADR) letters or semi-automated notification letters.
- July 29, 2016 - the last day that a Recovery Auditor may send notification of an improper payment to providers. This includes sending a review results letter or no findings letter, and/or providing a portal notification to each provider.
- August 28, 2016 - Recovery Auditors will complete all discussion periods that are in process by this date. Recovery Auditors continue to be required to hold claims for 30 days, starting with the date of the improper payment notification (via letter or portal) to the provider, to allow for discussion period requests.
- October 1, 2016 - the last day a Recovery Auditor may send claim adjustment files to the MACs.

While this is good news for O&P providers in the short term, it is not a signal that the RACs are going away any time soon. It is simply a pause to allow for a smooth transition to new RAC

contractors, including the single, national RAC contractor that will focus on claims for DMEPOS, Home Health, and Hospice services. While this announcement may result in a temporary slowdown of RAC activity, it is important to remember that claims that are submitted today may be selected for audit by RAC contractors in the future.

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

Bureau of Labor and Statistics Releases CPI-U Update

On July 15, 2016, the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) released its latest update on the Consumer Pricing Index for Urban Areas (CPI-U). From June 2015 through June 2016 the CPI-U increased by 1.0%. This figure is relevant to O&P providers because it is used as the base for determining the adjustment for the 2017 Medicare DMEPOS fee schedule. While the CPI-U increased by 1.0%, the Affordable Care Act, beginning in 2011, introduced a second factor that is used to determine the annual DMEPOS fee schedule, the Multi-Factor Productivity (MPF) Adjustment. The MPF is not expected to be released until later in the year, usually in November.

The combination of the CPI-U increase or decrease and the MPF adjustment determines the annual update to the Medicare DMEPOS fee schedule. What this means is that the CPI-U of 1.0% minus the yet to be determined MPF adjustment will result in the update to the DMEPOS fee schedule that will be implemented for Medicare claims with a date of service on or after January 1, 2017. The MPF adjustment was -1.2% in 2011, 0.9% in 2012, 0.8% in 2013, 0.6% in 2014, and 0.5% in 2015. While the MPF adjustment has been trending downward, there is no guarantee that it will continue to do so in 2016.

AOPA will monitor the BLS website for news regarding the MPF adjustment and will notify AOPA members as soon as it is released.

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

Contact Your Representative to Support the Medicare O&P Improvement Act

We need your help in urging support for S. 829/HR 1530: The Medicare O&P Improvements Act. This bi-partisan bill that provides common sense solutions to reduce fraud. AOPA Executive Director Tom Fise has been meeting with legislators on the Hill to urge their support, but they need to hear from constituents. [Read the full bill here.](#)

These are some of the provisions included in the bill:

- Requires Medicare to reimburse only those orthotic and prosthetic providers who are licensed (in states that require licensure) or accredited (applicable in all non-licensure states) to provide orthoses and prostheses
- Recognizes the value of the Orthotist's or Prosthetist's Notes in the Medical record;
- Assures due process rights to improve proper Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) time frames;
- Reinstates and clarifies the statutory definition of "Minimal Self Adjustment" for Off-the-Shelf Orthoses to protect Medicare beneficiaries;
- Distinguishes Orthotists and Prosthetists from Suppliers of Durable Medical Equipment (DME);
- Requires greater transparency and granularity in CMS data availability about audit outcomes.

[Send a letter to Congress showing your support.](#)

Save \$30 off the 2016 Illustrated Guide

Let's celebrate 30 years of the easy-to-use reference manual, AOPA's Illustrated Guide, with a \$30 off sale! The guide covers orthotics, prosthetics, and shoes, and includes the official HCPCS for the official Medicare descriptor and an illustration of each code. And now it is \$30 off until August 30th! [Click here](#) to purchase your Illustrated Guide today!

AOPA Announces Winners of 2016-2017 Pilot Grant Awards

The Center for O&P Learning (COPL), in conjunction with AOPA, solicited proposals to fund O&P research with grants of up to \$15,000. A record 27 proposals were received in response to the request for proposals, and the board took the extraordinary step of choosing seven projects to fund, instead of the usual 3-4 projects. The previous years' projects, dating back to 2009, are available for review on [AOPA's website](#).

The 2016-2017 Grant Winners are as follows:

- Walter Lee Childers, PhD, MSPO, CP, *Stumble recovery mechanisms utilized by people using different types of microprocessor knees*
- Kenton Kaufman, PhD, PE, *Risk factors and costs associated with secondary health conditions of individuals with above-knee amputations*
- Staci Shearin, PT, NCS, *Impact of Carbon Fibre AFOs on gait and resulting changes in quality of life across time in persons with PD*
- Nicholas LeCursi, CO, *Relative influence of orthotic support features within an open frame AFO versus a total contact AFO on function, endurance, and activity level in patients with spastic equinovarus secondary to chronic stroke*
- Ignacio Gaunaurd, PhD, MSPT, *Utilizing an innovative Timed-Up-and-Go test for fall risk detection in people with unilateral lower limb loss*
- Sai Vikas Yalla, PhD, *Activity Based Quality Life Assessment to Compare Prostheses with and without Microcontrollers in Transfemoral Amputees*
- Shane Wurdeman, PhD, MSPO, CP, FAAOP, *Improved mobility with lower limb prostheses: the establishment of a national multi-site outcomes database*

AOPA Announces Thomas Watson, CP as 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award Winner



Congrats to Tom Watson, CP of Tom Watson's P&O Lab! He is the 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award winner, to be honored at [#aopa2016](#) National Assembly. He has run a successful business, been mayor of Owensboro, KY, past president of AOPA, volunteer for numerous boards and organizations, and effective grassroots advocate for O&P. An easy choice for this year's award!

Read more at <http://www.aopanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Press-Release-2016-Lifetime-Award.pdf>

Sign Up to Exhibit at the 2016 National Assembly

AOPA is still accepting exhibit applications for the 2016 AOPA National Assembly, which takes place in Boston, MA on September 8-11, 2016. Sign up by **Friday, July 29th** to be included in the show's *Final Program of Activities* and the *Assembly Mobile APP*. If you are looking to introduce your products and services to an expanded group of decision makers—this is the meeting for you! The National Assembly is the country's oldest and largest meeting for the orthotics, prosthetics and pedorthics profession. [Click here](#) for more information.

Contact Kelly O'Neill koneill@aopanet.org or (571) 431-0852 with any questions.

2016 Thranhardt Golf Tournament

Join us at 2016 Thranhardt Golf Tournament held in conjunction with the 99th Annual AOPA National Assembly at the Robert R. Lynch Municipal Golf Club at Putterham.



Hit the links and network with top leaders in O&P while attending the 2016 AOPA National Assembly. We've scheduled the tournament for the afternoon of Wed., Sept. 7 from 1:00 to 5:00 PM so you can fly in on Wednesday morning, catch the luxury motor coach to the tournament at noon and enjoy a relaxing afternoon of golf with your O&P colleagues, customers, and family.

Brookline Golf Course is located in the Putterham neighborhood of Brookline, MA which was home to the legendary Francis Ouimet, who as an amateur, won the 1913 U.S. Open which was played at The Country Club of Brookline. The course is a short 6 miles from the Hynes Convention Center.

At over 6,300 yards, Brookline Golf Course is a great test for all players. With multiple sets of tees, it suits the beginner very well and will always give the accomplished player a challenge.

AOPA's Capitol Connection and OPAF have once again joined forces to co-sponsor this great event to benefit the inspiring efforts of OPAF and the legislative, research and education efforts of the Capitol Connection to further the O&P policy agenda.

Green fees, cart fees, pre-round range balls, transportation and an awards ceremony are all included.

Visit our [sponsorship form online](#) to book your sponsorship opportunities today. Book your [tickets online](#) TODAY.

Book Your Early Bird Registration by August 1st!



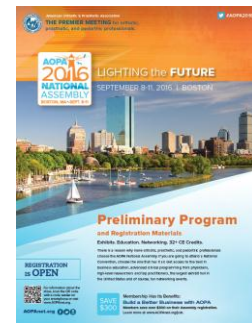
Book by August 1st for the Early Bird Discount!
99th AOPA National Assembly – Sept. 8-11 – Boston

Register today for the country's oldest and largest meeting for orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic professionals. Take advantage of five dedicated education tracks, providing the most relevant education for orthotists, prosthetists, technicians, pedorthists and business managers.

Save \$100 by Booking By August 1st!

Top 5 Reasons to Attend

- 36+ CEs
- Our best program yet...Osseointegration, Boston Strong Grand Rounds, Treating "O" More like "P," The Future of Pedorthics, and more!
- Five concurrent education tracks so everyone keeps a full schedule
- The country's largest O&P Exhibit Hall
- Fun networking events and the Alumni Connection



Join AOPA and 2300+ prosthetists, orthotists, pedorthists, therapists, physicians, technicians and other health care professionals in historic downtown Boston. [Click here to browse through the preliminary program.](#)

[Learn More or Register Now](#)

Join the Coding & Billing Experts in Las Vegas!

The AOPA Coding & Billing Experts are Coming to Las Vegas!

AOPA's next Coding & Billing Seminar will be in Las Vegas! Don't miss this opportunity to get the most up-to-date information to advance your O&P practitioners' and billing staff's coding knowledge.

Join your Colleagues November 14-15 in Las Vegas!

At this seminar you will:

- Receive up-to-date information on Prior Authorization and other Hot Topics
- Ensure your Proof of Delivery meets Medicare Requirements
- Learn how to assess risk areas in your practice



- Learn successful appeal strategies and hints to avoid claim denials
- Practice coding complex devices, including repairs and adjustment
- Attend break-out sessions for practitioners and office staff
- Earn 14 CEs

Where else can you get two jam-packed days of reliable, valuable O&P coding and billing information? [Learn more.](#)

[Register Now](#)

Upcoming AOPA Events

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| August 1, 2016 | <i>Early Bird Registration Deadline for 2016 National Assembly</i>
Boston, MA
Learn more and register here |
| August 10, 2016 | <i>Supplier Standards: Are You Compliant?</i>
AOPA Webinar
Learn more and register here |
| September 8-11, 2016 | <i>AOPA National Assembly</i>
Boston, MA
Learn more and register here |