



**American Orthotic &  
Prosthetic Association**

# AOPA in Advance

## Breaking News for O&P Professionals

May 4, 2010

Volume 14, Number 9

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### In This Issue

#### O&P NEWS:

- [Ongoing Need in Haiti for O&P Volunteers](#)
- [Update on O&P Reimbursements by Medi-Cal](#)
- [Register Today-The 2010 AOPA Policy Forum to be held May 26-27](#)
- [Changes to Timely Filing Requirements for Medicare Claims](#)
- [Updated Information on Signature Requirements](#)
- [New York State OIG Reviewing Medicaid Payment for O&P services in SNFs](#)
- [DEADLINE EXTENDED: 2010 Operating Performance Survey Needs Your Numbers](#)
- [Results for the March 2010 Business Conditions Survey](#)
- [Coding and Billing Seminar This Month in Pittsburgh](#)
- [May 12 AOPAversity Audio Conference: New Rules for HIPPA: Are You Still Compliant?](#)
- [Now Accepting Poster Presentations for the 2010 National Assembly](#)

#### O&P RESOURCES FROM AOPA:

- [2010 AOPA Coding Products Now Available](#)
- [Check the AOPA Job Board for New Opportunities](#)
- [Are You Registered for AOPA's 2010 Series of Medicare Audio Conferences?](#)

#### O&P INSIDER'S TRACK:

- [People in the News](#)

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#### Newsletter Feedback

We invite your comments and questions. Please contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

#### Featured Supplier Plus Partner of the Week:

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- [Businesses in the News](#)
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## O&P NEWS

### Ongoing Need in Haiti for O&P Volunteers

The Haitian earthquake tragedy may not be on front pages anymore or be the lead story on the evening news, but the human need continues. The [joint Web site](#) by AAOP and **AOPA** offers the opportunity for individuals and companies to make known their willingness to help sustain O&P services in Haiti through cash and equipment donations or volunteering of services. The site also gathers needs information such as the following request to AOPA members from Orthopedic Surgeon, Dr. John Lovejoy ([jf1264@me.com](mailto:jf1264@me.com)):

"We are asking a CPO, CP or CO, their spouse and or tech to come for a week or two. The hospital has a residency and room and board. The only expense is transportation and a \$40 gratuity for food and for housekeeping. Ann Cullo is scheduling the trips and has more detailed information. Her email is: [aculloo@aol.com](mailto:aculloo@aol.com). Please pass this on to your members. I would be happy to answer any other questions. John Lovejoy MD"

Here is more background from Dr. Lovejoy on his experience in Haiti: "Dr. Lovejoy has been going to Haiti off and on for 35 years and to the hospital Sacra Couer in Milot for 10 years. He was there after the earthquake and did many amputations. Upon returning he realized the need for a prosthetic lab at their hospital. With the help of Mike Richard, CPO and their community they constructed a lab in a container and shipped it to Milot. They are hoping to staff the facility with volunteers. Their goal is not only to make prostheses but to train Haitians to become prosthetists."

[Click here to access the joint AAOP/AOPA Haiti Relief Site.](#)

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

[Back to Top](#)

### Update on O&P Reimbursements by Medi-Cal

The March 9 edition of **AOPA** in Advance notified members of potential cuts to reimbursement for O&P by the state of California. Bryce Docherty, Executive Director of the California Orthotics & Prosthetics Association (COPA), spearheaded a charge to oppose a proposed budget policy from Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger that included an option which would eliminate all payments under California Medicaid for the prosthetic and orthotic devices used by amputees and those with other limb impairments starting July 1, 2010.

**AOPA** and the Amputee Coalition of America distributed a press release and provided all support requested by COPA. COPA testified and sent letters to members of the California Senate Budget Subcommittee #3: Health and Human Services and also to the California Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Health and both committees have voted to reject the proposed elimination of reimbursement for O&P services.

COPA's efforts have yielded some positives thus far, but the battle is not over yet. The next important date will be May 14 when Governor Schwarzenegger releases a revised budget cut proposal. Mr. Docherty said that it is uncertain whether the revised budget cut proposal will include any other recommendations to eliminate O&P as a benefit for Medi-Cal patients.

**AOPA** will continue to follow this story and keep members updated.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

[Back to Top](#)

## Register Today-The 2010 AOPA Policy Forum to be held May 26-27

For O&P today there are two critical events taking place on the federal level. First, as a result of health care reform's passage, there are implementation issues that have yet to be resolved in terms of how the law will be applied and how regulations will take shape. Second, now that the Senate has introduced S. 3223, the Federal Prosthetic and Custom Orthotic Parity bill, both the House and Senate have parity bills ready for passage. Additionally there are challenges on the state level, particularly in regards to licensure, parity and budgets that are vital to the O&P community.

The 2010 **AOPA** Policy Forum on Wednesday and Thursday, May 26-27, 2010 at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill looms as even more important with the opportunity for **AOPA** members during their Capitol Hill visits to make a specific "ask" of their legislator for action on O&P issues. At this year's **AOPA** Policy Forum, attendees will be briefed on:

- What health care reform will mean to your business;
- How to discuss O&P concerns with members of Congress; and
- Techniques and talking points to take home to your state to further O&P issues at the state level.

[Click here to see the 2010 AOPA Policy Forum schedule.](#)

[Click here to see more details about the 2010 AOPA Policy Forum.](#)

This exciting Capitol Hill location will provide a new experience for returning attendees as well as a memorable first time for those who have not attended before. Call (800) 233-1234 or (202) 737-1234 by COB today, May 4, and mention the 2010 **AOPA** Policy Forum in order to receive the special room rate of \$255 per night, a bargain in Washington for this time of year.

[Click here to access the registration form.](#)

AOPA and our talented professional advocates are always working for you in Washington. But no voice is stronger or more listened to than a constituent's. Please join us at the 2010 **AOPA** Policy Forum on May 26-27 to add your voice to the ongoing discussion of what health care should be.

Questions? Contact Erin Kennedy at [ekennedy@AOPAnet.org](mailto:ekennedy@AOPAnet.org) or 571-431-0876.

[Back to Top](#)

## Changes to Timely Filing Requirements for Medicare Claims

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), signed into law on March 23, 2010 reduces the maximum time period for filing Medicare claims with dates of service on or after January 1, 2010 to one calendar year from the date of service. In addition, the law requires that any claims with a date of services on or after October 1, 2009 but prior to January 1, 2010 must be submitted by December 31, 2010.

Claims with dates of service prior to October 1, 2009 may continue to be filed within the pre PPACA timely filing limits. These limits allow for the remainder of the calendar year from the date of service plus an additional 12 months for claims to be filed with a 10% reduction on assigned claims that are filed more than 12 months from the date of service.

Questions? Contact Joe McTernan at [jmcternan@AOPAnet.org](mailto:jmcternan@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0810 or Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0854.

[Back to Top](#)

## Updated Information on Signature Requirements

Medicare has recently provided all of its contractors updated information regarding signature requirements for medical review purposes. When contractors (i.e. the DME MACs or the RACs) are reviewing your claims, they may ask for additional information, such as the patients medical records. When reviewing the medical records you submitted they may use the presence or absence of a signature to approve, deny, or seek repayment of your claims.

Any entry that is included in the patient's medical record must be signed and authenticated by the individual who made the entry.

**[Click here to view the full announcement and for a reference chart of what is considered an acceptable signature in a medical record.](#)**

Questions? Contact Joe McTernan at [jmcternan@AOPAnet.org](mailto:jmcternan@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0810 or Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0854.

[Back to Top](#)

## New York State OIG Reviewing Medicaid Payment for O&P Services in SNFs

The New York State Office of Inspector General has been investigating the improper payment by the Medicaid program of claims for Durable Medical Equipment, Prostheses, and Orthoses provided to patients in a Medicaid covered SNF stay. According to New York State regulations, the Medicaid program payment to the SNF includes these services and therefore they are not eligible for separate reimbursement.

The OIG has examined claims from January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2008 and is in the process of sending overpayment letters to providers whose claims have been identified as paid improperly.

**AOPA** has researched the New York State regulations and it appears that the OIG's investigation is factually accurate.

If you receive an overpayment letter, you may want to review the circumstances surrounding the claim in question and attempt to negotiate payment arrangements with the facility who ordered the original services.

Questions? Contact Joe McTernan at [jmcternan@AOPAnet.org](mailto:jmcternan@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0810 or Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0854.

[Back to Top](#)

## DEADLINE EXTENDED: 2010 Operating Performance Survey Needs Your Numbers

As a benefit to members who have requested extra time in order to complete the 2010 Operating Performance Report, **AOPA** has extended the deadline to May 21, 2010 for submitting materials. This gives all members extra time to participate in the 2010 OPR survey and ensure that they are part of this service which enables any O&P practice to benchmark and measure its financial performance.

It's absolutely confidential when you provide your financial and other operating information to **AOPA**'s consultant, Industry Insights. No one from the O&P community or **AOPA** staff sees any individual data. Data is destroyed after the survey is published. But it is vitally important that **AOPA** members contribute their information. More participation means the final report will be more reflective of the collective operating experience in the O&P field and more valuable to you.

Your participation automatically entitles you to a FREE customized Company Performance Report that will give you invaluable information about your business as compared with similar O&P facilities. It's a great benchmark for making better management decisions or identifying and fixing profit drains. You will also receive free access to the Business Optimization Analysis Tool (BOAT) web site for one year and a FREE copy of the final 2010 Operating Performance Report (\$185 members/\$325 non-members) with data presented by business size, location and profit leaders.

**Click here in order to complete the survey questionnaire by the new May 21 deadline.**

Complete it online using the "save and return" feature so you don't have to do it in one sitting or download it and return the completed hard copy to Michael Becher, Industry Insights, 6235 Emerald Parkway, Dublin, OH 43016. You can also make participation completely painless by simply mailing Michael your year-end financials or audit statement.

You can reach Michael Becher for answers to questions or help in completing the survey at (614) 389-3100 extension 114 or by email at [mbecher@industryinsights.com](mailto:mbecher@industryinsights.com).

[Back to Top](#)

## Results for the March 2010 Business Conditions Survey

The Business Conditions Survey for March 2010 revealed a decrease in the number of firms that reported revenue increases from 2009 to 2010. When comparing that period of time, 47 percent of respondents reported an increase in revenue compared with 62.2 percent who reported an increase in revenue in the February 2010 Business Conditions Survey. In terms of revenue increases, 23.5 percent reported a more than 10 percent increase in revenue; 5.9 percent reported an increase in revenue of 6-10 percent; and 17.6 percent of respondents noted an increase in revenue of 1-5 percent. In terms of decreased revenue, 41.2 percent of firms who took the survey reported a decrease in revenue when comparing 2010 to 2009. Specifically, 23.5 percent reported a decrease of 1-5 percent; 5.9 percent reported a decrease of 6-10 percent; and 11.8 percent reported a decrease in revenue of more than 10 percent. Finally, 11.8 percent of survey respondents reported no change in revenue for March.

Exactly two thirds of respondents reported that their practices have not transitioned to electronic records. Of that group, 46.2 percent believe they will transition to electronic records within the next year. Of the 53.8 percent who do not have plans to transition to electronic records in the next year, some responded that the most significant barrier to entry was a desire for more information and testimonials of electronic transitions.

If you are the primary business decision maker at your O&P facility and are not receiving these surveys, please email Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org).

The survey results presented here represent a compilation of information received from responding member firms. It is not a statistical sample and is for use only as a guide. Information is also presented from prior surveys for comparative purposes. It is important to remember that there may be a different mix of firms responding in each survey. This would have some impact on survey averages.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

[Back to Top](#)

## Coding and Billing Seminar This Month in Pittsburgh

A few spots remain for **AOPA**'s second "Mastering Medicare: Advanced Coding & Billing Techniques" seminar of 2010, which will be held in Pittsburgh, Pa., May 24-25. Hundreds of your colleagues have already benefited from this detailed, advanced seminar given by **AOPA**'s coding experts as well as members of the **AOPA** Coding & Reimbursement Committee. Join us in Pittsburgh where you will:

- Learn how to code complex devices, including repairs and adjustments, through interactive discussions with **AOPA** experts and your colleagues;
- Join in-depth discussions on compliance with Medicare billing rules and documentation expectations;
- Learn how to assess compliance risk areas and deal with them;
- Learn successful appeal strategies and hints on avoiding claim denials;
- Break-out sessions for practitioners and office staff;
- Detailed information on hot topic issues in O&P; and
- Earn 14 continuing education credits in two days

Seminar attendees stay at the Hyatt Regency Pittsburgh Airport for just \$105/night!

Cost of attending the seminar is \$550 for members/\$750 for non-members. Any additional attendees from the same office get a \$50 discount, just \$500 for members and \$700 for non-members. Join us in Pittsburgh, bring your toughest coding questions, and spend an informative two days with **AOPA**'s experts and your colleagues.

[Click here to register.](#)

Contact Erin Kennedy at [ekennedy@AOPAnet.org](mailto:ekennedy@AOPAnet.org) or (571)431-0876 if you have any questions.

[Back to Top](#)

## May 12 AOPAversity Audio Conference: New Rules for HIPPA: Are You Still Compliant?

The next **AOPAversity** audio conference, "New Rules for HIPPA: Are You Still Compliant?" will be held on Wednesday, May 12 from 1-2 p.m. EDT. Join us for this informative session to learn how the HITECH Act has updated HIPPA such as:

- What now constitutes a breach of PHI?
- When and how to notify a patient of a breach of their PHI
- What policies and procedures must be updated?
- How these new changes will be enforced
- What happens if you are not compliant?

The cost of participation is just \$99 per line for members (\$199 for non-members). Any number of employees may listen on a given line. Those needing continuing education can earn 1.5 credits by returning the provided quiz within 30 days and scoring at least 80 percent.

As an added bonus for attending this call, each participant will receive an updated Business Associates Agreement. Why do you need an updated Business Associates Agreement? Register for the audio conference to find out!

[Click here to register.](#)

Contact Erin Kennedy at [ekennedy@AOPAnet.org](mailto:ekennedy@AOPAnet.org) or (571)431-0876 if you have any questions.

[Back to Top](#)

## Now Accepting Poster Presentations for the 2010 National Assembly

Present your research findings or a particular case presentation at the 2010 **AOPA** National

Assembly with a Poster. Poster Presentations are a great way to have Assembly attendees exposed to your work. The poster format enables display of findings including photographs, diagrams, flowcharts and graphs and any sample educational materials developed. **AOPA** will include the poster title, author and a 3-5 sentence description in the Assembly final program. This information will be confirmed with the author in early August.

Presenters will prepare their poster presentations on-site Wednesday, September 29, 2010 from 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM. Posters will be presented formally on Friday, October 1 from 1:00 - 2:00 PM. Presenters must be in attendance next to their posters to speak with interested conference participants. Presentations should remain posted for the remainder of the program, but need to be removed by noon on Saturday, October 2, 2010.

[\*\*Click here to view poster presentation templates available at no charge.\*\*](#)

If you are interested in presenting a Poster, [\*\*click here in order complete an application.\*\*](#) Applications will be accepted through July 2010.

Questions? Contact Erin Kennedy at [ekennedy@AOPAnet.org](mailto:ekennedy@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0876.

[Back to Top](#)

## O&P RESOURCES FROM AOPA

### 2010 AOPA Coding Products Now Available

Don't get caught with out of date coding references. Update your **AOPA** coding products today. The 2010 **AOPA** coding products are now available through the **AOPA** bookstore and may be ordered by calling (571) 431-0835.

The 2010 *Illustrated Guide*, *Quick Coder* and *Coding Pro* include all of the newly released HCPCS codes that describe O&P items. In addition, the 2010 *Coding Pro* contains expanded medical policy references and the 2010 Quick Coder includes a new section that lists all of the current modifiers used in O&P billing.

As an added bonus, if you purchase all three **AOPA** coding products at the same time, you will receive a bundled discount of \$50 off the regular retail price of the three items as sold separately.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

[Back to Top](#)

## Check the AOPA Job Board for New Opportunities

If you need a position filled at your business or are interested in looking at other job possibilities within the O&P field, check out the [\*\*AOPA Online Job Board\*\*](#). In the past month the Job Board has been viewed over a thousand times. If you want people to find out about a job opening at your facility or are interested in posting your resume for employers to view for potential openings, visit the [\*\*AOPA Online Job Board\*\*](#) today.

And remember: if you advertise on the Online Job Board and decide to also advertise in the *O&P Almanac*, then you'll receive a 5% discount on the cost of advertising in the *Almanac* and on the Job Board.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

[Back to Top](#)

## Are You Registered for AOPA's 2010 Series of Medicare Audio Conferences?

Numerous offices have benefited from their participation in **AOPA's Medicare Audio Conferences**. These one hour sessions come to you in the comfort of your office on the second Wednesday of each month at 1:00 pm Eastern. This series provides an outstanding opportunity for you and your staff to stay abreast of the latest hot topics in O&P, as well as gain clarification and ask questions on topics that you may not understand as fully as you would like to.

Seminars are still priced at just \$99 per line for members (\$199 for non-members). Buy the series and get two free; members pay just \$990 and non-members pay \$1990. If you purchase all the conferences, all conferences from months prior to your purchase of the set will be sent to you as CDs.

These convenient one hour telephone seminars are designed to fit easily into your busy schedule. Any practitioners needing credit can get 1.5 per audio conference by returning the provided quiz within 30 days and scoring at least 80%. Billing staff and others who don't need credit nonetheless can gain information they will use right away. The topics for 2010 are:

- January 13: Red Flag Rules: Are You In Compliance? (Available on CD)
- February 10: Hints on Passing Your Supplier Standards Inspection (Available on CD)
- March 10: Billing for Refused/Returned Devices and Deluxe Features (Available on CD)
- April 14: Documenting for Success: Chart Notes, Prescriptions and Physicians' Records
- May 12: New Rules for HIPAA: Are You Still Compliant?
- June 9: When Disaster Strikes: Implementing a Contingency Plan
- July 14: Medicare Appeals Strategies
- August 11: Medicare's Knocking: How Good Is Your Compliance Plan?
- September 8: Missed Billing Opportunities: Are You Billing Everything You Can?
- October 13: You're Going To Pay Me WHAT?...Hints on Managed Care Contracting
- November 10: The Ins and Outs of Billing in a Part A Setting: Hospital, SNF and Hospice
- December 8: 2011 New Codes and Medical Policies

If you miss an audio conference, it will be available on CD after the fact. Cost is the same as if you participate live (\$99/\$199). We hope you'll be able to join us for this year's series.

[\*\*Click here to register for any or all of the 2010 AOPA audio conferences.\*\*](#)

Questions? Contact Erin Kennedy at [ekennedy@AOPAnet.org](mailto:ekennedy@AOPAnet.org) or (571)431-0876.

[Back to Top](#)

## O&P INSIDER'S TRACK

### *The Only Up-to-the Minute O&P Newsline*

#### People in the News

[\*\*Orthocare Innovations\*\*](#) announced the addition of **Suzie Williams, CP** as Clinical Services Manager.

[\*\*ESPN\*\*](#) featured a segment on **Nate Winters**, who was involved in a water sport accident that caused an lower extremity amputation summer of 2009. This past month he pitched a high school varsity baseball game for Winter Park High School, wearing a prosthetic leg. The prosthesis was fabricated by **Stan Patterson, CP** of [\*\*Prosthetic and Orthotic Associates\*\*](#).

[\*\*USA Today\*\*](#) featured a story of runner **Amy Palmiero-Winters**, who is cared for by **AOPA** member **Erik Schaffler, CP**, of [\*\*A Step Ahead Prosthetics\*\*](#) in Hicksville, NY.

[Back to Top](#)

## Businesses in the News

[\*\*American Association of Breast Care Professionals\*\*](#) announced the introduction of S. 3255, the Custom Fabricated Breast Prosthesis Act of 2010.

[\*\*Nearly Me Technologies, Inc.\*\*](#) announced the roll-out of its latest product, Style 355 Butterfly.

[\*\*Ohio Willow Wood\*\*](#) has made several product donations this year to [\*\*Physicians for Peace\*\*](#) and [\*\*Limbs for Life\*\*](#) in wake of the devastating January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Ohio Willow Wood also donated prosthetic products to independent prosthetic mission initiatives including the [\*\*Connecticut Haitian American Organization, Inc.\*\*](#) and to [\*\*Wyoming Haiti Relief\*\*](#) and its partner organization [\*\*Precision Prosthetics & Orthotics\*\*](#).

[\*\*The Orthotic and Prosthetic Assistance Fund\*\*](#) (OPAF) updated its 2010 schedule for its First clinics:

- May 15 First Volley Tennis Clinic, Alta Vista Tennis Courts, Redondo Beach, CA. Sponsored by Mutual Amputee Aid Foundation
- May 15 First Volley Tennis Clinic, Frosty Hollow Tennis Center, Levittown, PA. Sponsored by Foundations Community Partnership
- May 21 First Swing/Learn to Golf Clinic, Mill Run Golf Course, Benton, PA. Sponsored by Geisinger Healthcare.
- May 22 McKeever's First Ride, ASPIRE Therapeutic Riding Center, Waterloo, IA. Sponsored by Clark & Associates
- May 22 First Dive, Intro to Scuba Clinic, Williamston High School Pool, Williamston, MI. Sponsored by Capital City Scuba and Knit Rite, Inc.
- May 23 First Paddle Kayaking Clinic, Michael Jones Pool, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI. Sponsored by SOAR (Special Opportunities Advanced Rehabilitation).
- June 12 First Volley Tennis Clinic for Shriners Hospital/Philadelphia, Bucks County Racquet Club, Washington Crossing, PA. Sponsored by USTA.
- June 15 First Swing/Learn to Golf Clinic, Atlantic City Country Club, Northfield, NJ, Sponsored by Allied Orthotics & Prosthetics
- June 18 First Dive Intro to Scuba Clinic, The Dive Shop, Marietta, Georgia. Sponsored by The Dive Shop
- June 19 First Volley Tennis Clinic for University of Northern Iowa Adaptive Sports Camp, Cedar Falls, Iowa. Sponsored by USTA Missouri Valley Iowa District
- June 19 McKeever's First Ride, Chastain Horse Park, Atlanta, Georgia. Sponsored in part by the Wachovia Foundation, the Shaw Family Trust

[Back to Top](#)

## Send Us Your News!

The next **AOPA in Advance** will arrive in your inbox on May 18. So if you have a new employee or a new office, tell us! Share your news with the over 15,000 readers of the **O&P Almanac** and **AOPA In Advance** newsletter. Contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org)

[Back to Top](#)

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5/4/2010

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