



**American Orthotic &
Prosthetic Association**

AOPA in Advance

Breaking News for O&P Professionals

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AMERICAN ORTHOTIC & PROSTHETIC ASSOCIATION

330 John Carlyle St., Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: (571) 431-0835

Fax: (571) 431-0899

E-mail: info@AOPAnet.org

Newsletter Feedback

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

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O&P NEWS

2012 Medicare O&P Fee Schedule Increase Announced

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced that the 2012 Medicare fee schedule for orthotic and prosthetic services will be increased by 2.4 percent. This increase is effective for claims with a date of service on or after January 1, 2012.

The annual Medicare fee schedule increase is legislatively tied to the percentage increase in the consumer price index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) for the 12-month period ending with June of the previous year. This percentage, which was 3.6 percent in June 2011, is then reduced by an annual productivity adjustment, which for 2012 was calculated to be 1.2 percent, resulting in a net positive fee schedule increase of 2.4 percent.

CMS has also released 2012 reimbursement rates for L4205 and L7520, which represent 15 minute segments of orthotic and prosthetic labor respectively. These codes are not subject to the productivity adjustment and will be increased by the full 3.6 percent CPI-U based adjustment.

The official 2012 Medicare DMEPOS fee schedule will be released sometime after November 16, 2011. **AOPA** will download and make this file available to members as soon as it published by CMS.

[Click here to read the CMS Medlearn Matters article announcing the 2012 Medicare fee schedule increase.](#)

Questions? Contact Joe McTernan at jmcternan@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0811 or Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0854.

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AOPA State Representatives Help Ensure O&P's Voice is Heard on Essential Health Benefits

On October 7 the Institute of Medicine released its report on Essential Health Benefits. As a result the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is now in the process of obtaining stakeholder input by hosting regional listening sessions throughout the month of November. Senior HHS officials are attending these sessions to listen to stakeholder feedback. To ensure representation of O&P interests, **AOPA** reached out to the **AOPA** State Representatives to enlist their attendance at these sessions.

Why are these Listening Sessions Important? As described in prior editions of **AOPA in Advance**, If the Secretary of HHS were to enact regulations that do not explicitly define the legislation's words "rehabilitative and habilitative services" to include orthotics and prosthetics, and therefore orthotics and prosthetics are not included in the essential health benefits package, private insurers offering coverage in health insurance exchanges and elsewhere under the federal law would be free to completely exclude O&P benefits from that coverage. Payments for our services might be completely dependent on the non-insurance resources of our patients.

Key criteria that HHS will be using to determine what is "in" or "out" of the essential health benefits package are: (1) how prevalent is this benefit in small private employer health plans; and (2) how expensive is it to provide this benefit.

Given the importance of being included as an Essential Health Benefit, the attendance by the state representatives, in addition to patients, at these events is an indispensable tool to provide a voice for the O&P field.

Here is an excerpt from Mark Kirchner, CPO, who attended the Dallas session with Mona Patel, an amputee and social worker:

"My overall take was positive and I truly believe that the Regional Director Marjorie Petty, US Department of Health and Human Services, Region VI, and Lee Wilson the Director, Division of Public Health Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation were genuinely listening to the concerns of all the speakers...

I am glad to report that I was able to speak on behalf of AOPA... Lee Wilson addressed me directly, and stated for the others present who might not understand our position, that some insurance companies only pay for one device a lifetime. I was able to briefly point out that the study in February 2011 [SHRM study] showed that 75% of the major employer plans and 70% of the smaller plans included coverage for O&P.

Lastly, when Lee Wilson mentioned the "one a lifetime comment", Mona Patel walked up behind me and addressed him stating, "I was hit by a drunk driver when I was 23 and thought my life was over until I was able to receive a prosthesis". This was a visual that I believe left a GREAT impression.

... Our voice needs to be heard and it needs to be heard loud and clear!!!!

Once again a **BIG THANKS** to the **AOPA** state representatives and other attendees for their efforts on this matter!

[Click here for AOPA's Executive Director's Letter on Essential Health Benefits.](#)

Questions? Contact Catherine Graf at cgraf@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0807.

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AOPA Meets with OIG Regarding Report on Lower-Limb Prostheses

As reported in the August 23 and September 20 issues of **AOPA in Advance**, **AOPA** has been tracking an Office of Inspector General report issued on Lower Limb Prosthetics. This report was referenced in a "Dear Physician" letter from the DME MAC Medical Directors. **AOPA** and others in the O&P field have significant concerns that the OIG report reflected a lack of understanding of how O&P care is really delivered, and if its recommendations were implemented it would significantly increase the hassle factor for practitioners and their patients alike. Through coordinated efforts of **AOPA** and the members of the O&P Alliance, communications have been generated at four different levels in government raising very significant questions about the OIG report.

AOPA, along with its partners in the O&P alliance secured a meeting with Peter Budetti, MD, JD, CMS Deputy Administrator for Program Integrity on November 10 to address both the OIG report, as well as the restrictive documentation requirements for both lower limb prostheses as well as therapeutic shoes for persons with diabetes.

Three **AOPA** staff members joined O&P Alliance Counsel, Peter Thomas and two clinical practitioners, in meeting with Dr. Budetti and three members of his staff. The history and problems for patients and practitioners relating to increasing physician documentation required in support of reimbursement for diabetic shoes provided a background and primer for discussion of similar OIG complaints about the absence of face-to-face patient/physician visits, and to documentation related to lower limb prosthetics. Dr. Budetti and staff appeared to understand that the OIG report demonstrated

some ways in which OIG did not have a solid understanding of how prosthetic care is delivered. **AOPA** introduced some samples of typical physician documentation and the CMS staff promised thorough evaluation and potential remedial steps to alleviate substantial potential patient hassle factor.

AOPA will continue to keep members updated about developments on this issue.

Questions? Contact Joe McTernan at jmcternan@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0811.

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Renew Your Membership Today - Protect Your Future of Tomorrow

AOPA members have been renewing in record numbers - almost twice the number have already renewed as last year at this time. And it's undoubtedly due to the tremendous concerns members have over challenges facing O&P and the entire health care field as regulations are being written for implementation of the new health care law passed in 2010.

Members realize only a strong voice with the right message and facts can help preserve the opportunity to deliver the quality patient care that the O&P field is known for. They also realize **AOPA** will be their resource for definitive answers on all the questions regarding Accountable Care Organizations, shared savings programs and the myriad of other new regulations that will affect the daily lives of health care providers.

The 2nd notice renewal invoice will be mailed this week and please give it your full attention. The easy, painless way to renew and update your company's directory data is through this link: www.AOPAnetonline.org/profile

You will need your user name and password which is on the printed invoice you'll receive in the mail.

Thank you for the loyal support that makes **AOPA** possible for you.

Questions? Contact Michael Chapman at mchapman@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0843.

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Hats Off to First "Growing for the Future Club" Member

Alexander Lyons, CPO, of Lyons Prosthetics and Orthotics wins special accolades by becoming the first **AOPA** member to join the "Growing for the Future Club" - the **AOPA** marketing effort to expand the membership from nearly 1,000 member companies to 1,500 members. **AOPA** president Tom DiBello, CO, FAAOP put it this way - "It's time to move the people inside the **AOPA** tent who have been outside relying on, "Let George Do It."

AOPA members have been "George" too long - "But you can't be expected to always carry the load alone," according to DiBello.

Every major voluntary organization in the world has found their current members to be their most successful growth partners. And most offer current members an incentive to help create growth. The **AOPA** incentive is offering members an opportunity to reduce their own dues investment by 10 percent of the new member's dues who identifies the **AOPA** member as the recruiter when making payment. The recruiting member can apply the 10 percent of the new member's dues to their own dues or toward any other **AOPA** product, service, seminar or National Assembly registration. The incentive applies to each new member so an **AOPA** member recruiting 10 new members could completely offset their dues.

With the uncertainties associated with the new health care law, it's clear that payers are going want evidence based or comparative effectiveness research to justify reimbursement. **AOPA** has

already funded the first comparative effectiveness study commissioned by the Amputee Coalition and it's expected many more will follow. These studies can cost six figures each and several will probably be necessary to provide data on the most common diagnoses and treatment programs. The first study is comparing a cohort of amputees in the Medicare database over a three year period who received O&P intervention versus a cohort with the same diagnoses who did not receive timely O&P intervention. It is expected the first study due for completion in late 2011 or early 2012 will clearly demonstrate the long term higher health care costs involved when patients do not receive proper O&P intervention.

The other huge expense **AOPA** members have borne alone is the expanded advocacy effort and the lobbying team that works with **AOPA** staff to make sure O&P patients are treated fairly in the implementation of the new health care law. Think of the ongoing effort to make sure O&P is included in the definition of "essential benefits."

Joining the "Growing for the Future Club" is the first step in making sure O&P is well equipped to meet the challenges of the future with a much larger pool of O&P providers and suppliers sharing the costs to "Make It Happen. The "Growing for the Future Club" has a special section on the **AOPA** web site that has a list of prospects by state, a special marketing kit, application forms and a list of Club members, [click here to download the application form to join and learn more about how you can help build your organization into a stronger voice for you!](#)

Isn't it time you made an effort to make sure your colleagues who also get the gain also share the pain?

Questions? Contact Michael Chapman at mchapman@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0843.

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2012 CMS Provider Enrollment Application Fee Set at \$523

On November 2, 2011 CMS published in the Federal Register the Medicare, Medicaid, and Children's Health Insurance Programs; Provider Enrollment Application Fee amount for Calendar Year 2012. The fee amount is \$523 for applications on or after January 1, 2012 and on or before December 31, 2012. The \$523 fee amount represents an \$8 difference from the earlier projected amount of \$515 for Calendar Year 2012. As you may recall, 42 CFR 424.514 requires institutional providers and suppliers that are (1) initially enrolling in the Medicare program, (2) revalidating their Medicare enrollment, or (3) adding a new Medicare practice location, to submit an application fee beginning March 25, 2011 with any enrollment application. For more details, [click here](#).

Questions? Contact Catherine Graf at cgraf@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0807.

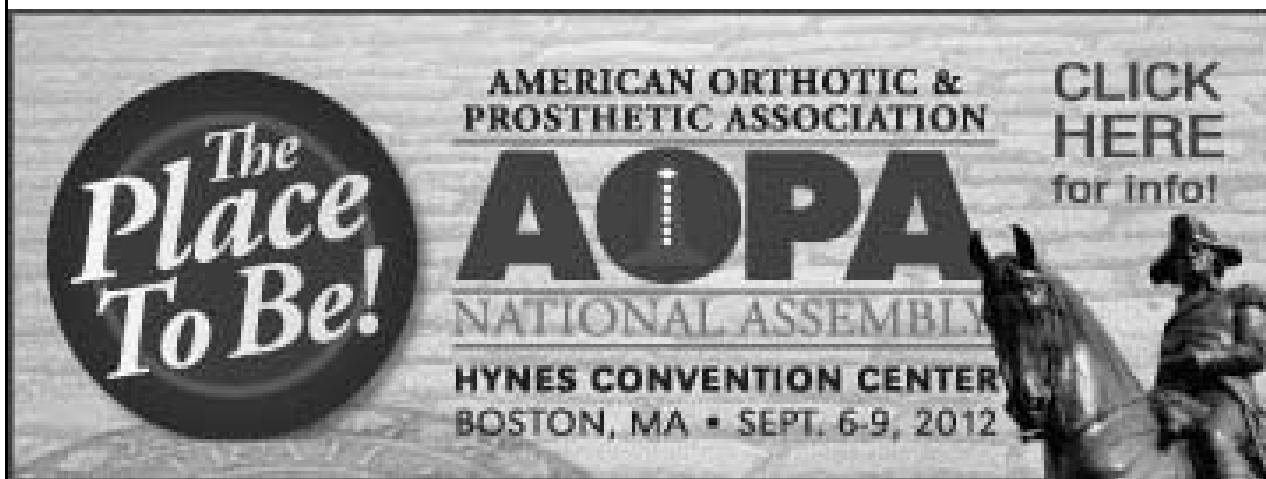
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Update on Medicare Part B Beneficiary Premiums and Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment

Medicare Part B monthly premiums in 2012 are lower than previously anticipated and start at \$99.90. The Medicare Part B deductible will also decrease by \$22, leaving a deductible of \$140 for the year. For most beneficiaries Medicare Part B premiums have not increased since 2008. Notably, there is a law that freezes Part B premiums in the years where beneficiaries do not receive Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increases for Social Security benefits. However, the Social Security Administration is issuing a COLA of 3.6% for Social Security recipients. This represents the first COLA since 2009, as there was no COLA in 2010 or 2011. Further, Medicare Advantage (also called Medicare Part C) plan premiums are set to decrease by 4 percent.

Questions? Contact Catherine Graf at cgraf@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0807.

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2012 AOPA National Assembly: A Call for Papers

AOPA is excited to announce this "Call for Papers" for the **95th Annual AOPA National Assembly to be held September 6-9, 2012 in downtown Boston**. The "call for papers" requests that all interested presenters submit an abstract of their proposed scientific paper or description of their proposed business paper. Presentations will be selected from among papers received by the **AOPA** Assembly Program Committee. Currently, submissions are being accepted for the following **AOPA** National Assembly programs and awards:

- **Clinical Presentations and Award Winning Thranhardt Lectures:** 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 2012 **AOPA** National Assembly. [Click here to submit your Clinical Abstracts.](#)
- **Business Presentations and Sam E. Hamontree, CP Award Submissions:** **AOPA** is looking for qualified O&P professionals and business management experts who have significant business experience. Join the ranks of our profession's recognized experts and share your knowledge and know-how at the 2012 **AOPA** National Assembly. [Click here to submit your business presentation for consideration as a general business program or the Hamontree Award.](#)
- **Poster Presentations:** Present your research findings or a particular case presentation at the 2012 **AOPA** National Assembly. Presentations should be a graphical display in a poster format using photographs, diagrams, flowcharts and graphs and any sample educational materials developed. Applications for poster presentations will be accepted through July 1, 2012. [Click here to submit abstracts for a poster presentation.](#)
- **Otto and Lucille Becker Award** will be presented for the best orthotic abstract submitted and the **Edwin and Kathryn Arbogast Award** for the best prosthetic abstract submitted by a qualifying student or resident. [Click here if you are a student and/or resident to submit your abstract.](#)

Eligible presenters will receive a complimentary full-conference registration for the 2012 **AOPA** National Assembly. Due to programming time constraints and the volume of abstracts typically received by the committee, please remember that only top-quality papers will be accepted for presentation at the 2012 Assembly. Submissions for Clinical and Business Presentations will be accepted through January 31 and Poster Submissions will be accepted through July 31.

Questions? Contact Tina Moran at tmoran@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0808.

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Register for AOPA's December Audio Conference: "Are You Ready for the New Year? 2012 New Codes and Policies"

HIPAA requires all payers to use HCPCS Codes. The end of the year marks the beginning of New Codes and Modifier changes that will be effective January 1st, 2012. Do you have a plan in place? The ability to make sure your practice is sound may prevent unnecessary audits down the road. As we welcome a new year, join **AOPA** on December 14 for an **AOPA**iversity Mastering Medicare Audio Conference that will focus on New Codes and Medical Policy Changes for 2012 and why it's an important part of your business operation. An **AOPA** expert will address the following issues during the Audio Conference:

- Learn about new HCPCS codes effective January 1, 2012.
- Discuss verbiage changes to existing codes and how they may affect your business.
- Find out which codes will no longer be used as of January 1, 2012.
- Discover other changes to the HCPCS system.
- Find out **AOPA**'s interpretation of why the changes took place.

The audio conference begins at 1 PM (EST), the cost of participating is \$99 per line for **AOPA** members (\$199 for non-members), 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 percent. Contact Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0854 with content questions.

[Click here to register online.](#)

Questions? Contact Stephen Custer at scuster@AOPAnet.org (571) 431-0876.

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Announcing the 2012 Audio Conference Series from AOPA

AOPA has confirmed the dates and topics for its 2012 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 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 percent. Billing staff and others who don't need credit can nonetheless gain information they will use right away. The topics for 2011 are:

- January 11: RAC Audits, What Are They and How to Prepare
- Feb. 8: Resources for O&P Patient Care Facilities
- March 14: AFO/KAFO Policy - What You Need to Know
- April 11: Network and Market Your Way to Success
- May 9: Contracting 101
- June 13: Improving Your Bottom Line
- July 11: Perfecting the Intake Process
- August 8: The Ins and Outs of Advance Beneficiary Notices (ABNs)
- September 12: How to Get Paid for Orthopedic and Diabetic Shoes
- October 10: What Every O&P Facility Needs to Know about the FDA
- November 14: Medicare Enrollment Procedures
- December 12: Are You Ready for the New Year? 2012 New Codes and Policies

[Click here to register for any 2012 Audio Conference.](#)

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.

Questions? Contact Stephen Custer at scuster@AOPA.net (571) 431-0876.

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O&P RESOURCES FROM AOPA

Check Out the AOPA Job Board for New Opportunities in O&P

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](#). The online job board sports a freshly updated look and an easy-to-navigate profile creation system.

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 percent discount on the cost of advertising in the *Almanac* and on the Job Board.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at srybicki@AOPA.net or (571) 431-0835.

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O&P INSIDER'S TRACK

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

In Memoriam

AOPA received the following notice from Joann Marx, CPO, FAAOP:

Our field has suffered a great loss by the passing of **Kenneth Carozza, RPOA**, husband of **Marita Dorsch-Carozza CP, FAAOP**. Serving the prosthetic community for over thirty years, he started his career at Dorsch Prosthetics in New York City. Kenny was not only a mentor, friend and wonderful practitioner but a man with great compassion. He provided services for many international patients as well as United Nations' Ambassadors. Mr. Carozza was retired for 12 years. After a long health battle, he passed away quietly in his sleep. He will be deeply missed.

AOPA received the following remembrance of **Joe Garza, CO**:

Jose (Joe) Garza, CO, passed away Oct. 20, 2011 in Crown Point, Indiana. He practiced orthotics for 41 years at Calumet Orthopedic & Prosthetic Company, Hobart, Ind., until retiring in June of this year. "Joe was very dedicated to his patients and was very compassionate and warm-hearted," said Ron Pawlowski, CPO, owner and president of Calumet. Joe is survived by his wife, Judith; daughters Kristen M. Heilman and Nicole L. Bateman; son, Eric L. Garza; and other relatives and friends. "I think Joe would like to be remembered as making the best of the life he was given, and having made a difference in those he knew and cared for," Ron said. "We will miss Joe and we will keep his memory alive in our hearts."

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People in the News

Mabio Costa, a world champion amputee triathlete, has been certified as an [OPAF](#) First Swim instructor.

Hanger Orthopedic Group announced the addition of several employees:

- **Brian Tolsma, CO** joins its patient care facility in Hazel Crest, Illinois;
- **Philip Brereton, CPO** joins its Reno/Carson City, Nevada patient care facility;
- **Sarah Ewing, CPO** joins its Folsom, California patient care facility; and
- **David Egan, CPO** joins its South Sacramento, California patient care facility.

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Businesses in the News

The **Master of Science in Health Science, Orthotics and Prosthetics Option at California State University Dominguez Hills** has been approved by the CSU Chancellor's office. CSUDH is recruiting students and accepting applications for the inaugural MS class. Classes begin June 2012. The CSUDH/VA Center for Orthotics and Prosthetics is accepting applications for the first Masters of Science in Health Science, Orthotics and Prosthetics Option class. [Click here for more information.](#)

Limbs of Freedom, a cooperative program between the Rotary Clubs of Coronado, California and Ensenada/Calafia, Mexico, returned to Ensenada with the support of the **Barr Foundation** and **Herb Barrack, CPO** of Hanger Orthopedics, Inc., to fit five patients with new artificial legs

OPAF & The First Clinics, announced that in conjunction with Project Hope Belize is seeking interest from the O & P community for a SCUBA diving trip in May 2012. Additionally, McKeever's First Ride™, the therapeutic horsemanship program of OPAF & The First Clinics was recently a featured part of the 113th annual Verona Horse Fair.

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Send Us Your News!

The next **AOPA in Advance** will arrive in your inbox on November 29. 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

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AMERICAN ORTHOTIC & PROSTHETIC ASSOCIATION (AOPA)

330 John Carlyle St., Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314

Tel: (571) 431-0876, Fax: (571) 431-0899

www.AOPAnet.org