



**American Orthotic &
Prosthetic Association**

2nd Quarter 2016 Staff Report

To: AOPA Membership
From: Thomas F. Fise, Executive Director
Date: July 12, 2016

Subject: Great Policy Forum Charted New Pathway to Legislative Solutions for O&P PLUS a Summary of AOPA's Actions on Your Behalf for These Last Three Months.

This year's April 26-27 Policy Forum was a whole new ballgame with a legislation writing session led by former Senator Bob Kerrey who helped bring O&P's concerns about the flawed LCD Policy Article on Lower Limb Prostheses to the highest levels in the White House, Congress and CMS. The more than 140 AOPA members attending the Policy Forum broke into small groups and distilled the major issues challenging O&P providers and patients into a simple one page "ask" legislative measure that is now being used in AOPA's lobbying efforts with the House of Representatives and the U. S. Senate. While many of the provisions captured in the simplified Prosthetic and Orthotic Care Modernization Act are present in other currently pending legislative measures (S. 829 and H.R. 1530), this simplified version offers one more vehicle for O&P to secure legislative action.

Setting the stage for the more than 350 legislative appointments on April 27th was the April 21st pre-Policy Forum AOPA telenews press event with two amputees, president-elect Michael Oros and AOPA executive director Tom Fise, all of whom drilled home the message of how the flawed LCD proposal seriously impairs timely and appropriate prosthetic care. The proposal was criticized for reverting the standard of care to a 1970's level. They described how private insurance companies were using the flawed proposal to deny otherwise legitimate claims. Media participation spread the message widely throughout the country on TV, radio, newspapers and magazines.

While there was action a plenty during the Policy Forum, there was a huge follow-on effort that included the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee's letter to HHS Secretary Burwell criticizing the LCD efforts of CMS and its contractors and launching an oversight inquiry requesting extensive lists of CMS and DME MAC documents, including public comments, on how the draft LCD proposal was promulgated. Hearings or other oversight committee actions could follow.

Senator Kerrey personally met with key Senators and staff of the Senate Finance Committee and urged adopting S. 829, with some of the clarifying language from the O&P Care Modernization Act.

AOPA past president, Tom Watson, CP, personally shared the harmful LCD events with Senator Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell (R-KY)), who followed up with a letter to CMS Acting Administrator Andy Slavitt on May 5th (bit.ly/mcconnellcms) seeking clarification on four issues raised by Mr. Watson:

- What is the current status of the rule? Why hasn't CMS rescinded the draft rule? Is there a plan to retract the proposal in the future?
- Who are the stakeholders involved in the working group? How many prosthetic users and makers are represented in the working group?
- Is the working group considering stakeholder comments submitted on the draft LCD?
- Will the working group provide the industry with updates on the topics being discussed?

With the political turmoil and the shorted time for Congressional business always present in an election year, expectations are still running high that 2016 may see some positive action on the O&P agenda which AOPA and its O&P Alliance partners have been pressing for the past decade.

To further the opportunity for action during what's left of this limited session of Congress, AOPA targeted members in those states whose Senators serve on the Senate Finance Committee urging them to write their Senator asking for their support for S. 829. More than 300 letters from www.AOPAvotes authored by members made this ask. Additional conversations by Tom Watson with Senate Majority Leader McConnell (R-KY) and Senator Kerrey with Minority Leader Reid (D-NV) sought bipartisan support for this non-controversial legislation. Having Senate Finance Committee members responding to a recent letter from Senators Hatch and Wyden by voicing support for "non-controversial bill" treatment for S.829 can build momentum. AOPA Executive Director Tom Fise visited with health advisers to GOP Finance Committee Senators Enzi, Burr, Coats, Roberts, and Portman to try to consolidate more support for the Senate bill. S. 829 received a no cost score from the Congressional Budget Office which helps make it a candidate for inclusion on the list of non-controversial bills that may have a good chance for consideration.

Stay tuned. Now for the other goings on at AOPA these past few months.

Legislative Update

On April 25, Representative Ellmers (R-NC) introduced HR 5045: Preserving Access to Modern Prosthetic Limbs Act of 2016. The bill is "to impose a moratorium on the implementation of a proposed Medicare local coverage determination on lower limb prostheses." The bill would place a moratorium until June 30, 2017 on implementing the July 16, 2015 Draft Local Coverage Determination (LCD): Lower Limb Prostheses (DL33787). The bill also would require that CMS and its contractors remove the policy from their websites, which is necessary because private payers have been adopting provisions included in the LCD. This bipartisan bill was co-sponsored by Rep. Schakowsky (D-IL).

As noted earlier, AOPA and the attendees of the 2016 Policy Forum drafted a new piece of legislation, with the help of former Senator Bob Kerrey titled “The Prosthetic and Orthotic Care Modernization Act of 2016” which focuses on separating O&P from DME, reimbursing only credentialed O&P providers, protecting custom O&P from competitive bidding, and legitimatizing the orthotist/prosthetist notes as a legitimate part of the Medicare beneficiary patient’s medical record.

AOPA continues to champion the passage of The Medicare O&P Improvement Act of 2015 (S. 829 and H.R.1530), the most comprehensive legislation aimed at resolving most of the problems facing O&P providers today (e.g. ALJ delays, proper recognition of your notes, the separation of O&P from DME, etc.),

Currently the following Representatives & Senators have signed on in support of The Medicare O&P Improvement Act of 2015: Sen Grassley (R-IA), Sen. Warner (D-VA), Rep. Thompson (R-PA), Rep. Thompson (D-CA), Rep. Stivers (R-OH), Rep. King (R-NY), Rep. Duckworth (D-IL), Rep. Beatty (D-OH), Rep. Heck (R-NV), Rep. Ruppersberger (D-MD), Rep. Israel (D-NY) and Rep. Ellmers (R-NC). If you don’t see your Senator or Representative listed please contact them and ask them to sign on as a co-sponsor and show their support. Ask your patients to contact their representatives as well. You and your patients may easily submit a letter to your Representatives and Senators by visiting www.AOPAvotes.org.

Please contact AOPA for additional tools and information that may help you persuade your congressional representatives to join the O&P fight on behalf of patients and providers.

O&P PAC Update

The O&P PAC Update provides information on the activities of the O&P PAC, including the names of individuals who have made recent donations to the O&P PAC and the names of candidates the O&P PAC has supported. The O&P PAC, between April 1, 2016 and June 30, 2016, received contributions from the following **AOPA** members: Jeffrey Brandt, CPO; Maynard Carkhuff; J. Martin Carlson, CPO; Rick Fleetwood, MPA; Pam Lupo, CO; Thomas Watson, CP and Rob Yates, CPO.

The purpose of the O&P PAC is to advocate for legislative or political interests at the federal level, which have an impact on the orthotic and prosthetic community. The O&P PAC achieves this goal by working closely with members of the House, Senate and other officials running for office to educate them about the issues, and help elect those individuals who support the orthotic and prosthetic community.

During the same timespan the O&P PAC made contributions to the following members of Congress: Rep. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA).

2016 AOPA National Assembly & The 9th Annual Wine Auction & Tasting

The 9th Annual Wine Tasting & Auction is scheduled to take place at 6:00 pm on Friday, September 9th during the 2016 AOPA National Assembly. The Wine Tasting and Auction is a fun event and plays the vital role of raising awareness for all of AOPA's Government Relations

advocacy outreach programs. This year's event has a special Boston flair: signed Boston sports memorabilia.

Last year's event was a success, with record numbers. Will you help make this year's Wine Auction and Tasting even more of a success than last year's? If you would like more information on the wine auction (i.e., interested in donating, interested in attending, etc.) please contact Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org.

Coding and Reimbursement Update

Medicare Final Rule on Prior Authorization for Certain Prosthetic Items

On December 30, 2015, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the long anticipated final rule regarding Medicare prior authorization of certain DMEPOS, including most lower limb prostheses.

AOPA's continued concerns regarding the Medicare prior authorization final rule were summarized in the last AOPA staff report but several developments have occurred over the last few months that are relevant for discussion.

Indications remain that implementation of prior authorization is not imminent and will most likely not occur until later in 2016 or early in 2017. CMS has indicated that it intends to implement prior authorization on a smaller scale initially, most likely choosing a small subset of the master list of devices published in the final rule, and implementing prior authorization in select regional markets in order to better evaluate the impact the program may have on beneficiary access to care.

AOPA continues to have concerns with prior authorization of prostheses: (1) that the regulations do not either provide any guarantee of payment or any assurance that a claim on which prior authorization has been obtained will not be subject to post payment medical necessity RAC audits and, (2) that it will critically delay timely access to the provision of prosthetic devices that are crucial to the rehabilitation needs of Medicare beneficiaries. AOPA continues to meet with CMS officials and members of Congress to make sure that prior authorization of any kind will not adversely affect a Medicare beneficiary's access to medically necessary care.

AOPA Underscores Concerns with Inconsistencies in Veteran's Administration Coding Recommendation

AOPA has recently questioned an apparent unilateral decision by the internal Veteran's Administration (VA) Coding Committee regarding the proper use of codes L5987 and L5986 to describe certain prosthetic feet. The VA Coding Committee issued guidance to its field offices that in order to qualify for L5987, a prosthetic foot must contain a separately identifiable "shock pylon" as part of its construction. Similarly, the VA Coding Committee indicated that in order to qualify for L5986, a prosthesis must contain a "separate and distinct" rotation unit. AOPA has engaged in conversation with the VA regarding this coding guidance and believes that the VA guidance does not take into account the function of prosthetic feet that incorporate a vertical loading pylon through mechanisms other than a traditional vertical shock pylon design as well as features of prosthetic feet that exhibit multi-axial rotation through design features that are incorporated into the foot, rather than through a separate axial rotation unit.

Companies whose feet have been adversely affected by this VA coding policy change have worked with AOPA to better inform interested congressional offices who have requested clarification from the VA regarding this coding guidance that appears to be not entirely consistent with Medicare payment policies for certain prosthetic feet. AOPA will continue its discussions with the Veteran's Administration regarding this issue and report any new developments as they occur. AOPA members can alert lawmakers to the recent VA changes to reimbursement codes that are affecting access to certain prosthetic feet for veterans. There is a letter for veterans, and a separate letter that practitioners can send. These are all available on www.AOPAvotes.org.

AOPA Comments on the Skilled Nursing Facility Prospective Payment System Proposed Rule for FY 2017

AOPA submitted comments on the CMS proposed rule that will govern payments to Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) during FY 2017. The proposed rule requested input from the public regarding codes that should be considered for exemption from the SNF PPS system. As it has done in the past, AOPA suggested the inclusion of HCPCS codes L5987 and L5969 HCPCS codes to be exempt from SNF PPS. In addition, AOPA suggested including the HCPCS codes that represent partial hands and partial feet for inclusion in the PPS exemption list. AOPA will review the final rule when it is released and report any news of significance to AOPA members.

Draft Local Coverage Determination and Policy Article for Lower Limb Prostheses

On November 2, 2015, CMS published a notice that based on a preliminary review of the public comments on the draft LCD, the DME MACs would not be finalizing the Lower Limb Prosthesis LCD "at this time." CMS announced it was forming an interagency workgroup in 2016 to "develop a consensus statement that informs Medicare policy by reviewing the available clinical evidence that defines best practices in the care of beneficiaries who require lower limb prostheses."

The inter-agency workgroup has been established and is made up only of employees of federal agencies. To date, the workgroup has met on two occasions and expects to take significant time to formulate a strategy to properly address the LCD issue. The general consensus is that it will take at least a year or more to complete. AOPA continues to make every effort to ensure that any future LCD for lower limb prostheses is advanced through a transparent process, with stakeholder input, so it does not hinder Medicare beneficiary access to medically necessary and appropriate prosthetic services.

Revision to Local Coverage Determination and Policy Article for Knee Orthoses

The DME MACs have recently published a revision to the Knee Orthosis Local Coverage Determination (LCD) and Policy Article (PA) that was effective for dates of service on or after June 2, 2016.

The primary revisions to the LCD and Policy article included the addition of ICD-10 diagnosis codes that allow providers to indicate whether the encounter was considered an initial, subsequent, or sequela encounter; and incorporation of language from the DMEPOS quality standards regarding the definition of custom fabricated orthoses. The revision also incorporates standard documentation language found in other O&P policies.

DME MAC Contractor Transition

The transition of contractor responsibilities for the Jurisdiction A DME MAC and Jurisdiction B DME MAC occurred on July 1, 2016. CGS is now the contractor for both Jurisdiction B and C, and Noridian Healthcare Solutions, LLC is now the contractor for Jurisdictions A and D. The transition appears to have happened relatively smoothly with few issues occurring as a direct result of the transition.

RAC Audit Update

As a result of the delay of the award of the national DMEPOS, Home Health, and Hospice RAC contract, CMS has authorized the existing four RAC contractors to begin active RAC audit activity. Renewed RAC audits relative to AFOs have been reported in Jurisdictions A and D in significant numbers. AOPA has developed educational material on RAC audits and is presenting a free webinar for members on July 14, 2016 and a paid webinar available to the public on July 21, 2016. One key issue is for members to be fully aware the CMS rules limit CMS contractors to a maximum of 10 additional data requests (ADRs) in any 45 day period.

Revised Limitations on the Scope of Review for Redeterminations & Reconsiderations

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has recently issued a revised directive to its contractors handling appeals that are a result of a “complex prepayment reviews, complex post-payment reviews or automated post payment reviews.” CMS has informed the Durable Medical Equipment Medicare Administrative Contractors (DME MACs) and the Qualified Independent Contractor (QIC) that during the redetermination and reconsideration levels they may only “limit their review to the reason(s) the claim or line item at issue was initially denied”.

This means that the contractors may no longer deny your claim for a different reason upon further review of the claim, they may only review and make a decision based on the initial issue at hand. However, this limit doesn’t apply to appeals that are the result of an automated pre-payment review denial. The limit on the scope of review only applies to appeals which are the result of denials due to complex prepayment reviews, complex post-payment reviews or automated post payment reviews.

This is a beneficial shift in policy. Previously, the DME MACs and the QIC could still “develop new issues and evidence at their discretion” and issue unfavorable decisions for any reason besides the one provided with initial determination; even on post-payment reviews. Now, they may only “develop new issues and evidence at their discretion” when a claim is denied on an automated pre-payment review basis only.

This revised directive and instructions only applies to redetermination and reconsideration requests received by the DME MAC or QIC on or after April 18, 2016. The revised instructions will not be applied retroactively.

AOPA Updates its Joint Statement on Physical Characteristics of Orthopedic Shoe Inserts

In 2013, AOPA, in conjunction with the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) and the Podiatric Footcare Association (PFA), developed a joint statement on the interpretation of HCPCS codes L3000, L3010, L3020, and L3030. The joint statement was presented to AOPA leadership at the time and was approved for publication. On May 13, 2016 a follow up meeting of the three organizations was held and a slight revision to the joint statement was proposed with the understanding that the leadership of the three organizations would have the opportunity to review

and approve the revised document. The revised statement has been reviewed and approved by AOPA leadership and is available on the AOPA website at www.AOPAnet.org

OTS Orthoses and Competitive Bidding

Off the Shelf (OTS) orthoses remain eligible for inclusion in future rounds of Medicare competitive bidding but have not been selected as a product category for the most recently announced phase, known as Round 1 2017, scheduled to be implemented for January 2017. AOPA will continue to monitor this issue closely.

AOPA Participation on DME MAC Advisory Councils

AOPA continues to actively participate on each of the four DME MAC Advisory Councils. These groups meet on a regular basis with representatives of the four DME MACs to discuss provider issues. AOPA has been able to create and maintain open lines of communication with Medicare contractors as a result of participation on the advisory councils.

Mastering Medicare Webinars

The AOPA Mastering Medicare Webinar series continues to be a useful resource for AOPA members and others in the O&P community. The webinars are scheduled for 1:00 PM eastern time on the second Wednesday of each month. The webinars are \$99 each for members and \$199 for non-members. Members can sign up for the entire 2016 series for only \$990 and get two free. Sign up at www.AOPAnet.org. Mid-year signups for the entire series receive a recorded version of sessions missed.

The webinars are a great way to boost employee morale (by providing monthly staff education event), provide needed education and earn CE Credits. The remaining 2016 Mastering Medicare webinar series schedule is listed below.

July 13	Strategies and Levels: How to Play the Appeals Game
July 21	Don't Let the RACs Catch You Unprepared
August 10	The Supplier Standards: Are You Compliant?
September 14	Fill in the Blanks: Know Your Forms
October 12	KO Policy: The ABCs of the LCD and PA
November 9	Don't Miss Out: Are You Billing For Everything You Can?
December 14	New Codes and What Lies Ahead for 2017

AOPA Essential Coding & Billing Seminar

AOPA experts provide the most up-to-date information to help O&P Practitioners and office billing staff learn how to code complex devices, including repairs and adjustments, through interactive discussions with AOPA experts, your colleagues, and much more. Meant for both practitioners and office staff, this advanced two-day event will feature breakout sessions for these two groups, to ensure concentration on material appropriate to each group. The registration rate is \$525 per attendee for members and \$725 for non-members. For additional attendees from the same office, a discount is offered: \$475 for members and \$675 for non-members. The final seminar for 2016 will be held in Las Vegas, NV on November 14-15th. Learn more at <http://www.aopanet.org/education/coding-billing-seminar/>

AOPA's Take. Where You Go.....When You need to Know!

AOPA's blog site, www.aopastake.org continues to grow in popularity. *AOPA's Take* has proven to be a very useful tool in communicating important information relevant to the O&P community in a timely and efficient manner. Feedback from subscribers has been extremely positive. *AOPA's Take* is quickly becoming a “go to” resource for O&P practices.

99th Annual AOPA National Assembly

Join 2,300+ of your colleagues at the 99th Annual AOPA National Assembly. Light the way toward a strong future through clinical and business education, networking and the support of an innovative supplier community. If you need credits, why not attend the country's oldest and largest meeting for orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic professionals and earn over 35 CE Credits at this one meeting. Take advantage of five dedicated education tracks—providing the most relevant education for orthotists, prosthetists, assistants, technicians, pedorthists and business managers.

What's New for 2016 –

- Expanded Technical Fabrication Contest
- Technical and Pedorthic Education comes together for WOW programming with demonstrations on Subtalar Control Foot Orthoses Fabrication, Relasting a Shoe for Severe Foot Deformities, plus the opportunity to try your hand at 3-D Printing.
- Boston Strong Grand Rounds – join us for an inspiring afternoon beginning with personal success stories followed by a series of case studies based on the Boston Marathon Survivors.
- Women's Leadership Forum – Watch your mail for a special invitation
- Alumni Connection Events scheduled throughout the program
- Hands-on CAD CAM training through a four-part program.
- Expo Day – a fun, interactive day in the exhibit hall featuring demonstrations, giveaways and more.
- Scoliosis Lunch and Learn – Spontaneous discussions about different Scoliosis treatment options over lunch
- Special “How-to” programs on business strategies such as “How-to” obtain proper documentation
- Trail of Freedom – participate in our own version of the Freedom Trail without leaving the exhibit hall

And much more

Download the AOPA365 app to view the full program, set up your personal schedule and check out speaker bios on your smartphone. This year's program features distinguished speakers from around the world -- such as:

- **Horst Aschoff, MD** – Physician and Osseointegration specialist from Germany
- **James Beck, MD** – Physician, Research Scientist and Osseointegration Specialist
- **Zachary Bohart, MD** – Physiatrist, specializing in tone management from Spaulding Rehab
- **David Crandell, MD** – Physician at Spaulding Rehab and PM&R Instructor at Harvard Medical School

- **Michael Dillon PhD** – Research Scientist from Australia specializing in partial foot amputations
- **Stefania Fatone, PhD** – Associate Professor at Northwestern
- **John Femino, MD** – Orthopedic Surgeon at University of Iowa Medical Center
- **Kenton Kaufman, PhD** – Research Professor, Department of Bioengineering at Mayo Clinic
- **Edward Lemaire, PhD** – Clinical Researcher at Ottawa Hospital and Professor at University of Ottawa
- **Danielle Melton, MD** – Board Certified in PM&R and Asst Professor University of Texas Medical School
- **Richard McGough, MD** – Orthopedic Surgeon at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
- **Munjed Muderis, MD** – Orthopedic Surgeon from Sydney, Australia specializing in Osseointegration
- **Luigi Pascarella, MD** – Vascular Surgeon at University of Iowa Hospital
- **Megan Sions, PhD, DPT, PT** – Physical Therapist and Research Scientist at University of Delaware
- **Stephen Wegener, PhD** - Assoc Professor of PM&R at John Hopkins University School of Medicine

Check out the enclosed Preliminary Program, visit: www.AOPAnet.org or contact AOPA Headquarters at (571) 431-0876 or info@AOPAnet.org

Communications Update

Mobility Saves Updates

Mobility Saves is growing on social media, with over 12,000 likes on Facebook (“like” us at www.facebook.com/mobilitysaves), 2,200 Twitter Followers (www.twitter.com/MobilitySaves), and 135 followers on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/mobility-saves). The website is kept updated with issues affecting O&P patients and with news of interest.

Mobility Saves continues its partnership with the Amputee Coalition and is currently seeking new partnerships to expand the reach of the campaign.

O&P Almanac

The *O&P Almanac* has been awarded two Silver Awards of Distinction from the 2016 Communicator Awards competition. This international awards program honors innovation and achievement in communications and public relations and marketing. The O&P Almanac was recognized in the “Content Marketing” category for the “United We Stand” package in the October 2015 issue of the magazine, which covered the grassroots campaign built in response to the proposed Local Coverage Determination and Policy Article for lower-limb prosthetics. The magazine also was recognized in the “Writing—Feature Article” category for the December 2015 cover story, “Virtual O&P.” The award comes on the heels of the Bronze award for the Association TRENDS’ 2015 All Media Contest for the monthly trade association publication category.

The May issue featured humanitarian efforts by O&P practitioners, June featured Upper-Limb prosthetics, and July featured growth opportunities in pedorthics. August will focus on the program

and events to be held at the 2016 AOPA National Assembly in Boston, and September will focus on the Paralympics.

AOPA 365

AOPA's app, "AOPA 365", which was launched in 2015, continues to be downloaded by our loyal members. The app is immensely useful when attending the Annual Assembly, as a source to view the agenda and set up your own personal schedule, interact with colleagues, share photos and comments, search for speakers and specific topics, navigate the exhibit hall, and review speaker bios. Beyond the Assembly, this app is also your source to read the *O&P Almanac*, review membership benefits, get current with Hot Issues, see how Mobility Saves, shop in the AOPA Bookstore, access the AOPA Membership Directory, and connect with AOPA through social media. Search "AOPA 365" in the App store or Google Play today!

AOPA Clinical O&P Research Support

AOPA Funds Pilot Grants

AOPA, in partnership with the Center for O&P Learning & Evidence-Based Practice (COPL), announced a Request for Pilot Grant Proposals in 16 potential areas of orthotic and prosthetic research including an open topic. Twenty-seven applications were received, and the high quality of the proposals led the Board to choose to fund seven of the grants, well above the usual three or four that are usually funded.

The 2016-2017 Grant Recipients are as follows:

Lee Childers, PhD, MSPO, CP, *Stumble recovery mechanisms utilized by people using different types of microprocessor knees*

Kenton Kaufman, PhD, *Risk factors and costs associated with secondary health conditions of individuals with above-knee amputations*

Staci Shearin, *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 Gaunard, 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*

All of the 2014-2105 COPL grants, listed below, have been completed. The 2015-2016 grants are currently underway. These reports, and all reports dating back to 2009, are available for review at <http://www.aopanet.org/resources/research/>.

Walter Lee Childers, PhD, MSPO, CP, "The world is not flat: Justifying prosthetic feet with multi-axial features being used on uneven terrain"

Goeran Fiedler, PhD, CPO, “Physiologic range of step-by-step variations in lower limb prosthesis forces during walking”

Dennis E. Clark, CPO, “Comparison of Post-Operative Care Following Trans-Tibial Amputation“

The RAND Research Project

After reviewing proposals from RAND Corporation and two other health economics “think tanks,” AOPA in conjunction the Prosthetics 2020 program has entered into an agreement commissioning RAND Corporation to complete a comprehensive, independent, validated study to establish the value proposition for prosthetic services to amputees. In addition to the study and final report, it is expected that this joint effort will likely end up comprised of three components- the study and final report, as well as a free-standing modeling tool based on the RAND simulation and a white paper outlining AOPA's vision.

It was the unanimous view of the AOPA Board and Executive Committee that current circumstances demand the most comprehensive and credible possible look at the prosthetic value proposition and reimbursement picture, and that the RAND proposal seemed uniquely positioned to satisfy those needs.

AOPA Prosthetics 2020 Technical Advisory Committee

The AOPA Prosthetics 2020 Technical Advisory Committee has been formed to assist with the Rand Corporation study and other research efforts supporting the Prosthetics 2020 project. Representatives to this committee include Dr. Andreas Kannenberg, Dr. Jason Highsmith, Dr. Kenton Kaufman, Kim DeRoy, Stephen Blatchford, Sam Liang, AOPA President Jim Campbell, AOPA President –Elect Michael Oros, and AOPA Executive Director Tom Fise. The committee will meet monthly via teleconference to keep the project advancing forward.

AOPA Google+ Community

During the 2016 AOPA Policy Forum AOPA launched a pilot phase of a Google+ Community. This community will serve as a forum to discuss issues facing the O&P profession and to develop advocacy strategies to address those issues. The concept itself was developed as part of the Mobility Saves committee with emphasis on the need for a forum where members could engage in conversation about issues with other members. The forum will allow members to benefit from shared information when they encounter similar challenges. The pilot phase of the AOPA Google+ Community currently includes members serving as AOPA State Representatives.

AOPA Compendium

AOPA is currently developing a new member benefit that will function much like a Wikipedia for reimbursement information. The vision is for this site to serve as a collection of concise, but detailed information with additional links to supporting documentation about the topics most important to our members. Much like Wikipedia, this compendium will have a crowdsourcing component, garnering the vast knowledge and experience of our membership body. A workgroup, led by AOPA President-Elect Michael Oros, CPO, FAAOP and supported by AOPA Executive Director Tom Fise, Ashlie White, AOPA Manager of Projects and others on the AOPA staff will continue to develop this concept with the goal to have a beta version ready to launch by the end of 2016.

Member Benefit Update

Welcome New Members Joining April 1, 2016 to June 30, 2016

AOPA welcomes the following new patient care facility members in the second quarter of 2016. Ascent Orthotics & Prosthetics, Inc. of Centennial CO; Lake Area Prosthetics & Orthotics of Lake Charles, LA, and Foot Solutions of Atlanta, GA.

New supplier members joining AOPA this quarter are: Fusiform Medical Devices of Baltimore, MD; Capron Podologie of France; Click Medical of Steamboat Springs, CO; Qdesign S.r.l. of Bientina, Italy; Anatomic Metrix, Inc. of Montreal, Canada; Apex 360 Systems, LLC of Tipp City, OH; Osseointegration Group of Australia of North Sydney, Australia, and Peacocks Orthotics, Ltd of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

2016 Operating Performance and Compensation Survey

An often overlooked membership benefit is the Operating and Performance survey conducted annually for members. This industry benchmarking survey helps managers measure the financial performance of their company and develop strategies to gauge and improve the health of their O&P businesses. Surveys were mailed to all AOPA member patient care facilities May 1 and the survey deadline is July 15. The final report will be published in late summer and unveiled at a special Assembly program in Boston on Friday September 9th: *The Top 5 Things to Know about Your Business to Survive and Succeed*. If you didn't participate in the survey this year, the report will be available for sale in the bookstore at the member rate of \$185.

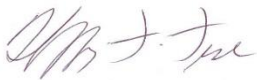
2017 – AOPA's 100th Anniversary

2017 promises to be a milestone year at AOPA. We will celebrate our association's 100th anniversary: our history, our leaders and our members, like you. AOPA's Centennial Committee is planning many exciting activities for our year-long celebration. A 100th Anniversary Commemorative Membership Directory is planned, featuring our leaders, milestones, accomplishments, and a membership listing. Look for more information later this summer on special ways to participate and update your locations.

And Finally

Almost 100 years ago our O&P predecessors thought we needed a unified voice to secure the future of our profession. They were right. Together we have fought unfair government regulations that threaten our businesses and delay patient care. What would our profession be like today without that forethought and our track record? Our profession needs a strong voice today and for the next 100 years. We thank you for your continued support. Your AOPA membership matters more than ever and your support helps us make a difference.

Sincerely,



Thomas F. Fise
Executive Director