



AOPA 1st Quarter 2017 Staff Report

To: AOPA Membership
From: Thomas F. Fise, Executive Director
Date: April 18, 2017

Subject: As AOPA celebrates its 100 year anniversary, we face lots of big if's for O&P and the entire healthcare community, particularly in light of the absence, so far, of action by Congress relating to the Affordable Care Act. The President's budget presents additional problems and more big if's but conventional wisdom views the budget as presented by the President a long way from what any final product may look like. In the shorter term, funding to keep the government open—and Medicare payments rolling—will run out at the end of April unless either Appropriations bills, or another Continuing Resolution is enacted. AOPA is trying to get ahead of the curve: (1) by a planned meeting/O&P briefing for key HHS staffers next week; and (2) by developing new products and services that will give AOPA members a leg up in their ability to navigate what will certainly be some choppy waters in the months and years ahead. Products focused on reimbursement solutions are at the head of the line for new ways for members to cope, get fairly reimbursed and assure patient access to quality care. The AOPA Policy Forum, May 24-25 offers that rare opportunity to receive firsthand information from the AOPA lobbying team, legislators and Congressional staff and educate the decision makers on Capitol Hill.

AOPA World Congress and 100th Anniversary Celebration: Get Ready for the Big One!

Join your colleagues from around the world at the 2017 O&P World Congress, September 6-9, 2017 in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. The planning committee has been hard at work organizing a stellar program that will feature the latest clinical innovations and business tactics.

Celebrate 100 years of the organized O&P profession in the U.S. during AOPA's centennial celebration on Thursday, September 7. Don't miss the "Walk Through Time" historical display, which will be available throughout the show. Peruse the largest exhibit hall in the Western Hemisphere with an anticipated 200 exhibitors from around the world.

Participate in special events such as our Technology Transfer Program, Poster Presentations with "wine and cheese," Party with a Purpose, Pre-conference workshops and Lunch and Learns.

Experience clinical education so remarkable it will be memorialized in an international journal. Our clinical workgroup made up of an international team of researchers, practitioners and partner representatives has made arrangements to have the top ten research papers published in the *International Journal of Neuro-engineering and Rehabilitation*—which will be sponsored by ABC.

Clinical topics include

- Symposium: Implementing an Integrated Care Model into your Practice
- World Perspectives on Polio & PPS Management
- Instructional Course: Innovative Transfemoral Socket Design
- Setting Quality Standards in Upper and Lower Limb Prosthetics
- Symposium: Pediatric LE Orthotic Gait and Functional Design, Tuning and Alignment
- Gait Salvage
- Orthotic Management for Stroke
- Future of Prosthetics: Analyzing the Tissue Socket Interface
- Predicting Walking Ability Following Lower Limb Amputation
- Amputation and Prosthetic Treatment after Partial Foot Amputation
- Pediatric UE Functional Orthotics for Children with Neuromuscular Diseases

Business Executives won't want to miss programming on topics such as the Triple Aim—

- **What is the Triple Aim? An overview and definition of the Triple Aim**
Anthony F Potter, MBA, RN
Receive an overview and definition of the Triple Aim concept, how it originated and how it has evolved. Hear an introduction to integrated care as a way to deliver the Triple Aim.
- **Complete Care: Succeeding in Alternative Payment Models**
Mark Froimson, MD, MBA, Trinity Health
Learn how alternative payment models, including episode of care payments, may impact O&P.
- **Quality at Kaiser**
Jonathon Van Etten, Director - National Provider Contracting & Network Management at Kaiser Foundation Health Plan
Andrew Amster, Director, Department of Care and Service Quality
Insights into the Total Quality Approach at Kaiser Permanente, how it is measured and how it is applied to O&P providers.
- **How Measuring Satisfaction Can Change Behavior**
Richard Vernon, Managing Director Customer Loyalty Practice, Franklin Covey
Learn new methods for measuring patient satisfaction and how to use those measurements to drive the behavior you want in the delivery of care.
- **How Could Triple Aim Impact the Scope of Practice of the O&P Clinician -Threat or Opportunity?**
Frank Bostock, CO, FAAOP
With the rise of integrated care models what are the potential impacts on the scope of practice?

Visit www.opworldcongressusa.org often to learn more about the special events planned for the World Congress and 100th Anniversary Celebration. Registration opens on May 1 so be sure to make plans today.

Celebrate 100 Years with AOPA

AOPA's Commemorative Centennial Who's Who Membership Directory

We couldn't have made it this far without you! AOPA celebrates its 100th Anniversary in 2017 and this special *100th Anniversary Commemorative Who's Who Centennial Directory* is one way we are celebrating our shared history and recognizing that our members are what makes AOPA great. The Commemorative Directory will be mailed in April to all 2017 AOPA member companies. This keepsake

directory will feature the history of AOPA intertwined with the history of O&P and technological advancements through time. A few of our oldest AOPA members get a special mention, and we also pay tribute to our present and past leadership and Lifetime Award Winners and PAC supporters.

Contact information on all of AOPA's members is included to encourage networking among the profession, and referrals as we are distributing this resource to case managers as well. There's much more included in this directory, and we hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed creating it. Extra copies of the Centennial Directory will be available for sale in late April.

Your Story is Our Story

Don't forget to share your personal story for our commemorative website, www.AOPA100.org. Visit to see our interactive timeline and extensive gallery, and to listen to the wonderful anecdotes from your peers. Make sure to submit your stories and photos for inclusion. For more information contact Lauren Anderson at landerson@aopanet.org.

Throwback Thursday

AOPA will be doing a Throwback Thursday post each week in 2017 on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to celebrate the Centennial. We will be sharing old and more recent photos of AOPA members, events, and related O&P things of interest. Submit content to us at www.AOPA100.org and then follow us for fun photos all year long.

Instagram: @american_oandp.

Facebook and Twitter: @americanoandp

Government Affairs and Legislative Round Up

AOPA Policy Forum

Registration is now open for the 2017 AOPA Policy Forum. The Policy Forum will take place May 24-25 at the Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City, just across the Potomac River from Capitol Hill. The Policy Forum is your best opportunity to learn the latest legislative and regulatory developments and how they will affect you, your business and your patients. Once you are armed with the facts, we as a profession will educate our members of Congress to offer common sense solutions and share how the O&P profession restores lives and puts people back to work. Learn more and register at bit.ly/policyforum2017.

AOPA Submits Comments on BIPA 427 Qualified Provider Proposed Rule

On March 13, AOPA submitted comments on the CMS "Proposed Rule on Medicare Requirements for Qualified Practitioners and Qualified Suppliers of Prosthetics and Custom-Fabricated Orthotics". This is the proposal that would enact the long awaited provisions of Section 1834(h) of the Social Security Act (enacted as Section 427 of BIPA 2000), which establishes requirements for qualified suppliers and qualified practitioners, and outlaws Medicare payments to providers who don't meet those criteria.

AOPA gathered member input on the rule and prepared pre-written comments for members to submit through the AOPAvotes.org platform. Nearly 200 members submitted comments to CMS through AOPAvotes.org.

AOPA submitted its own comments that reflect our support of the rule, which is the first step toward ensuring that only qualified providers and suppliers provide prostheses and custom fabricated orthoses to Medicare beneficiaries. AOPA's comments include our opinion that the rule as written is overly broad and should include exceptions, and includes AOPA's concerns with enforcement mechanisms, the "equivalency to ABC or BOC standards", and the regulation of fabrication of O&P devices. AOPA's comments may be viewed at bit.ly/bipacomments

AHRQ Publishes Document Regarding its Systematic Review of Lower Limb Prostheses

On March 29, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) published an announcement that in conjunction with its systematic review of clinical literature regarding lower limb prostheses, it would be performing an evidence review entitled *Error Rate Reduction Regarding Lower Limb Prosthesis*. Included in the announcement was a link to the protocol that will be used in performing the evidence review. It appears that the protocol that will be used for the evidence review adopts several suggestions that were made during the comment process for the previously announced systematic review currently underway by the AHRQ.

AOPA, with significant input from its Medical Advisory Board and its Prosthetics 2020 expert steering committee, as well as AOPA Board members, previously submitted detailed comments that addressed both the systematic review in general as well as responses to the 8 key questions that the AHRQ requested comments for. In addition to its own comments, AOPA actively contributed to comments developed and submitted by the O&P Alliance, of which AOPA is a member. Many other organizations and individuals have also submitted comments on this very important topic. AOPA's comments may be viewed on the AOPA website at bit.ly/ahrqcomments. AOPA will monitor the new announcement closely and keep AOPA members informed of any developments from this project.

AOPA Submits Comments on Proposed CT Medicaid Reimbursement Cuts

On March 30, AOPA submitted comments on two recently announced Connecticut Medicaid policies. The proposed changes include the elimination of some L-Codes from the Connecticut Medicaid fee schedule due to lack of utilization, as well as a 10% reduction in the fee schedule for several custom fitted or custom fabricated orthosis HCPCS codes.

One proposed reimbursement change that is of particular concern is a 40% reduction in Connecticut Medicaid reimbursement for cranial remolding orthoses described by HCPCS code S1040. The notice from Connecticut Medicaid states that the 40% reduction is to “ensure consistency with reimbursement rates of other states and to contain costs.” In addition to the proposed 40% reduction in reimbursement for cranial remolding orthoses, there are also proposed changes to the prior authorization process for cranial remolding orthoses that may lead to unnecessary and inappropriate delays in the provision of quality care.

AOPA submitted comments on the March 30th deadline and provided a letter that 73 AOPA members in Connecticut plus supplier members submitted through the AOPAVotes website. AOPA's comments may be viewed at bit.ly/ctmedicaid.

Medicare Prior Authorization for Certain Prosthetic Items

On December 19, 2016, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the initial implementation of the Medicare prior authorization program that was authorized through the final rule published on December 30, 2015.

As expected, CMS has chosen a cautious approach in implementing its prior authorization program. The initial list of codes subject to prior authorization only contains 2 codes, both of which describe power wheelchairs. The two codes selected are:

K0856--Power wheelchair, group 3 standard, single power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds; and

K0861--Power wheelchair, group 3 standard, multiple power option, sling/solid seat/back, patient weight capacity up to and including 300 pounds.

In addition to limiting the number of codes initially subject to prior authorization, CMS has chosen to implement the prior authorization process in two phases. The first phase was implemented on March 20, 2017 and requires prior authorization for the two codes above in one state within each DME MAC jurisdiction. The second phase will be implemented on July 17, 2017 and will expand the prior authorization program for the two codes above nationwide.

While the initial implementation of the Medicare prior authorization program does not include any lower limb prosthetic codes, the possibility/expectation remains that prior authorization for many lower limb prostheses may well become reality at some point in the future. AOPA will continue to monitor developments and communicate any new information to its members.

Draft Local Coverage Determination and Policy Article for Lower Limb Prostheses

There have been no public announcements regarding the status of the draft LCD for lower limb prostheses since our last report. The recent announcement by the AHRQ discussed above indicates that the work of the AHRQ is continuing. While the AHRQ work has been characterized as independent of the 2015 draft LCD, it is expected and that they will provide feedback and advice to the Inter-Agency task force that has been charged with reviewing and re-writing the draft LCD for lower limb prostheses. AOPA has been working with its Alliance partners on a Statement of Principles that can be shared with all interested HHS/CMS parties, and AOPA will continue to monitor this situation closely.

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, which was scheduled to be implemented in January 2017.

CMS recently announced the product categories for Competitive Bidding Round 2019 and OTS orthoses were also not included in the list of products for Round 2019. An interesting note is that shortly after the 2019 announcement, CMS reported that they are delaying the implementation of Round 2019 to allow the current administration to complete a review of the Medicare Competitive Bidding Program and its effectiveness. The new HHS Secretary, Tom Price, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon, has not been a proponent for unbridled competitive bidding, and AOPA will report any changes to the competitive bidding program that may result from this review.

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. Representatives from all four DME MAC Jurisdictions are scheduled to participate in a panel discussion during the September 6-9 World Congress.

RAC Audit Update

The national DMEPOS, Home Health, and Hospice RAC contractor (Performant Recovery), was authorized by CMS to begin its audit activity. Performant Recovery began auditing claims in March. Currently, there are no orthotic or prosthetic claims listed on the RAC's approved issues list, the list of items/services the RAC has chosen to audit. To view the current list of approved issues visit the Performant Recovery Provider Portal website: www.performantrac.com/ContentPages.aspx?Page=ProviderPortal.

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 remaining 2017 webinars for only \$495 and get one free. Sign up at www.AOPAnet.org. 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 2017 webinar series schedule is listed below. All past webinars are available for purchase as a recording.

January 11- O&P Clinical Documentation: Who Needs to Document and What You Need to Document (recording available)

February 8 - LSO/TLSO Policy (recording available)

March 8 - Marketing Your Business (recording available)

April 12 - Grassroots Advocacy (recording available)

May 10- Modifiers: What do they mean and when to use them

June 14- Internal Audits: The Why and the How of Conducting Self-Audits

July 12 - Know Your Resources: Where to Look to Find the Answers

August 9 - What the Medicare Audit Data Tells Us & How to Avoid Common Errors

September 13 - ABC Inspections & Accreditation

October 11 - AFO/KAFO Policy

November 8 -Gift Giving: Show Your Thanks & Remain Compliant

December 13 - New Codes & Other Updates for 2018

AOPA 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 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 first two seminars of the year in Nashville, TN and Denver, CO were well attended and well received. The next two seminars for 2017 will be held in Pittsburgh, PA on July 17-18th and Phoenix, AZ on November 6-7th. Learn more at bit.ly/2017billing.

Local Coverage Determinations (LCD) Reformatting

The four Durable Medical Equipment Medicare Administrative Contractors (DME MACs) began making changes to the existing format for Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs). Specifically, the general documentation requirements that apply to all Medicare covered services will be removed from the individual LCDs and will be published as a new single stand alone Policy Article that will apply to all Medicare covered services. Currently, the AFO/KAFO Policy, KO Policy and the LSO/TLSO Policy have been reformatted.

C2C Solutions Announced Expansion of the Formal Telephone Discussion Demonstration

C2C Innovative Solutions, the Medicare appeals contractor which processes all DMEPOS appeals at the reconsideration (second) level, announced implementation dates for its expansion of the formal telephone discussion demonstration. The program, currently limited to only DMEPOS claims in Jurisdiction C and D, was expanded to include claims for orthoses in February and claims for prostheses in March.

The formal telephone discussion demonstration is an opportunity for providers to interact directly with the medical review staff at C2C in an attempt to resolve issues that caused the claim to be denied by the DME MAC and subsequently denied at the redetermination level of the appeal process. To date, the demonstration has proven to be very successful with a denial overturn rate approaching 86%. Unfortunately there is no way to “sign up” for this program. Your claim(s) must be selected for review by representatives of C2C solutions. In addition, because this program was established as a demonstration project, there must be a study group (Jurisdiction C and D) and a control group (Jurisdiction A and B). As a result, it is unlikely that the project will be expanded beyond Jurisdiction C and D, at least not during this demonstration project stage.

In addition C2C has indicated that they have been authorized by CMS to overlook some common reasons for claim denials (e.g. missing or illegible signatures), if the documentation and records support the medical necessity of the claim.

DME MACs Update Policies for AFO/KAFOs, KOs, and LSO/TLSOs

The four Durable Medical Equipment Medicare Administrative Contractors (DME MACs) published updated Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs) and Policy Articles for AFO/KAFOs, Knee Orthoses, and Spinal Orthoses. While the changes are mostly format based, there were some minor changes that may impact how you bill Medicare for these services.

The format change that applies to all three policies and will be implemented for other policies in the future is the removal of the “standard documentation” sections of the LCD and Policy Article. Policy specific revisions include the addition of ICD-10 codes that describe acquire genu recurvatum of the knee as eligible for coverage of L1850, the deletion of codes that were discontinued as of December 31, 2016, the addition of codes that were effective January 1, 2017, and the removal of diagnoses codes that describe charcot deformity of the knee as eligible for coverage of L4631.

The most significant revision to all three policies is a clarification regarding the use of HCPCS codes that do not differentiate between custom fitted by an individual with expertise and OTS. These codes simply state “prefabricated, includes fitting and adjustment.” There was some question regarding the proper use of these codes since they did not distinguish whether a device was custom fitted or provided OTS. The policy revisions clearly state that these codes should be used to describe prefabricated devices regardless of whether they are provided as custom fitted or OTS. This clarification only applies to those HCPCS codes that are not part of a split code set.

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 January 1, 2017 and March 31, 2017, received contributions from the following AOPA member(s):

- **George Breece**
- **Steve McNamee, CP, BOCO, FAAOP**

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 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:

- **Sen. Jeff Flake (R-AZ).**

The O&P PAC will also be hosting a series of fun and unique events during the 2017 AOPA World Congress, so please stay tuned as more information is released about these events. If you have not already done so, please consider becoming part of the O&P PAC by reviewing and signing an AOPA O&P PAC authorization form. The work accomplished by the O&P PAC cannot be completed without your help. Learn more at bit.ly/oandppac.

Research and Projects

Prosthetics 2020

AOPA continues its commitment to Prosthetics 2020, the vehicle designed to make sure that prosthetics are properly positioned for the future value driven healthcare economy with four key goals – (1) improve the future reimbursement landscape for LEP; (2) match appropriate technology to patient needs instead of payer forced lowest cost technology to all patients; (3) define new patient segments benefitting from LEP technology; and (4) separate the O&P profession from DME in the minds of payers.

More member participation is needed to support Prosthetics 2020 efforts, Medical Advisory Board (MAB) activities, and needed clinical research and literature reviews. If you share a commitment to protect, fortify, and enhance the recognized, scientifically-substantiated value of prosthetic care in the minds of payers, patients and the general public, you will want to consider making an investment to be part of Prosthetics 2020. You would be joining these forward looking companies in supporting the future of O&P patients and their providers: Endolite, Freedom Innovations LLC, Hanger Clinic, Ossur, Ottobock, Scheck & Siress and WillowWood, Contact Ashlie White, AOPA's Manager of Projects at awhite@aopanet.org to find out how you can join the effort to protect O&P's future.

AOPA Co-OP, the Compendium of O&P

The AOPA Co-OP, a reimbursement, coding and policy resource, is set for an official launch on May 24 during the AOPA Policy Forum. A preview of the platform was conducted at the upcoming AOPA Coding and Billing seminar in Denver, April 10-11.

As a member-only benefit, the website will serve as a collection of concise, but detailed information with additional links to supporting documentation about the topics most important to our members. The platform's key subject areas currently include: Medicare, Medicaid, VA, DoD, Commercial Payors, Data/Evidence, Compliance, State Matters, Good Practices and Trending Topics. The crowdsourcing component of this project allows AOPA to garner the vast knowledge and experience of the membership body.

AOPA Medical Advisory Board (MAB)

AOPA would like to congratulate Medical Advisory Board member Michael Jaff, D.O. on his new position as President of Newton-Wellesley Hospital. A meeting of the AOPA Medical Advisory Board, which includes Dr. Jaff, Kenton Kaufman, PhD, Biomechanics, Mayo Clinic, Col. (ret) Paul F. Pasquina, MD, PM&R, Walter Reed and Doug Smith, MD, Orthopedics, University of Washington, convened February 25th at AOPA Headquarters. Agenda items for the meeting included: status and prospects for the RAND Study; legislative issues; LCD status update; proposed BIPA 427 regulations, prosthetic registry discussion; and future planning for Prosthetics 2020.

The Medical Advisory Board exists to ensure clinical efficacy and provide the necessary clinical knowledge to oversee research development and communicate the findings to patients, providers and payers, including CMS. If you are interested in getting to know more about AOPA Medical Advisory Board members and their commitment to the work of O&P, you'll want to see the brief, 10-minute, face-to-face introduction to these four important leaders, available on the AOPA website at: bit.ly/prosthetics2020.

The RAND Research Project

RAND Corporation has been working to complete a comprehensive, independent, validated study to establish the comprehensive economic value proposition for prosthetic services to amputees, which focuses on advanced prosthetics and includes K2/K3 comparisons. RAND's work is strictly evidence-based, relying on peer-reviewed medical literature, and is expected to result in a 10-year simulation model of all costs and benefit analysis. RAND's work has been accompanied by extensive meetings with independent subject matter experts, together with physicians/scientists on both the AOPA Medical Advisory Board and on the Study's Technical Advisory Committee. At Rand's request, AOPA also enlisted Dobson | DaVanzo to prepare focused tables reflecting recent Medicare claims data relevant to RAND's analytic and data needs.

The results of the RAND research project will be incorporated into what is likely to be two separate final reports—one covering prosthetics for transfemoral amputees and the second relating to prosthetics for transtibial prosthetics, with both including modeling for conventional and advanced prosthetics. 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 simulation model on value over a 10 to 15-year time frame, and a white paper outlining a vision for the future for O&P patients and practitioners.

AOPA Prosthetics 2020 Technical Advisory Committee

The AOPA Prosthetics 2020 Technical Advisory Committee, which includes Dr. Andreas Kannenberg, MD, PhD; Dr. Jason Highsmith, PT, DPT, PhD, CP, FAAOP; Dr. Kenton Kaufman, PhD; Kim DeRoy, MSc, PT, CPO, Med; Stephen Blatchford; Sam Liang; AOPA Past President Jim Campbell, PhD, CO, FAAOP; AOPA President Michael Oros, CPO, LPO, FAAOP; and AOPA Executive Director Tom Fise, continues to meet in their advisory role as RAND prepares the final report and simulation model.

Research Updates

In 2015, AOPA released a request for proposals for systematic reviews and ultimately selected three to fund. The review by Dr. Michael Dillon, PhD of La Trobe University (Australia) titled "Outcomes of dysvascular partial foot amputation and how these compare to transtibial amputation: a systematic review for the development of shared decision-making resources" has now been accepted and published to the peer-reviewed, open access journal *Systematic Reviews* on the BioMed Central database. Read Dr. Dillon's systematic review at <http://www.aopanet.org/resources/research/>.

The two other systematic reviews funded in 2015 have been completed and are in process or pending publication ("Cost Efficacy of Transtibial Interventions" by Jason Highsmith, DPT, PhD, CP, FAAOP, and "Prosthetic Design and Research: A Systematic Review of Established Treatment Guidelines to Determine Post Amputation Functional Performance Level and Develop a Prosthetic Candidacy Treatment Algorithm" by Jason Kahle, CPO, MSMS, FAAOP).

Small Grant RFP announcement

In February, 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. The grants are for projects up to \$15,000 and the submission deadline is April 28, 2017.

Areas for submission are listed below:

- a. Study community outcomes of patients, such as activity, social interactions, depression and anxiety
- b. Understand the effects of prosthetic component selection on community activity levels rather than in the lab
- c. Study the origins/clinical goals and prevalence of prosthesis prescribing patterns

- d. Link biomechanical performance measures to functional levels
- e. Validate a novel technique for kinetic or kinematic assessment that can be reasonably accomplished in a regular prosthetics practice.
- f. Examine impact of changing type of prosthesis on physical activity, and energy consumption
- g. Demonstrate methods to record primary health outcomes such as falls and lower back pain in amputees
- h. Demonstrate the validity and reliability of an outcome measure that can be used by practitioners to predict or document patient outcomes
- i. Create a mechanism for crowd sourcing incidence reporting and issues of importance to patients
- j. AFO/KAFO: Utilization and comparative effectiveness of custom vs. OTS AFOs and KAFOs. Investigation and analyses of patients who receive custom orthosis subsequent to OTS AFO fitting.
- k. Microprocessor Controlled Knee and Ankle Joints – Safety Benefits for Non-Variable Cadence (K-1, K-2) Ambulators
- l. How does restricted access for K-2 to Hydraulic Controls Adversely Impact Patients?
- m. Functional Impacts of Vacuum-Assisted Socket Suspension Systems
- n. Outcomes Measures, Evaluation of Clinical Benefit, and Quality of Life Metrics Related to Orthotic Management (Note: Submissions Should be Pathology and/or Condition Appropriate, e.g. Stroke, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Polio, OA)
- o. Stance Control Knee Ankle Foot Orthoses, Clinical Application and Measured Outcome.
- p. Open Topics – Beyond the Above Priorities, Top Quality Clinical O&P Research Topics Considered

The 2017 COPL grants that are selected for funding will be listed at www.aopanet.org/resources/research/.

Communications and Membership

Mobility Saves Updates

Mobility Saves continues to grow on social media, with over 16,000 likes on Facebook (“like” us at www.facebook.com/mobilitysaves), 2500 Twitter Followers (www.twitter.com/MobilitySaves), and 150 connections on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/mobility-saves). The website is updated with issues affecting O&P consumers and news of interest.

After completing a usability study, the Mobility Saves Committee and workgroup are in the final stages of planning for significant updates to MobilitySaves.org. Updates will include a redesigned homepage, improved navigation, and new research content. Previously published content will remain available on the website. With results expected from ongoing studies in the coming months, the Committee plans to launch the updated site with new published research and associated content. MobilitySaves.org continues to be a tool to communicate to patients, practitioners, and payers that research on orthotic and prosthetic services affirms that mobility saves.

Healthcare Compliance and Ethics Week—November 5-11, 2017

Be on the lookout for information about plans for Healthcare Compliance and Ethics Week. AOPA is teaming up with the Healthcare Compliance and Ethics Association (HCCA) to provide opportunities and resources for AOPA members to dedicate the week of November 5-11 to introduce and reinforce the compliance and ethics standards their employees are expected to meet. The importance of employee education is emphasized by the U.S. Federal Sentencing Guidelines’ seven elements of an effective compliance and ethics program. The education element requires that steps be taken so all employees know and understand the compliance and ethics standards that they are expected to meet.

Plans are in the works to provide AOPA member companies with resources, education and ideas on making this week an impactful and memorable one.

O&P Almanac

The *O&P Almanac* has been celebrating AOPA's Centennial all year long, kicking off with AOPA's 100 years of history as its feature article in the January issue. Each issue throughout the year will include a "Then and Now" highlighting how an AOPA event or product has evolved over the years. Leading up to the AOPA World Congress, each issue will also have an interview with an O&P Professional from a different country. The February issue continued with the Centennial Celebration, but focused on Patient Empowerment, and the March issue's feature was on Pediatric Bracing. April's feature is on O&P professionals partnering with patients in advocacy efforts. May's issue will be on Healthcare Reform, June will be on Upper-Limb Devices, and July will be on Osseointegration.

AOPA 365

If you haven't already, download AOPA's app, "AOPA 365". 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 Welcomes New Members January 1, 2017 to March 31, 2017

AOPA welcomes the following new patient care facility members in the first quarter of 2017: **Upstate Prosthetics LLC** of Greenville, SC; **Medical Arts Prosthetics Clinic** of Madison, WI; **Reliant Prosthetics Southwest LLC** of Santa Theresa, NM; **Horizon Prosthetics LLC** of Lone Tree, CO; **Ortho Illinois** of Rockford, IL ; and **LimBionics** of Durham, NC.

New Supplier members for the first quarter of 2017 include: **Protosthetics** of Fargo, ND; **Cypress Adaptive LLC** of Bartlett IL; and **Monetek** of Bloomfield Hills, MI.

Operating Performance and Compensation Report Committee Kicks Off 2017 Survey

AOPA's Operating Performance and Compensation Survey Working Group met this quarter to refine the annual survey instrument to be mailed to members in May. Members are encouraged to participate in the benchmarking surveys (FREE) to assist in developing specific strategies to gauge and improve the fiscal health of their O&P business. Participating members also receive a free customized individual Company Performance Report comparing their performance with other like size O&P businesses. The survey also helps AOPA develop a more accurate picture of the financial trends in the industry and is used by bankers and investors to benchmark clients and acquisition targets. Final 2017 reports are expected to be published late summer/early fall. Watch for your survey in the mail around May 1, or go to: www.aopa-survey.com

AOPA's Resource Guide – At Your Fingertips

Renewing AOPA members will find some new items in their 2017 AOPA membership certificate mailing. We hope you will proudly display the 2017 AOPA member static cling decal, Mobility Saves static cling decal and the special commemorative membership certificate in your office. Also enclosed was AOPA's Resource Guide. We hope you will laminate it or tuck it somewhere near your desk for quick and easy reference. It has all the information you need to access ALL of your AOPA membership benefits plus contact information for AOPA staff, who are here to assist you.

And finally, a big thank you for renewing your AOPA membership in 2017. We work hard every day to ensure fair treatment of O&P by legislators and regulators, so that your business has the resources it needs to survive and grow. AOPA membership makes your business more viable and profitable and we thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Thomas F. Fise, JD
Executive Director

2017 Calendar of Events

Learn more at AOPAnet.org

Date	Event	Location
May 10	Modifiers: What Do They Mean and When to Use Them	AOPA Webinar
May 24-25	2017 AOPA Policy Forum	Washington, DC
June 14	Internal Audits: The Why and the How of Conducting Self-Audits	AOPA Webinar
July 12	Know Your Resources: Where to Look to Find the Answers	AOPA Webinar
July 17-18	Mastering Medicare: Essential Coding & Billing Techniques	Pittsburgh, PA
August 9	What the Medicare Audit Data Tells Us & How to Avoid Common Errors	AOPA Webinar
September 6-9	AOPA 2nd World Congress and Centennial Celebration	Las Vegas, NV
September 13	ABC Inspections & Accreditation	AOPA Webinar
October 11	AFO/KAFO Policy	AOPA Webinar
November 5-11	Corporate Compliance & Ethics Week	Webinars, Resources, and more
November 6-7	Mastering Medicare: Essential Coding & Billing Techniques	Phoenix, AZ
November 8	Gift Giving: Show Your Thanks & Remain Compliant	AOPA Webinar
December 13	New Codes & Other Updates for 2018	AOPA Webinar