



American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association

www.AOPAnet.org

AOPA In Advance SmartBrief  
*Breaking News*  
December 19, 2017

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**AOPA Submits Comments on Proposed Rule That Would Limit a Veteran's Rights to Choose Their Orthotic and Prosthetic Provider**

The October 16, 2017 *Federal Register* included a proposed rule published by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that intends to "reorganize and update the current regulations related to prosthetic and rehabilitative items, primarily to clarify eligibility for prosthetic and other rehabilitative items and services, and to define the types of items and services available to eligible veterans."

There is a provision in the proposed rule that significantly threatens longstanding VA policy that allows the veteran to decide whether they receive O&P services directly from the VA or from a VA contracted provider. The proposed language states the following:

***"VA will determine whether VA or a VA-authorized vendor will furnish authorized items and services under § 17.3230 to eligible veterans. When VA has the capacity or inventory, VA directly provides items and services to veterans. However, VA also may use, on a case-by case basis, VA authorized vendors to provide greater access, lower cost, and/or a wider range of items and services. We would clarify in regulation that this administrative business decision is made solely by VA to eliminate any possible confusion as to whether a veteran has a right to request items or services generally, or to request specific items or services from a provider other than VA, and to clarify for the benefit of VA-authorized vendors that VA retains this***

***discretion as part of our duty to administer this program in a legally sufficient, fiscally responsible manner.”***

This language, if finalized, is in direct conflict with the current VA policy as well as the Veteran’s Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 and will significantly restrict the ability of a veteran to see the VA contracted provider of their choice for prosthetic and orthotic care.

AOPA submitted comments on the proposed rule which were due on December 15, 2017. [AOPA’s comments may be viewed by clicking here.](#)

Questions regarding this issue may be directed to Joe McTernan at [jmcternan@AOPAnet.org](mailto:jmcternan@AOPAnet.org) or Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org).

### **AOPA Submits Comments on CMS Proposed Change to the DMEPOS Quality Standards**

On December 11, 2017, AOPA submitted formal comments on CMS’ proposed change to the DMEPOS Quality Standards that would expand the definition of the term “molded to patient model” to include custom fabricated diabetic inserts that are fabricated using a virtual or digital model of the patient’s foot and a direct milling process. Earlier this year, the DME MACs published a correct coding bulletin that indicated that because direct milled inserts were not molded over a positive model of the patient’s foot, they could not be billed using HCPCS code A5513 and would have to be billed using A9270 which is a statutorily non-covered service.

The proposed change to the DMEPOS Quality Standards creates a pathway for Medicare coverage for direct milled inserts but a subsequent frequently asked questions (FAQ) document published by CMS indicates that direct milled inserts cannot be billed using A5513 and that reimbursement for inserts fabricated this way will be reduced by approximately 14%.

AOPA’s comments generally supported the proposed change to the DMEPOS Quality Standards but challenged the CMS proposal to arbitrarily reduce the reimbursement rate for direct milled inserts. AOPA believes that the manner of fabrication is irrelevant and that the proposed change to the DMEPOS Quality Standards should allow direct milled inserts to be properly billed using A5513.

[AOPA’s comments may be accessed by clicking here.](#)

### **Rehacare & Orthopedic China Hosting Trade Fair in China**

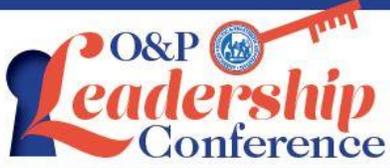


Rehacare & Orthopedic China 2018 (R&OC 2018), the leading trade fair of prosthetics & orthotics, assistive products and rehabilitation equipment, will be held in in April 2-4, 2018 in Guangzhou, China. R&OC 2018 serves to feature the latest state of development of Chinese industry and introduces the world’s latest technologies to the Chinese market. The combination of International Rehabilitation Canton Forum (IRCF) makes the R&OC an optimal trading and dialogue platform for

professionals, market leaders, suppliers, dealers and innovative newcomers from China and across the world. [Watch the 2017 video report](#)

[Learn more](#) or [Register online](#)

## 2018 AOPA Leadership Conference



AN EXCLUSIVE, BY INVITATION ONLY EVENT

**JAN. 5-7, 2016 • PALM BEACH, FL**  
THE BREAKERS



AOPA invites our top level executives from AOPA member companies to join us at our third O&P Leadership Conference.

—Featured Speakers—



**Alison Cernich, PhD** is the Director of the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation (NCMRR) in the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development at the National Institutes of Health. As Director of NCMRR, Dr. Cernich oversees a varied portfolio of research projects, training programs, and rehabilitation research infrastructure network sites aimed at improving the care of individuals with physical disability who require medical rehabilitation.



**Bill Stainton** is a multiple Emmy Award-winning TV producer, writer, and performer; an author; a business humorist; and an internationally-recognized Beatles expert. He blends the business smarts he learned from twenty years in corporate management with the show biz sparks he garnered from working with people like Jerry Seinfeld, Ellen DeGeneres, and Bill Nye the Science Guy to create entertaining and enlightening presentations enjoyed by audiences around the world!



**Jason Altmire** served three terms as Representative for Pennsylvania's 4th district (Democrat). He was a bipartisan centrist known for working with both sides of the aisle. He has been profiled by numerous national publications and has appeared on a wide variety of news programs. In his business career, he has served in senior executive positions in the health-care industry, and as an adjunct professor at George Washington University, focusing on politics and policy.

This event is invitation only—contact [landerson@aopanet.org](mailto:landerson@aopanet.org) to request another copy of your invitation. [www.AOPAnet.org](http://www.AOPAnet.org)

## AOPA Submits Comments on the CMS Proposed Rule That Would Provide States with Additional Flexibility in Defining Essential Health Benefits

On November 2, 2017, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* entitled “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; HHS Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2019.” Among the provisions in the proposed rule is a section that would provide individual states with increased flexibility in defining essential health benefits (EHB) for purposes of establishing benchmark plans required by the Affordable Care Act.

AOPA submitted official comments on the proposed rule on November 27, 2017. Our comments reflected AOPA’s consistent position that orthoses and prostheses must remain essential health benefits and any action by CMS that restricts or reduces access to O&P services is not in the best interest of quality patient care.

AOPA’s comments may be accessed by [clicking here](#).

## The First AOPA Coding & Billing Seminar of 2018 is in Atlanta, GA

**When: February 26-27, 2018**  
**Location: Doubletree by Hilton Atlanta Airport**  
**3400 Norman Berry Dr.**  
**Atlanta, GA, 30344**

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.

At this seminar you will:

- Receive up-to-date information on Prior Authorization and other Hot Topics
- Ensure your Proof of Delivery meets Medicare Requirements
- Learn how to assess risk areas in your practice
- Learn successful appeal strategies and hints to avoid claim denials
- Practice coding complex devices, including repairs and adjustment
- Attend break-out sessions for practitioners and office staff
- Earn 14 CEs



[Register Now](#)

Questions regarding the seminar may be directed to Joe McTernan at (571) 431-0811 or Devon Bernard at (571) 431-0854.

### Attend the 2018 AOPA National Assembly in Vancouver, Canada

**2018 AOPA National Assembly ~ Sept 26-29  
Vancouver, BC, Canada**

#### **Gain International Recognition \* Advance Your Career \* Improve Patient Care**

AOPA is seeking high-quality educational and research content for the 2018 AOPA National Assembly, September 26-29 in Vancouver, BC, Canada. **All submissions are due March 1, 2018.**

Your submissions will set the stage for a broad curriculum of high-value clinical and scientific offerings at the National Assembly. All free paper abstracts must be submitted electronically. Abstracts submitted by e-mail or fax will not be considered. All abstracts will be considered for both podium and poster presentations. The review committee will grade each submission via a blind review process, based on the criteria below and reach a decision regarding acceptance of abstracts.

- Relevance, level of interest in topic
- Quality of Scientific Content
- Quality of Clinical Content

**Clinical Free Papers** - Present an Orthotic, Prosthetic or Pedorthic Free Paper. The top scoring papers will compete for the prestigious Thranhardt Award.

**Technician Program** - Submit your Technical education paper for submission the Technical Track.



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**Symposia** - If you are interested in organizing a Symposium.

**Business Education Program** - The top papers will be considered for the prestigious Sam E. Hamontree, CP (E) Business Education Award.

**Pedorthic Program** - Healthcare professionals with an interest in Pedorthics should use this form.

**All papers are due March 1, 2018.**

[Learn More](#)

**2018 AOPA Webinars Announced**

AOPA is pleased to announce the topics for its 2018 Webinars, which take place on the second Wednesday of each month at 1:00 P.M. Eastern Time. [Register here.](#)

January 10- Lower Limb Protheses Policy: A Comprehensive Review

February 14-Inpatient Billing

March 14 - Medicare Coding Guidelines: MUEs, PTPs, PDAC, etc.

April 11-Enhancing Cash Flow & Increasing Your Accounts Receivable

May 9 - Coding: Understanding the Basics

June 13- Audits: Know the Types, Know the Players, and Know the Rules

July 11-Administrative Documentation

August 8 --Outcomes & Patient Satisfaction Surveys

September 12-Medicare as Secondary Payer: Knowing the Rules

October 10- Year End Review: How to Wrap-Up & Get Ready for the New Year

November 14: Evaluating Your Compliance Plan & Procedures: How to Audit Your Practice

December 12: New Codes, Medicare Changes & Updates

During these one-hour sessions, AOPA experts provide the most up-to-date information on a specific topic. Perfect for the entire staff-- a great team-building, money-saving, educational experience! Sign up for the entire series and get two conferences FREE. Entire Series (\$990 Members/\$1,990 Non-Members). [Register here.](#)

**HCPCS Code Changes for 2018**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has released the new HCPCS codes for 2018, and there were only a few minor changes. Below is a complete breakdown of the code changes which will be effective for claims with a date of service on or after January 1, 2018.

**New Codes**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
L3761	Elbow orthosis with adjustable position locking joint(s), prefabricated, off-the-shelf
L7700	Gasket or seal, for use with prosthetic socket insert, any type, each

## Changes in Code Descriptors

Code	New Descriptor	Old Descriptor
L3760	Elbow orthosis, with adjustable position locking joint(s), prefabricated, item that has been trimmed, bent, molded, assembled, or otherwise customized to fit a specific patient by an individual with expertise	Elbow orthosis, with adjustable position locking joint(s), prefabricated, includes fitting and adjustments, any type

AOPA's Coding and Reimbursement Committee will review the list of changes and provide appropriate comments to CMS.

### Upcoming AOPA Events

- January 5-7, 2018      AOPA Leadership Conference (Invitation Only)  
Palm Beach, FL
- January 10, 2018      *Lower Limb Protheses Policy: A Comprehensive Review*  
AOPA Webinar  
[Learn more and register here](#)
- February 26-27, 2018      Coding & Billing Seminar  
Atlanta, Georgia  
[Learn more and register here](#)