



American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association

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AOPA In Advance SmartBrief

Breaking News

March 20, 2018

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Upcoming Events

AOPA Secures an Advocacy Victory on Reimbursement for Custom Fabricated, Direct Milled Diabetic Inserts

AOPA is very pleased to announce an advocacy win regarding the fee structure for K0903/A5513. AOPA has confirmed with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that the Medicare fee schedule for K0903, a temporary HCPCS code, effective April 1, 2018, that describes custom fabricated, direct milled diabetic inserts has been set at the same amount as the current Medicare fee schedule for A5513 (\$43.56 for most states), which describes custom fabricated diabetic inserts that are fabricated over a positive model of the patient's foot. This has been a very long battle, one in which AOPA partnered with the American Podiatric Medical Association, the O&P Alliance, and the Amputee Coalition. AOPA is also greatly indebted to Rep. Brad Wenstrup and his excellent staffers - Derek Harley, Nick Uehlecke (Ways & Means Committee) and Greg Brooks for their help, as well as Joe McTernan, Devon Bernard, Ashlie White and others on AOPA's lobbying team. Believe it or not, this battle started in August, 2017, when we set our strategy, began outreach to podiatrists, and to key Hill players! This is VERY important because A5513 is not the only code where scanning processes have evolved - this hopefully sets the right precedent for the agency.

This battle included a decision, first highlighted by PDAC, that diabetic shoes inserts that were fabricated using scanning devices and direct milling did not meet the precise words of the A5513 code, which referenced the process as molded over a model of the patient's foot. A coding verification notification was initiated by PDAC to focus on the process used. It should be noted that this code, vital to protecting diabetic patients, had declined in utilization by 14% in the prior 3

years, largely because of unreasonable reimbursement cuts. At an Open Door Forum, CMS announced that they agreed that the processes were equivalent, but also said that the scanned device required less work, and they expected to reduce the fee by about \$7 for direct milled inserts. A long battle has ensued, where as a result of Congressional pressure, the fee decision was shifted to the very highest levels in CMS. Ultimately, CMS reached the right decision that as the processes were essentially equivalent, the fee needed to also be identical (one of the several arguments AOPA mounted was the CMS' own manuals say that when one code is "exploded" into two parallel codes both new codes must retain the same fee), as provided in CMS' own Medicare Claims Processing Manual.

AOPA is proud of this advocacy victory, not only for what it represents for providers of diabetic inserts, but also for the precedent that it sets for future issues involving the use of scanning and other technology to create alternate manufacturing processes in orthotics and prosthetics.

Questions regarding this issue may be directed to Joe McTernan at jmcternan@AOPAnet.org or Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org.

AOPA Submits Comments on Proposed Rule that Would Impact Coverage of Essential Health Benefits

On March 6, 2018, AOPA submitted comments on a proposed rule that would change the definition of the term “employer” as it relates to association health plans and the requirement to cover “essential health benefits” under provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The proposed rule states that by expanding the definition of the term “employer” association based health plans will have new opportunities to negotiate terms with insurance companies that will benefit its members. AOPA’s primary concern with the proposed rule is that the proposed expansion of association health plans will significantly reduce the requirements for these plans to provide coverage for health benefits, including orthotics and prosthetics, which have been designated as essential health benefits by provisions of the ACA.

[AOPA’ full comments may be reviewed by clicking here.](#)

Questions regarding this issue may be directed to Joe McTernan at jmcternan@AOPAnet.org.

Wrap up of the 2018 AOPA Policy Forum

The 2018 AOPA Policy Forum held March 7-8 was another success that presented realistic opportunities for O&P to meet with Congressional representatives to improve patient care and advance other legislative objectives. With a recent legislative win under our belts, AOPA members and O&P users travelled to DC to visit lawmakers to build on this momentum, presenting their stories of the impact O&P makes on patients’ lives, and suggesting common sense solutions to issues obstructing O&P interventions.

Ninety-six O&P professionals and patients donned their advocacy hats during the March 8 visits to Capitol Hill, and visited with legislators in 500 appointments. Attendees encouraged lawmakers to support the Medicare O&P Improvement Act – the clinical notes provision was one part of the bill, but seven provisions remain that have not been enacted. Attendees also requested support for additional funding for O&P research and education, expressed the importance of Veterans' Choice, and took the opportunity to share other issues facing their patients and their businesses. The impact of the visits is not always immediate, but the cumulative effect of hearing from patients, clinicians, manufacturers, and AOPA and other O&P organizations is how we get lawmakers to share our concerns and promote our responsibility in the rehabilitative process.



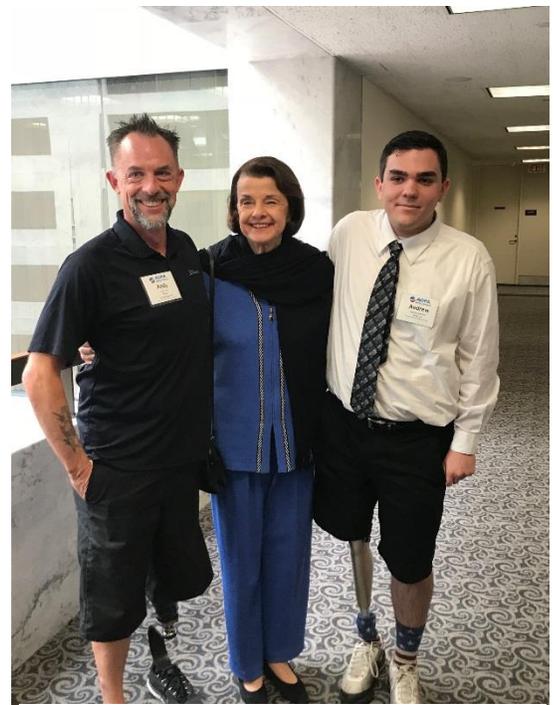
Frank Snell, Congressman French Hill, and Rick Fleetwood of

On the first day of the Policy Forum, attendees heard from Congressional members Rep. Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Rep. Mike Bishop (R-MI), who shared their insights on healthcare and their advice for advancing O&P's legislative agenda. Attendees then heard from a panel of experts including AOPA staff, lobbyists, board members and other voices in O&P to feel confident in their "asks" from lawmakers. On the second day attendees heard from Senator Ben Cardin and finalized their talking points and "asks", and headed to Capitol Hill.

AOPA staff will be following up with legislative staff to keep the ball moving forward. See more photos at [AOPA's Flickr site.](#)



From left: Justin Rheault, Nicole Ver Kuillen, Rep. DelBene (D-WA), Natalie Harold, David Boone



Andy May, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-CA, Andrew Seelhof

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Opportunities for Clinical O&P Research Support from AOPA – April 30th Deadline

The American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association is proud to announce 5 Requests for Proposals for separate research grants.

As part of AOPA's Orthotics 2020 initiative, we are committed to making a major leap forward in clinical research that can answer some of the most important and profound issues about Orthotics. AOPA, together with its many partners among O&P manufacturers, patient care companies, and others entities committed to an evidence-driven future for O&P, will be funding one grant for each topic below in amounts of up to \$60,000-\$75,000, varying by topic - see each RFP for the specifics of the grant.

1. [Orthotic Treatment for Stroke Patients](#)
2. [Back Bracing](#)
3. [Osteoarthritis of the Knee](#)
4. [Orthotic Treatment for Plagiocephaly in Pediatric Patients](#)

In partnership with the Center for O&P Learning & Evidence-Based Practice (COPL), AOPA is accepting applications for pilot grants for up to \$15,000-\$30,000 for ten O&P topics, including an open topic (multiple grants will be funded).

- [Pilot Grant RFP](#)

The deadline for all proposals is April 30, 2018.

If you have any questions, please contact Yelena Mazur at ymazur@AOPAnet.org or 571/431-0876.

Attend the San Antonio Coding & Billing Seminar April 30-May 1

When: April 30 – May 1

***Location: The San Antonio Marriott Riverwalk
889 E Market St
San Antonio, TX 78205***

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

Book your hotel by April 6 for the \$179/night rate by calling 800/648-4462 or [online](#). Register by March 30 for early bird rate. Questions regarding the seminar may be directed to Joe McTernan at (571) 431-0811 or Devon Bernard at (571) 431-0854.

Plan an Exclusive Tour during the National Assembly



Easy day trips and tours in Vancouver!



Join us for the 2018 AOPA National Assembly in Vancouver, BC, Canada, September 26-29 and take advantage of the wonderful location to take easy daytrips and tours of the region. AOPA has partnered with Landsea Tours & Adventures to offer AOPA Assembly attendees, and their travelling companions, special rates on sightseeing tours of Vancouver and the surrounding areas. Landsea is offering 7 different tours, from a four hour tour of Vancouver city highlights, to longer trips to Capilano Suspension Bridge Park, Whistler, Victoria, the Sea to Sky Gondola, and more. [See the tour options.](#) Don't forget to renew your passport if necessary!



SEPT. 26-29 | VANCOUVER | CANADA

Upcoming AOPA Events

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|------------------------|---|
| April 11, 2018 | <p><i>Enhancing Cash Flow & Increasing Your Accounts Receivable</i>
AOPA Webinar
Learn more and register here</p> |
| April 30 – May 1, 2018 | <p>Coding & Billing Seminar
San Antonio, Texas
Learn more and register here</p> |
| May 9, 2018 | <p><i>Coding: Understanding the Basics</i>
AOPA Webinar
Learn more and register here</p> |