

AOPA 2nd Quarter 2018 Staff Report



To: AOPA Membership
From: Thomas F. Fise, Executive Director
Date: July 16, 2018

Subject: Celebrating Success Times Two!

After years of hard work challenging the draft LCD for lower limb prostheses, the DME MACs officially retired the draft LCD based on the recommendation of the Inter Agency Workgroup tasked with developing a guidance statement on Medicare coverage of lower limb prostheses. AOPA members, AOPA staff and our lobbying team also celebrated the House VA Health Subcommittee *and* full VA Committee unanimously voting to approve legislation creating competitive grants to expand or create O&P masters programs. We still need this to pass the full House plus the Senate. Success is sometimes incremental and this victory was the result of a lot of work, explanations and advocacy by AOPA members. And just because a law is signed, doesn't mean it is quickly implemented. AOPA pressed CMS through various channels this quarter to issue immediate guidance to its contractors on the provisions of Section 50402 as it relates to recognizing the prosthetist's and orthotist's notes inclusion in the medical record. And in the research arena, Orthotics 2020 is identifying a Medical Advisory Board and implementing an aggressive research program on the outcomes effectiveness and value of five specific orthotic services.

CMS' Lower Limb Prostheses Interagency Workgroup Releases a Consensus Statement

In 2016 the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) convened the Lower Limb Prostheses Interagency Workgroup in response to the comments received in regard to the 2015 Draft Local Coverage Determination (LCD) for Lower Limb Prostheses. The Workgroup's purpose was 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 Workgroup has completed their review and released a consensus statement outlining their findings and suggestions. Based on the findings and recommendations of the Workgroup CMS is taking the following immediate actions:

- Instructing the Durable Medical Equipment Medicare Administrative Contractors (DME MACs) to remove the Draft LCD
- Instructing the DME MACs that coverage for lower limb prostheses will remain under the current LCD, with no changes
- Future LCD changes must follow procedures set forth in the 21st Century Cures Act
- Considering creating a National Coverage Determination (NCD) to evaluate the use of microprocessor knees (MPK) in those individuals utilizing their prostheses as a limited community ambulator (K2 functional level)

The removal of the Draft LCD has been an aim of AOPA and its lobbying efforts, since it was introduced in 2015, and the official directions from CMS to remove it is a major victory.

The body of the report is a series of assertions claiming lack of strong support from either side of the controversy, and instead would pass responsibilities off to pre-authorization. This relegating many important decisions to pre-authorization is opposed by both AOPA and the Amputee Coalition. It could easily represent CMS passing the buck on key beneficiary decisions to its contractors. The science and bibliography seemed incomplete, but it became clear that there will be a second Interagency Task Force that will focus on research issues in prosthetics, and will be chaired by Dr. Alison Cernich of NIH. It appears that this second report will need to be completed before the CMS Interagency report is ready to be opened for formal comments, and potential additional action...a process which may be 12-18 months into the future.

The bottom line: AOPA agrees with 60%--the four key findings in bullets above, and AOPA disagrees with the bevy of topics being relegated to pre-authorization. Medicare amputee beneficiaries deserve better clarity on these key issues.

In addition the recommendation that the potential for MPK devices for K2- limited community ambulators- be done by a NCD is an important step forward as it represents CMS taking back this authority from the DME MACs. LCDs are the province of the DME MACs, while a NCD is a strict Federal Register CMS-driven rulemaking process. CMS has consistently said that the only way they could take this matter out of the authority of the DME MACs would be to invoke a NCD. AOPA will also be submitting comments on the proposed NCD and potential for microprocessor knees to be used by K2 -limited community-ambulators in accordance with established guidelines.

2018 AOPA Assembly: Passport to Innovation

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The AOPA leadership looks forward to seeing you in Vancouver Canada September 26-29, 2018 for the 2018 AOPA National Assembly. Enclosed you will find a copy of the preliminary program which includes all education, special events and program highlights.

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If you are not already planning to attend, please consider:

- Earn CE Credits. Over 40 CE Credits are available to orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic practitioners.
- See the latest cutting-edge technologies in prosthetics, orthotics, and pedorthics while you peruse the largest O&P exhibition in North America.
- Hear from Nike Director of Innovations, Tobie Hatfield, and Paralympic Gold Medalist, Mike Schultz.
- Learn from unparalleled clinical content including: *Multi-disciplinary panel on Rehabilitation of the Paretic Arm, Technology for Geriatrics, Future Possibilities in Amputation Surgery, and Advances in Upper-Limb Control Technologies.*
- Participate in a priceless educational experience for business owners and managers – including programming on *Top Ten Strategy Series, Compliance in a Changing World*, and our ever-popular Business Certificate Program.

- Stay abreast on what's happening in the profession - *Our Notes are Officially Part of the Medical Record...Now What?*
- Fun Networking Events such as the Party with a Purpose, Professional Women in O&P Brunch, Thranhardt Golf Classic, Welcome Reception and more.

Experience an Exhibit Hall packed with exhibitors from around the world showcasing every device, tool, product and service you need to serve your patients. Plus:

- Step it up challenge makes it easy to win prizes while taking steps to stay healthy
- Slap Shot Game – receive tokens at education programs and bring them to the exhibit hall to try scoring a goal to score prizes from exhibitors
- Technical Fabrication Contest – a timed competition with a grand prize of \$500
- Product Preview Theater Presentations throughout the meeting provide knowledge and CE Credits
- Discounted Alaskan Cruise side trips

Participate in special events such as our Party with a Purpose 1970's Disco and Dinner, Thranhardt Golf Tournament, Poster Presentations, Pre-conference workshops and much more. Save \$100 when you register for the Assembly before August 15! Visit www.AOPAassembly.org for more details.

AOPA Board Meets – Sets Priorities

AOPA's Board of Directors convened for the annual summer retreat and planning meeting June 9-12, 2018 in Chatham, MA and established five priority areas for AOPA advocacy over the next six months:

1. Getting minimal self-adjustment provisions into law
2. A new VA/OIG report claiming overpayment for prosthetics is likely to be released
3. Humana dismissing orthoses as OTC
4. MEDPAC report on orthoses
5. Establishment of a joint VA and House Ways and Means Committee roundtable on coding as an impediment to innovation

Attending the meeting were: Jim Weber, MBA President; Michael Oros, CPO, FAAOP, Immediate Past President; Jeffrey Lutz, CPO, Vice President; Jeff Collins, CPA, Treasurer; Brad Ruhl, David Boone, MPH, PhD; David McGill; Jeff Brandt, CPO; Mitchell Dobson, CPO, FAAOP; Traci Dralle, CFm; Teri Kuffel, Esq; Rick Riley; and staff: Tom Fise, Tina Carlson, Ashlie White, Betty Leppin, and Joe McTernan.

Jeff Collins, CPA, AOPA's Treasurer, reported on the year to date financial operations noting expenses and revenue were tracking with budget and presented AOPA's investment advisor's recommendation that AOPA's investment policy be slightly modified to include investments in BBB rated bond instruments. Executive Committee members individually reviewed the change with investment advisors known to them personally and who all concurred that it was a prudent modification. AOPA's Executive Committee then presented the investment policy change to the Board of Directors for their consideration. The change was unanimously adopted.

The Board was informed that the American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics (ABC) has committed to supporting the Orthotics 2020 research endeavors with a \$200,000 grant, recognizing the critical need to advance the research agenda for orthotic services.

Also discussed was the recent policy change by Humana to eliminate coverage for off the shelf orthoses. AOPA has written several letters to Humana's CEO with no results. Efforts will continue to persuade Humana of the harm this policy change imposes.

AOPA has been challenged by the growing consolidation in O&P and the resulting reduction in the number of companies disappearing from membership because of acquisitions or other causes. In an effort to equitably distribute the costs of advocacy and member services, the Board adopted a recommendation of the Executive Committee to seek a bylaws change which would help address this problem.

The Executive Committee proposed a change in the affiliate member bylaws from “Affiliate Member: Any branch or subsidiary of a patient care facility, supplier, or education & research member of this association shall be **eligible** for Affiliate Membership in the association. Affiliate members must be within the same membership category as the parent entity” to “Affiliate Member: Any branch or subsidiary of a patient care facility, supplier, or education & research member of this association shall be **assessed** for Affiliate Membership in the association. Affiliate members must be within the same membership category as the parent entity.” There was a motion and second to present the bylaws change above to the membership at the 2018 National Assembly. Motion Carried. As with all Bylaws changes, these will be submitted for action by AOPA membership.

In future years, AOPA members would be invoiced based on affiliate locations based on member website location information.

The Board chose the Legislative Advocacy Award to be presented at the National Assembly’s Annual Business meeting to Denise Hofmann and Pam Lupo, CO. The Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented posthumously to Michael Schuch who served as AOPA president (1999-2000).

The 2019 proposed Budget was reviewed and will be finalized at the September Board meeting in Vancouver.

Government Affairs and Legislative Round Up

Dear Physician Letter Updates

The Durable Medical Equipment Medicare Administrative Contractors for each jurisdiction has released a “Dear Physician” letter for knee orthoses that is designed to educate referral sources about what documentation must exist in their medical records in order to support your claim for a knee orthosis. AOPA has reviewed the Knee Orthoses Dear Physician letter and believes it is consistent with existing Local Coverage Determination (LCD) and Policy Article (PA) policy requirements for Medicare coverage of knee orthoses.

In addition, the four DME MACs also published an announcement that the “Dear Physician” letter on lower limb prosthetics is being retired due to pending guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on potential program changes that may be necessary to implement the recently passed legislation that requires recognition of O&P practitioner notes as part of the patient’s medical record. While the retirement of the “Dear Physician” letter does not mean that the DME MACs will no longer require physician documentation to support claims for artificial limbs, it is a clear indication that they acknowledge and understand that the provisions of the original Dear Physician letter are no longer consistent with the law and therefore are not a prerequisite and cannot be used as the sole justification for denying a Medicare claim.

CMS Issues Instructions to Immediately Implement Provisions that Require the Recognition of Orthotist and Prosthetist Clinical Documentation as Part of the Medical Record

In the 1st Quarter 2018 Staff Report we informed you that as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 there was a provision (Section 50402) which stated that orthotist’s and prosthetist’s notes are to be considered part of the medical record for the purposes of determining medical necessity. It was unclear at

that time of how and when this provision would be implemented, since the Durable Medical Equipment Medicare Administrative Contractors (DME MACs) insisted they could not do anything without direct instructions from the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

AOPA and its lobbying team pressed CMS from all levels, including consultation with Trump Administration officials at the Office of Management and Budget, to formally implement the provisions of Section 50402 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018. AOPA was encouraged by the DME MAC announcement that they were ‘retiring’ the August 2011 “Dear Physician” letter on Lower Limb Prosthetics.

These efforts also resulted in a recent letter from Alec Alexander, CMS’ Director of Program Integrity which indicates that CMS “has issued instruction to the Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Medicare Administrative Contractors (MAC) to implement Section 50402 immediately. Mr. Alexander’s letter is a clear assertion of CMS’ commitment to acknowledge immediate implementation of the new statutory provisions in Section 50402, accepting the orthotist and prosthetist clinical notes as part of the individual’s medical record.

Even in light of the recent letter from the CMS Deputy Administrator & Director of Program Integrity instructing the implementation of Section 50402, CMS has yet to revise the Program Integrity Manual to reflect the directions from the Deputy Director, the head of CMS’ own Program Integrity Center, and the current status of the prosthetist’s notes continues to be misstated. We encourage AOPA members to consider including a copy of the letter with all claims they file. A copy of the letter may be found at <http://bit.ly/AlexLetter>.

MEDPAC Report on OTS Orthotics

On June 15 the long-promised MEDPAC report on Orthotics was released. MEDPAC is the government research entity charged to make recommendations to Congress on how they can make the Medicare system more cost-efficient. This is the first time their annual report has included a specific chapter relating to orthotics or prosthetics. This June MEDPAC report can be viewed at:

http://www.medpac.gov/docs/default-source/reports/jun18_ch6_medpacreport_sec.pdf?sfvrsn=0

You may wish to concentrate on pages 137-158. I doubt there is anyone who will like this report, which for example recommends competitive bidding be implemented for OTS Orthotics. However, the focus of the report is not AOPA members per se--target #1 is telemarketers and the physicians who enable them. There is a very unpleasant focus on OTS back braces and knee braces (our Orthotics 2020 emphasis is well/placed), and this ultimately could harm custom-fitted back and knee braces as well.

MEDPAC staff did a pretty deep dive into orthotics in preparing this report. Their focus is OTS orthotics, and some of what they report as having happened in the distribution of OTS is indefensible, if not criminal. AOPA’s focus in all communications with MEDPAC has been: (1) protecting custom-fit and custom-fabricated; and (2) beating hard for minimal self-adjustment being defined properly--that is O&P’s sole protection against having large numbers of custom-fitted items be scooted into OTS treatment.

Note especially that their competitive bidding proposals are limited to true OTS; their damning comments on split codes will demand CMS action; and especially their proposal on p.155 that certified orthotists be allowed to sell OTS around competitive bidding. They refused AOPA’s recommendations to underscore that the HHS OIG assault in 2013 was apples and oranges because the CMS L0631 code included orthotist clinical services, so comparison of Medicare and internet prices are not comparable (as they may be with OTS). MEDPAC afforded AOPA a chance to provide very extensive input to this report. They took some

of our input and declined others. The MEDPAC report is much better for our dialogue, though far from perfect. Your comments are welcome.

Legislative Advocacy Training Series

AOPA and the Amputee Coalition are teaming up to present a series of eight webinars for Amputee Coalition advocacy leaders. The purpose of the webinars is to help advocates strategically communicate why appropriate care to amputees is often denied, and what can be done about it.

The webinars are designed for Amputee Coalition members who have both an interest in advocacy and happen to reside in one of the key health care legislative districts – House Ways & Means, House Energy & Commerce and Senate Finance.

Presenters will include AOPA's Legislative Team, including two amputees – former Congressman Tom Andrews, (D-ME) and Nicole ver Kuilen, assisted by Ashlie White and Tom Fise. The webinar series will start in August and will include the following topics:

1. **Today on the Hill:** This webinar will provide an overview of current congressional priorities, where healthcare issues fit in those priorities, and how your issues, O&P issues, are perceived in the current environment. This session will also discuss the role the current Administration's priorities play in the overall legislative environment and what to expect post-ACA.
2. **Legislative committees and why they matter.** This webinar outlines the importance of Federal legislative committees. This session outlines the committees of reference and explains why every legislator is not created equally.
3. **What about ME?** How to go beyond “telling your story” to use your experience as an entrée into a discussion about key issues facing the greater limb loss/difference population.
4. **Building your case.** This webinar discusses the assembling of key talking points, the planning process for legislative advocacy, and the preparation for a visit with your legislator or his/her staff.
5. **Through their eyes.** This webinar discusses the differences in Democratic and Republican philosophy with respect to the issues affecting the limb loss/difference population. How the visit is perceived can influence the outcome.
6. **Make them remember your name?** This webinar discusses the steps to take in order to build an enduring relationship with your legislator. Ultimately, if your legislators know your name, or can pick you out in a room, they are more likely to listen to your concerns.
7. **Please and thank you!** This webinar discusses the importance of following up after a meeting to hammer home the message and repeat the asks.
8. **Bring it HOME!** How to connect with your Congressman beyond the beltway.

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. AOPA would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions in 2018 to the O&P PAC*: Curt Bertram, CPO; Ed De La Torre; Jim Kingsley; Teri Kuffel, Esq.; Charles Kuffel, CPO, FAAOP; Scott Sabolich, CP.

The O&P PAC has recently supported the following members of Congress*: Representative Mike Bishop (R-MI) and Representative Brian Mast (R-FL). 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, bit.ly/pacauth. The work accomplished by the O&P PAC cannot be completed without your help. Learn more at bit.ly/oandppac.

*This list only includes contributions made/received since the last AOPA Staff report between the period of 4/20/2018 and 6/28/2018.

AOPA Government Relations Events

If you plan to attend the 2018 AOPA National Assembly, September 26-29 in Vancouver, be sure to attend the “Party with a Purpose” on Thursday, September 27 at 6:30 pm for a 1970’s nostalgic filled evening. The evening will include dinner, soulful tunes, sunset harbor views, and much more!

Be there or be square in your best ‘70s threads or strut your stuff and win the Disco Dance Off! This is a special event and certain rules and restrictions may apply. For additional information about the “Party with a Purpose” or to register, contact Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org.

Research and Projects

COPL

The 2018 COPL grants that are selected for funding are listed at <http://www.aopanet.org/resources/research/>.

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 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. The project has now been completed and the research team accomplished the following:

- registered the systematic review protocol with PROSPERO
- published six articles in peer reviewed journals including a systematic review protocol (available as open access)
- two systematic reviews (both available as open access)
- an expert clinical view point describing the development of the decision aid and discussion guide
- two translational pieces challenging long held views about the association between amputation level and mortality rates, as well as increasing amputation prevalence
- written the first decision aid and discussion guide to help support decisions about dysvascular amputation
- translated this work through seven keynote/invited addresses
- published translational pieces for online magazines such as O&P Almanac and Amplified.

Read Dr. Dillon’s systematic review, “Outcomes of dysvascular partial foot amputation and how these compare to transtibial amputation: a systematic review for the development of shared decision-making resources”, available at <http://www.aopanet.org/resources/research/>. The two other systematic reviews funded in 2015 have been completed and are 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).

AOPA Co-OP, the Compendium of O&P

The AOPA Co-OP, a reimbursement, coding and policy resource, now has 328 active users. The most recent additions to the Co-OP include more in-depth information on each of the state pages, as the AOPA

State Representatives program continues to grow. A Member-to-Member page has been created for members to share resources created by AOPA members, for other AOPA members to use.

This member-only online resource serves as a collection of concise, but detailed information with links to supporting documentation about the topics most important to our members. The platform's key subject areas 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, vet that information and provide updates to the Co-OP on a regular basis. Members can find more information and sign up at www.AOPAnet.org/co-op

Prosthetics 2020

The AOPA Medical Advisory Board met May 29-30 at the AOPA Headquarters in Alexandria Virginia. AOPA continues its commitment to Prosthetics 2020 to ensure 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. The next two major initiatives for Prosthetics 2020 are: (a) finalizing a proposal for submission to the Center for Medicare Medical Innovation (CMMI) on the prospect alluded to in the CMS Interagency Workgroup report to broaden potential access to MPKs to some patients in K2 functional status and (b) convening an expert advisory group on a trans-tibial amputees to fill some knowledge gaps identified by the RAND study.

Orthotics 2020

In response to RFPs released by AOPA for four of the five clinical areas identified under the Orthotics 2020 initiative: Osteoarthritis; Stroke; Traumatic Spinal Injuries and Plagiocephaly, the Center for Orthotic and Prosthetic Learning and Outcome/Evidence-based Practice (COPL) has recommended two research projects to AOPA's Board of Directors for funding. An RFP for the fifth category, Scoliosis, is in development.

Stakeholder subgroups for each of the categories continue to meet on a regular basis to review the progress of the project and advise accordingly, and the formation of an Orthotics 2020 Medical Advisory Board is underway. AOPA is excited to transition Orthotics 2020 into a vital enterprise to protect the orthotic services upon which patients depend, including very active research and an Orthotics 2020 Medical Advisory Board and to begin populating a stronger research base around issues on the value of orthotic services.

The RAND Study: Economic Value of Advanced Transfemoral Prosthetics

The RAND Corporation released its comprehensive, independent, validated study that establishes the value proposition for prosthetic services to amputees in September of 2017, on its website, and is awaiting publication in the Journal of Neurosurgery.

RAND Corporation continues its work to explore the economic value of advanced transtibial prostheses. AOPA is working closely toward an Expert Consensus Conference to be held in early September in the hope of consolidating the latest information/publications to assist RAND with its work. AOPA extends special appreciation to the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists (AAOP), which conducted a State of the Science conference-13 (SoS-13) in November, 2017, and greatly appreciates the AAOP's efforts to expedite the availability of papers from that conference for use as background material for AOPA's planned Expert Consensus session in September. The objective of the Expert Consensus

Conference will be to assure that attendees have access to all relevant studies for review, and that expert consensus is available for the final stages of RAND’s research on advanced transtibial prostheses.

Outcome Assessment Reporting System (OARS)

AOPA has launched a beta test for an online application that that will walk a clinician through an outcome measure, with written and video instructions, and create a report, which will include what the result means for the patient with references to the science supporting the measure. This report can then be printed or downloaded as a PDF for the patient’s record.

As part of the beta testing phase, AOPA is offering free access to interested practitioners that work for AOPA members. If you are interested in participating in the OARS beta test, please email awhite@aopanet.org for additional information.

Small Grant RFP Announcement

In February, AOPA announced a Request for Pilot Grant Proposals in 10 potential areas of Orthotic and Prosthetic (O&P) research, including an open topic. For 2018-2019, the association is seeking proposals at two funding levels for one-time grants; \$15,000 and up to two exceptional proposals for \$30,000 for one year. The leadership of AOPA, working in conjunction with the Center for Orthotic and Prosthetic Learning and Outcomes/Evidence-Based Practice (COPL) and its Board of Directors comprised of representatives from eight leading O&P organizations recognized that there is a modest amount of original evidence-based or outcomes research in orthotics and prosthetics. Consequently, AOPA is interested in funding original pilot research that will lead to larger trials that may qualify for government or other research funding support in the following areas:

Areas for submission were:

- a) 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)
- b) Demonstrate methods to record primary health outcomes such as falls and lower back pain in amputees
- c) Functional Impacts of Vacuum-Assisted Socket Suspension Systems
- d) Documentation of therapeutic effects of spinal orthoses.
- e) Stroke: Utilization and comparative effectiveness of custom vs. OTS AFOs
- f) Measuring the impact of OA knee brace use on community activity
- g) Retrospective analysis of goals versus outcomes in treatments of pediatric patients with Plagiocephaly
- h) Study the origins/clinical goals and prevalence of current prosthesis prescribing patterns
- i) Microprocessor Controlled Knee and Ankle Joints – Safety Benefits for Non-Variable Cadence (K-1, K-2) Ambulators Study community outcomes of patients, such as activity, social interactions, depression and anxiety
- j) Open Topics – Beyond the Above Priorities, Top Quality Clinical O&P Research Topics Considered

Grants approved for funding in the small grant RFP category include:

| Title of Project: | Researcher: | Company or Institutional Affiliation: |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| Development of a mobility outcome measure to for people who use lower limb orthoses | Geoff Balkman, BA, MS, CPO | University of Washington |
| The Quantification of Containment Conditions Used for Directed Growth Within Infant Cranial Remolding Orthoses: A Pilot Study | John DesJardins, PhD | Clemson University |
| Normative Values, Reliability, and Validity of the Global Visual Gait Assessment for Measuring Orthotic Biomechanical Outcomes for Use in Post-Stroke Patients | Sun Hae Jang, M.Sc., CO, FAAOP | Eastern Michigan University |

| Title of Project: | Researcher: | Company or Institutional Affiliation: |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Gait Analysis Using Video: Defining K-Level in Lower-Limb Prosthesis Users | Shannon Mathis, PhD | The University of Alabama in Huntsville |
| Prospective Falls Analysis Among Lower Limb Prosthesis Users- Understanding the Role of Prostheses in Reducing Fall Risk | Shane Wurdeman, PhD, MSPO, CP, FAAOP | Hanger Clinic- Dept of Clinical & Scientific Affairs |
| Longitudinal Tracking of Stability Events and AFO Compliance Among Stroke Survivors During Sub-Acute and Chronic Phases of Recovery | Eric Weber, CPO, FAAOP | Hanger Clinic - Department of Clinical and Scientific Affairs |
| Effect of Ankle-Foot Orthoses (AFOs) on Continuous Walking in Persons with Post-Stroke Hemiplegia | Stefania Fatone, PhD, BPO(Hons) | Northwestern University |
| Effectiveness of Repositioning and Cranial Remolding in Infants with Cranial Deformation | Tiffany Graham, CPO, LPO, MSPO | University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center |

AOPA and the Center give preference to grants that address evidence-based clinical application in orthotics and prosthetics. The deadline for proposals was April 30, 2018.

Education

Healthcare Compliance and Ethics Week—November 4-10, 2018

AOPA encourages its members to make the right choices all year long, and celebrate Healthcare Compliance & Ethics Week with AOPA during the second annual HCEW November 4-10th. Corporate Compliance & Ethics Week is an initiative of the Health Care Compliance Association. AOPA has partnered with HCCA to celebrate Healthcare Compliance & Ethics Week with its members. AOPA offers several ways for you to plan for Healthcare Compliance & Ethics Week and engage your staff. Check out this year's resources, *including white papers, continuing education opportunities, free webinars from the 2017 celebration, and more*, for inspiration at <http://bit.ly/compliance18>.

Mastering Medicare Webinars

The AOPA Mastering Medicare Webinar series continues to be an informative 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 2018 webinars for only \$495 and get one free. Sign up at bit.ly/2018webinars. 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 2018 webinar series schedule is listed below:

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

All previous webinars are available for purchase as a recording:

January 10 Lower Limb Prostheses 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

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. Learn more at bit.ly/2018billing.

Upcoming dates:

July 23 - 24, St. Louis, MO- Registration is open

November 12 - 13, Las Vegas, NV- Registration is open

Communications and Membership

O&P Almanac

The O&P Almanac has been featuring its new annual Principal Investigator column for 2018, which profiles individuals who have undertaken O&P-focused research projects. The January issue captured trends in the new era of O&P while the February issue profiled athletes and their counterparts participating in the PyeongChang 2018 Paralympics. The March issue explored the proposed and actual changes to laws and regulations from the past year and their mixed effect on O&P. The April issue captured the events of the 2018 AOPA Policy Forum with O&P advocated sharing their messages with legislators. Smart marketing was the main focus for the May issue with experts sharing strategies for boosting O&P businesses. The June issue delved into the great expectations of new clinicians advancing in the O&P field. July will focus on senior care and how O&P professionals should be prepared to meet the growing needs of older patients. The August issue focuses on staffing, hiring, and retention for the O&P business.

O&P News

O&P News has continued to provide more diverse content to reach the heavily diverse medical community. Readers of the O&P News can read such articles as We Did Everything to Save that Leg, a discussion between professionals from across the healthcare spectrum that explores thoughts on gait salvage and amputation decision. February's, Going Lean and Driving Value questions investing in new technologies, as a myriad of market drivers force the shift to a leaner O&P business model. March and April editions focused on what drives professionals to join the O&P profession as well as the insights into students attaining their masters in O&P. May's focus on Embracing Innovation in O&P Business Operations analyzes the trends related to new patient prescriptions, and how to capture outcome measure data. June takes a more thorough glance at how the R&D Tax Credit applies to the O&P profession while the July issue discusses what it takes to build and maintain an O&P dream facility. Each issue also includes O&P research and features an O&P Visionary column, where O&P professionals discuss how they would impact the world of O&P.

AOPA Welcomes New Members April 1 to June 30, 2018

The following patient care facilities joined AOPA this second quarter: Lone Star Prosthetics of Arlington, TX; Areli Medical Devices of Sherman, TX; Limb Lab of Rochester, MN; North Carolina Orthotics & Prosthetics of Goldsboro, NC; and Advanced Orthotics & Prosthetics of Joplin, MO.

New international members include: Barber Prosthetics Clinic of Vancouver, Canada; Xi'an HSD Rehabilitation Appliance Co., of Xi'an China.

The following suppliers joined AOPA in the first quarter: TheraTogs, Inc. of Telluride, CO and BroadBay, LLC of Auburn Hills, MI.

Operating Performance and Compensation Report Committee 2018 Survey –Closes July 20th

AOPA's 2018 Operating Performance Survey was mailed to patient care facility members in May. This is a FREE scorecard opportunity for members to assess their business operations. Each AOPA member survey participant receives a customized company report showing how their financial operations compare to other O&P companies of similar size and geographic region. This data then assists them in developing specific strategies to gauge and improve the fiscal health of their O&P business. 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. Survey Final 2018 reports are expected to be published late summer/early fall and will be available for sale in AOPA's bookstore. Go to www.aopa-survey.com before the July 20th deadline to participate.

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!

Mobility Saves Updates

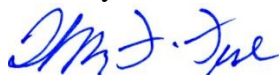
Mobility Saves continues to grow on social media, with over 22,000 likes on Facebook ("like" us at www.facebook.com/mobilitysaves), over 2500 Twitter Followers (www.twitter.com/MobilitySaves), and over 160 connections on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/company/mobility-saves).

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. The website showcases testimonials from individuals living with limb loss and mobility challenges, and the research that supports the efficacy of appropriate prosthetic and orthotic devices and services.

And finally, as we begin our third quarter of 2018, AOPA's annual membership drive begins. AOPA members recognize that as a profession, we are stronger together than we are as separate companies.

If you value your AOPA membership, consider sharing with a colleague why AOPA membership is important to you and to the future of O&P. Nothing is more powerful than a shared personal recommendation. We can achieve so much more together if we all share in the responsibility of growing our membership and our influence as professional health care providers.

Sincerely,



Thomas F. Fise, JD
Executive Director