

AOPA 2nd Quarter 2020 Staff Report



To: AOPA Membership
From: Eve Lee, Executive Director
Date: July 17, 2020

The second quarter was busy at AOPA. We continued to monitor the implications of COVID-19 and have been responding to your needs. Our [COVID-19 Responses and Resources webpage](#) grew with new actions, guidance, and resources. Additionally, we continued to connect with legislators about how they can best support the O&P profession. We know this is far from over and will continue to update this webpage frequently with actions, guidance, and resources as well as pushing out updates via email, Smartbrief, and our social media channels. Please know, the AOPA Board and staff remain committed to you and your needs so that you can continue to provide quality care to your patients.

As I hope you have seen, we made the difficult but safe decision to move the 2020 National Assembly to a virtual format. Rest assured we are going to make this a great experience for all, full of all the education, exhibits, and networking you've come to expect from AOPA.

Finally, during the second quarter we issued a [statement on systematic racism](#) to reaffirm our values, beliefs, and commitments. AOPA is committed to the principles of diversity, equality, and inclusion with each other, our allied healthcare professionals, and in all patient interactions. We stand united, ready to learn, grow, and work toward a better future.

Thank you for all you continue to do for your patients and the O&P profession. As always, if you have questions, concerns, or needs do not hesitate to reach out to any of the staff at info@AOPAnet.org.

I look forward to seeing you online in September during the 2020 Virtual National Assembly. Until then continue to stay safe and well.

2020 National Assembly

AOPA looks forward to welcoming you to for the 2020 Virtual National Assembly, September 9-12th.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this year's Assembly that was scheduled to take place in Las Vegas will instead be delivered as a virtual experience. This was not an easy decision, but ultimately the health and safety of our attendees, exhibitors, speakers, and staff remains our top priority. If you are not already planning to attend, here are just a few reasons you should:

- Comprehensive - Earn over 100 CE Credits
- Economical – Save 40 percent on registration prices and no travel costs
- Accessible - Engage when it's convenient for you: live or on-demand. Content will be accessible for 30 days post September 9-12.
- Relatable – Find content for any role supporting O&P Patient Care
- Customizable – Customize your learning experience with Five education tracks specifically for Prosthetists, Orthotists, Pedorthists, Technicians and Business Professionals.

See the latest cutting-edge technologies in prosthetics, orthotics, and pedorthics while you peruse the virtual O&P exhibition. The virtual exposition experience will feature live chat, live video conferencing, product showcases and displays, polling, and pre-scheduled appointments.

A high-profile faculty will provide education on topics such as:

- COVID-19 related education including, Navigating Your Business Through Covid or Work at Home Policies: Protecting Your Business & Making Sure the Work Gets Done
- Orthotic education highlights include: Orthotic Spine Management and The Teamwork Of ACPOC: Promoting Collaboration and Comprehensive Care of Children with Musculoskeletal Differences
- Prosthetic education topics include: Challenges of a Modern AK-Socket Design, Unifying Stakeholder Perspectives - The Limb Loss Rehabilitation Continuum Framework, Getting a Grip on Mechanical and External Powered Partial Hand Prostheses, and Impact of Prosthetic Interventions on Musculoskeletal Pain in Individuals with Lower Limb Amputations
- The Pedorthic Education Track will focus on treating the Geriatric Patient.
- Learn how to improve your workplace environment so that it is inclusive for all staff and patient populations by attending Navigating O&P Education and Practice as a Minority Individual or Workplace Sexual Harassment Tools and Guidance: Promoting Dialogue and Creating a Respectful Environment

Learn more by viewing the [Preliminary Program](#). Registration is now open. Visit www.AOPAassembly.org for more details.

Legislative and Regulatory

Legislative Updates

COVID-19 Legislation

On April 1 and April 13 AOPA held webinars to help guide our members through the financial relief included in the bill; more than 200 members attended.

We continued to work with more than 50 AOPA members to ensure they had access to the Paycheck Protection Act and Provider Relief Funds and understood the ramifications of keeping that money.

Finally, we made a push to include the distinguishing of O&P from DME in the House of Representatives' fourth COVID package. We were able to create a strong argument that the increase in telehealth did not benefit O&P, and the argument resonated strongly with multiple members. A bipartisan group, led by Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA), chair of the Congressional Telehealth Caucus, sent a letter to Administrator Verma and Secretary Azar arguing that CMS and HHS should find a way to allow for billing of telehealth during the Public Health Emergency.

Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act

On November 22, 2019, the House of Representatives introduced the Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act. Reps. Mike Thompson (D-CA), GT Thompson (R-PA), GK Butterfield (D-NC), and Brett Guthrie (R-KY) were the bills original sponsors, and since then Reps. Jeff Van Drew (R-NJ), David Roe (R-TN),

Joyce Beatty (D-OH), Steven Horsford (D-NV), Grace Napolitano (D-CA), and Ted Deutch (D-FL) have also joined the bill.

In late June Sen. Steve Daines agreed to be the Republican lead for the Senate version of the bill, which is expected to be introduced in late July. Daines and Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA) will introduce and lead the bill, which will also be sponsored by Sens. John Cornyn (R-TX), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI).

Wounded Warrior Workforce Education Act

AOPA staff and consultants continue to work closely with the Senate to move the WWWEA forward. Late last year we shifted our strategy away from the Veteran's Affairs committee and to the Armed Services committee, with the goal of including revised WWWEA language in the National Defense Authorization Act, which Congress must pass every year. In late February, Sens. Rick Scott (R-FL), Richard Durbin (D-IL), and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) all submitted our updated language in their NDAA requests. The language was not included in the first draft of the bill; thus Durbin, Duckworth, and Sen. David Perdue (R-GA) introduced an amendment that would create a pilot program for O&P schools to work with DoD to expand their programs. As of July 13, it's unclear if that amendment will pass.

O&P Political Action Committee

AOPA would like to thank the following individual(s) for their recent contribution* to the O&P PAC in 2020: Rick Ramos, CP, LP

While all in-person PAC events were cancelled beginning in mid-March, the AOPA PAC has been working with legislators to coordinate group and one-on-one virtual meetings with key legislators. In the second quarter, these meetings included:

- Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (\$10,000) – AOPA staff joined two virtual meetings during which we were able to discuss our issues with Leader McConnell.
- Sen. Tammy Duckworth (\$10,000) – we held a private online fundraiser for Sen. Duckworth during which time we were able to outline our policy priorities and ways she can help us for the remainder of the 116th Congress.
- Sen. Jim Inhofe (\$2,500) – we held a half-hour conversation with Sen. Inhofe, chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, on the importance of including our O&P education pilot program in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).
- Sen. Steve Daines (\$5,000) – AOPA staff held a one-on-one conversation with Sen. Daines to discuss details of the Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act and the ways we might move the bill forward in the 116th Congress.
- Sen. David Perdue (\$2,500) – AOPA staff and representatives from the O&P program at Kennesaw State University briefed Sen. Perdue on our proposed amendment to the NDAA and talked about the importance of increased O&P education in the face of a looming workforce shortage.
- Rep. Anna Eshoo (\$1,500) – Rep. Eshoo is chair of the Health subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Patient-Centered Care Act.
- Rep. Tony Cardenas (\$1,000) – Rep. Cardenas sits the Health subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.
- Rep. Raul Ruiz (\$1,000) – Rep. Ruiz sits the Health subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

* This list only includes contributions made/received since the last AOPA Staff report between the period of 4/10/2020 and 6/30/2020. If we missed your name please accept our apologies, and any contributions made or received after 6/30/2020 will be published in the next quarterly staff report.

2020 Policy Forum

AOPA held its first-ever virtual Policy Forum on Wednesday, May 6. More than 200 attendees listened into the latest on AOPA's policy efforts and were treated to a special visit from Sen. Tammy Duckworth. Following the event, nearly 100 attendees wrote to their legislators urging support of the Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act and other policy priorities.

Members Only Advocacy Webinar

Wondering what is going on in Washington DC to help the O&P profession?

Join Justin Beland, AOPA's Director of Government Affairs for AOPA's Monthly Member Advocacy Webinars. Justin will bring you up to speed on the latest from Capitol Hill and the Administration, as well as provide you with the tools to help you deliver a powerful message to your elected officials on behalf of the O&P profession. He'll cover the latest actions by Congress, legislation that affects O&P, and ways you can get involved to advance our profession.

Register today:

- [Wednesday, July 22 at 1pm ET](#)
- [Wednesday, August 19 at 1pm ET](#)
- [Wednesday, September 16 at 1pm ET](#)

Regulatory Updates

CMS Releases a Revised ABN Form

The Advance Beneficiary Notice of Noncoverage (ABN) form is subject to re-approval every three years, and the current version of the ABN expired in March 2020. The approval of a new ABN, form CMS-R-131, was postponed due to COVID-19 and suppliers were directed to continue using the expired form. The new ABN form 131 has recently been approved and released by CMS. Suppliers are mandated to use the new form on/after August 31, 2020. To verify if you are using the most recent version of the ABN check the expiration date on bottom left corner of the form and it should be 06/30/2023.

PDAC Coding Verification for Lower Limb Prostheses

The DME MACs and PDAC released a joint announcement for a new coding verification requirement for the six lower limb prostheses that were previously announced and will be subject to Medicare prior authorization. While implementation of Medicare prior authorization has been postponed due to the Covid-19 public health emergency, it is expected that the program will be implemented in the future.

The joint publication announced that, effective for claims with dates of service on or after January 1, 2021, the only products which may be billed using codes L5856, L5857, L5858, L5973, L5980, and L5987 are those for which a written Coding Verification Review has been made by the PDAC and is listed on the PDAC Product Classification List.

In addition to the joint DME MAC/PDAC publication announcing the coding verification requirement for the six prosthetic codes discussed above, the four DME MACs simultaneously released a revised version of the Lower Limb Prostheses Policy Article (PA) with an effective date of August 1, 2020. The revised PA includes new coding guidelines for L5856, L5857, L5858, L5980, L5981 and L5987. Coding guidelines for L5973 were published in a previous (January 2020) PA revision.

AFO/KAFO Policy Article (PA) Revision Reminder

The DME MACs updated the PA coding guidelines for the L1906 and introduced new coding guidelines for L1900, L1902, L1904, L1907, L1910, L1920, L1930, L1932, L1940, L1945, L1950, L1951, L1970, L1971, L1980, and L1990 in February 2020; and these new coding guidelines became effective on July 01, 2020.

The July 1, 2020 AFO/KAFO Policy Article also included four new ICD-10 codes for the coverage of L4631 (Ankle foot orthosis, walking boot type, varus/valgus correction, rocker bottom, anterior tibial shell, soft interface, custom arch support, plastic or other material, includes straps and closures, custom fabricated).

PDAC Coding Verification Reminder for L3960

For all claims with a date of service on or after August 1, 2020 the only braces which may be billed using L3960 (SEWHO, abduction positioning, airplane design, prefabricated, includes fitting and adjustment) must have a written PDAC coding verification and listed on the PDAC Product Classification list.

Research

AOPA Co-OP, the Compendium of O&P

Over 575 AOPA member companies are currently using the AOPA Co-OP and contributing to this comprehensive compendium of knowledge on O&P coding, policy and reimbursement. AOPA Supplier Members that are part of the [Supplier Plus Program](#) can now include links directly to product-specific webpages on company sites within the [L Code Search](#) section. Supplier Plus members also receive two additional Co-OP licenses.

AOPA continues to track and update important information about the ongoing pandemic on relevant pages across the AOPA Co-OP. Members continue to have an opportunity to request and share documents and policies developed to address the COVID-19 Pandemic on the [Member to Member](#) page and in the comments section at the bottom of the page.

If you haven't signed up for the Co-OP, or if you have questions about this free member benefit, there are several opportunities to learn about O&P's most comprehensive resource for coding, billing, and reimbursement during the monthly Co-OP tutorials. Members can find more information or activate a Co-OP account at www.AOPAnet.org/co-op or register for one of the upcoming Co-OP tutorials below:

- [July 24](#)
- [Aug 14](#)
- [Sept 18](#)
- [Oct 16](#)
- [Nov 13](#)
- [Dec 18](#)

The Center for O&P Learning (COPL)

We are excited to report that COPL received 26 submissions in response to the 2020-2021 COPL Pilot Grant RFP, nearly double the proposals received during the last round. Submissions are currently being reviewed by the COPL Board and review panel. Researchers will receive award notifications by July 15, 2020, and a formal announcement will be published by August 1, 2020. more information about COPL can be found [here](#).

Education

AOPAversity Mastering Medicare Webinars

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 2020 webinars for only \$990 and get two free. [Sign up](#). The webinars are a great way to boost employee morale (by providing monthly staff education event) and provide needed education and earn CE Credits. The 2020 AOPAversity Mastering Medicare Webinar series titles and dates are below:

August 12 - Contracting 101: Understanding the Basics

September 2 - Outside the Norms: Outliers and Situations Where the Rules are Different
October 14 - New Technical Credits- Clinician's Corner: Fitters and Techs
November 11 - RAC Audits: What Are They Looking At?
December 9 -New Year: New Codes, Fees, and Updates

All previous webinars are available for purchase as a recording:

January 8 - Modifiers: Enhance Your Claims Two Letters at a Time
February 12 - O&P Coding & Billing Myths: The Truth is Out There
March 11 - New Technical Credits- Clinician's Corner: Orthotics
April 8 - A Policy Review: LSO/TLSO
May 13 - Social Media Mayday: Increase Your Footprint
June 10 - New Technical Credits- Clinician's Corner: Prosthetics
July 8 - The ABCs of Appeals: Know the Players and Get the Tips

Questions about registration contact Ryan Gleeson at rgleeson@AOPAnet.org, questions about webinar content contact Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org.

AOPAversity Essential Coding & Billing Techniques 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.

This seminar now contains a new section on the creation of policies and procedures for your facility, and updated information on Medicare's new prior authorization program for certain DMEPOS. Implementation of prior authorization may be paused, but it is not going away, get ready for it.

Earn 14 CEUs!!

The next seminar is scheduled for November 9-10, 2020 at the Hampton Inn-Center City Convention Center in Philadelphia, PA. [Register](#) today.

Questions about registration contact Ryan Gleeson at rgleeson@AOPAnet.org, questions about seminar content contact Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org.

Online AOPAversity Learning Center

AOPAversity Learning Management System – NEW FREE Member Access

With the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), we knew your business needs were evolving. As we explored resources to help the profession navigate this unprecedented situation, we looked to our long-established strength in offering immediate solutions to best support our members. AOPA has guided the training and development of the O&P profession for over a century. With the complexity of all you are facing, including teleworking, we would like to offer our AOPA member's employees the ability to access our learning management system, AOPAversity, not just at a discount, but completely FREE.

All online offerings are pre-recorded videos available on demand. FREE. Don't already have an AOPAversity profile? [Visit](#) to create a profile. You will need your member ID when you create your profile in order to access the free offering. Already have a profile. [Visit](#) to enter your profile. Your username is the email used to create your profile. This FREE access offer is set valid through December 31, 2020. It does exclude any refunds to purchases made prior to the start of this offer.

Membership and Communications

New Member

AOPA welcomes New Beginnings Orthotics & Prosthetics of Warwick Rhode Island as our newest patient care facility member this quarter.

Volunteer Committee Activities

The newly formed Member Services Committee is made up of volunteers who are charged with advising AOPA's Board and staff on programs, products and services to meet members' needs. The committee met each month this quarter, reviewing several key coding and billing related products and webinars.

The Operating Performance Workgroup met several times this quarter to review the annual operating performance questionnaire for this year's annual benchmarking survey of O&P. This committee oversees the largest survey of its kind for the O&P profession. AOPA patient care facilities are eligible to participate and receive a free copy of the final report. This year's survey closes July 17. Go to www.aopa-survey.com for more information on how to participate.

O&P Almanac

With the ongoing pandemic and COVID-19 the April issue of the O&P Almanac explored how the community spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has put everyone at risk for contracting the disease and interrupted business operations across the nation. AOPA has responded with support in the form of communications with legislators, a new space on the AOPA Co-OP page so facilities can share their experiences and strategies, and a COVID-19 Response and Resources webpage. The May issue delved into O&P facilities across the nation who are experiencing hardships as revenues and profits drop, given the current coronavirus pandemic and myriad statewide stay-at-home orders. While most orthotic and prosthetic facilities—deemed essential businesses—are continuing operations, many are experiencing reduced patient loads, resulting in unprecedented financial losses. O&P companies are seeking creative solutions—pursuing grants, loans, tax credits, and more—to keep their businesses afloat until patients return.

AOPA is Social

Interact with AOPA and O&P professionals on social media. Get the latest AOPA and O&P news, network with others, watch videos, post photos and share your story. Follow us on Twitter, like us on Facebook and connect with us on LinkedIn. Play your part to bring more awareness to important O&P issues, use the hashtag #AOPA2020.

Education Calendar

- August 12 - Contracting 101: Understanding the Basics
- September 2 - Outside the Norms: Outliers and Situations Where the Rules are Different
- **September 9-12 – Virtual National Assembly, online**
- October 14 - New Technical Credits- Clinician's Corner: Fitters and Techs
- November 1-7 – Corporate Compliance and Ethics Week
- **November 9-10 – Coding & Billing Seminar, Philadelphia, PA**
- November 11 - RAC Audits: What Are They Looking At?
- December 9 -New Year: New Codes, Fees, and Updates

***Bold indicates event**