

## AOPA 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2020 Staff Report



**To: AOPA Membership**  
**From: Eve Lee, Executive Director**  
**Date: January 20, 2021**

Happy New Year! I hope each and every one of you had a safe, relaxing, and happy holiday season! After 2020, we certainly all needed and deserved this.

COVID forced us to become nimbler, to better adapt to crisis, and your needs. During the last couple months of 2020, we continued to monitor the implications of COVID-19 and responded to your needs. Additionally, we continued to connect with legislators about how they can best support the O&P profession. The AOPA Board and staff remain committed to you and your needs so that you can continue to provide quality care to your patients. To be here to help you get back to the new normal. Our efforts will not stop until the pandemic ends. We will keep updating this webpage as well as push out updates via email, Smartbrief, and our social media channels.

We have spent energy and time familiarizing members with AOPA Connection over the last couple of months. It is your one-stop-shop for all things AOPA. After logging in, you will instantly have access to all your AOPA benefits. AOPA Connection is available to all employees of AOPA members. Learn more including how you can access it [here](#).

So, as 2021 begins, thank you for your support of AOPA 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](mailto:info@AOPAnet.org).



### **Save the Date: 2021 National Assembly**

The 2021 AOPA National Assembly Planning Committee is already hard at work to bring you the best in education, networking, and technologies. Co-Chaired by Teri Kuffel, JD and Rick Riley, the committee has met monthly since November and has established five workgroups focusing on Clinical O&P, Pedorthic Education, technical education, and exhibits. The 2021 Assembly is currently scheduled to take place September 9-12 in Boston, MA. Look for updates soon.

### **Legislative and Regulatory**

#### **Legislative Updates**

##### COVID Legislation

AOPA engaged Congress to ensure our members are receiving every potential benefit possible as they continue to work through the pandemic. AOPA's efforts in Q4 resulted in additional benefits in the final COVID legislative package passed by the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, including tax deductions on Personal Protective Equipment and ensuring providers are not required to pay taxes on Paycheck Protection Program and

Provider Relief Fund disbursements. In that legislation, Congress also extended the suspension of Medicare sequestration through March 31, 2021.

#### 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), Ted Deutch (D-FL), Raul Ruiz (D-CA), and Gil Cisneros (D-CA) also joined the bill.

On August 6, 2020, the Senate introduced their version of the bill. Senators Steve Daines (R-MT), Mark Warner (D-VA), John Cornyn (R-TX), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) are the original sponsors of the bill. Since its introduction, AOPA worked closely with these offices as well as staff of the Senate Finance Committee to find a way to move the bill forward. With the COVID pandemic and a Supreme Court vacancy taking up most of the Senate's time, it was difficult to gain traction on the bill. Ultimately, we were not able to get the provisions of the bill incorporated into the final COVID package passed by Congress. However, our efforts (and the efforts of our grassroots advocates, who sent more than 1,500 letters and social media posts to Congress) were not in vain; we reached more than 300 members of Congress who now have a greater understanding of the need for the legislation, and we are well positioned to reintroduce the legislation early in 2021, providing a much larger window for passage.

#### Webinars

AOPA continued its monthly advocacy series to provide our members with updates on our activities before Congress, provide insight into our strategy, and to educate our members on the legislative process. In addition, we held pre- and post-election webinars to discuss how the election will impact our profession. The first webinar of 2021 will be held Wednesday, January 27 at 1pm ET. [Register here](#).

#### Workforce/Diversity Policy

AOPA has been asked by members of the Congressional Black Caucus to develop a policy platform to address workforce and diversity issues in the O&P profession. We were also engaged directly by members of the Biden/Harris transition team on the same subject. AOPA drafted and shared a policy platform which would involve legislation and new programs developed by the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) within the Department of Health & Human Services to create greater awareness of O&P careers. We look forward to working with the Biden Administration and the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress to further develop these proposals and enact them into law.

#### O&P Political Action Committee

AOPA would like to thank the following individual(s) for their contributions\* to the O&P PAC in 2020: Curt Bertram, CPO; Jeffrey Brandt, CPO; George Breece; Terri Bukacheski, CP; Erin Cammarata, CTO; Tina Carlson, CMP; Christina Cox; Steven Ehretsman; Don Foley; Eve Lee, MBA, CAE; Jim Liston, CP; F. Daniel Luitjohan, CP; Jeff Lutz, CPO; Brad Mattear, CFo, CPA, LO; Martin McNab, CPO; Wendy Miller, BOCO; Matthew Nelson, CPO; Ricardo Ramos, CP, LP; Bradley Ruhl; Michael Schlesinger; Lesleigh Sisson, Cfo, CFm; Bernie Veldman, CO; Regina Weger; Ashlie White; Dennis Williams, CO, BOCO; Scott Williamson, MBA; Larry Word, CPO; Ann Yamane, CO; James Young, Jr., CP, LP, FAAOP and Claudia Zacharias, MBA, CAE



To participate in, support and receive additional information about the O&P PAC, eligible individuals must first sign an authorization form, which may be completed online: [bit.ly/aopapac](https://bit.ly/aopapac).

\*Due to publishing deadlines this list was created on 12/18/2020 and includes only donations/contributions made/ received between 01/15/2020 and 12/18/2020. Any donations/contributions made/ received on/or after 12/18/2020 will be published in the next update

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 quarter, these meetings included:

- Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-IL) (\$2,500): Rep. Underwood sits on the Committee of Veteran's Affairs and the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee. Former AOPA Board Member Michael Oros joined us for this meeting.
- Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT): Daines sits on the Senate Finance Committee and is the lead Republican on the O&P Patient-Centered Care Act. We were joined on this Zoom by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. (The O&P PAC gave a total of \$10,000 to Sen. Daines in 2020.)
- Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA): Rep. Thompson sits on the Ways & Means Committee and is the lead Democratic sponsor of the O&P Patient-Centered Care Act. (The O&P PAC gave a total of \$5,000 to Rep. Thompson in 2020.)
- Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) (\$1,000): Rep. Maloney is a champion of O&P issues.
- Sen. David Perdue (R-GA) (\$1,000): Perdue sat on the Senate Armed Services Committee and was a champion of O&P issues (especially the master's program now at Kennesaw State University). Ultimately, Sen. Perdue lost his bid for reelection.
- Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) (\$1,000): Wyden is now the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, with jurisdiction over the O&P Patient-Centered Care Act. We were joined on the Zoom by Nathaniel Hampson, AOPA's Oregon state representative.

## **Regulatory Updates**

### Mandatory Use of the Revised ABN Form Reminder

Mandatory use of the revised ABN form (CMS-R-131), with the expiration date of 06/30/2023, is to begin with claims with a date of service on or after January 1, 2021.

### PDAC Coding Verification Reminder for Lower Limb Protheses

As a reminder, 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. You may find the Product Classification List [here](#).

### CMS Announces SPAs and Contract Winners for the Competitive Bidding Round 2021

In October CMS announced the Single Payment Amounts (SPA) for select Off-the-Shelf (OTS) knee and spinal braces included in the Round 2021 Medicare DMEPOS competitive bidding program scheduled for implementation on January 1, 2021. Read the full AOPA announcement [here](#).

In November CMS released a list of the contract winners for each competitive bidding area. You may download the full list [here](#). Please be reminded that if your patient resides in a competitive bidding area and you don't have a contract you may not provide an item on the competitive bidding list; unless your patient has signed a valid ABN.

### 2021 DMEPOS Fee Schedule Update

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has released the 2021 Medicare DMEPOS fee schedule which will be effective for Medicare claims with a date of service on or after January 1, 2020. As anticipated, the 2021 Medicare fee schedule for orthotic and prosthetic services will be increased by 0.2% over 2020 rates. The 0.2% increase is a net reflection of the 0.6% increase in the Consumer Pricing Index for Urban Areas (CPI-U) from June 2019 through June 2020, combined with the annual Multi-Factor Productivity Adjustment (MFP) of -0.4%.

Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants May Act as Certifying Physicians for Diabetic Shoes  
AOPA, in collaboration with other healthcare organizations, has actively supported the inclusion of nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) to serve as certifying practitioners under

the Medicare diabetic shoe benefit. The Social Security Act states that the certifying physician must be the MD or DO that is managing the patient's systemic diabetic condition. This has led to significant access issues as the delivery of healthcare has evolved and non-physician practitioners have become more prevalent as primary care providers. The Durable Medical Equipment Medicare Administrative Contractors (DME MACs) recently announced two separate pathways that expand the ability of NPs and PAs to certify the medical need for diabetic shoes provided to Medicare beneficiaries. More [here](#).

Under the "incident to" pathway, NPs and PAs must continue to operate under the direct supervision of a physician who must sign off on all documentation recorded by the NP or PA including the certifying statement.

#### DME MAC & PDAC Correct Coding Reminder: Tension Based Scoliosis Orthosis

The DME MACs and the PDAC released a correct coding reminder for L1005 (tension-based scoliosis and accessory pads, includes fitting and adjustment). The L1005 describes a spinal orthosis used to treat scoliosis and contains multiple tension features (Tension bands, straps, pads, etc.) which connect to a semi rigid pelvic structure. It is also considered to be a complete device and all inclusive, and the use of any other addition codes will be considered unbundling and incorrect coding.

#### DME MAC & PDAC Correct Coding Reminder: Bilateral Lumbo-sacral Hip Orthosis

The DME MACs and the PDAC released a correct coding reminder for the bi-lateral lumbo-sacral hip orthosis, L1690 (Combination, bilateral, lumbo-sacral, hip, femur orthosis providing adduction and internal rotation control, prefabricated, includes fitting and adjustment). The L1690, at a minimum, must have the following characteristics:

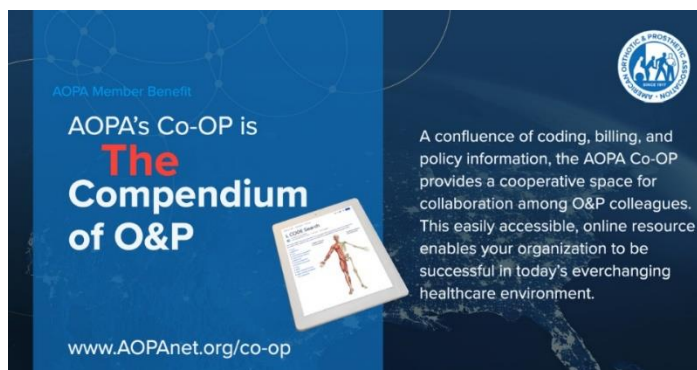
- Is prefabricated and includes fitting and adjustment
- Contains left and right hip joints specialized for combined planar motion
- Each hip joint uses rigid connectors for attachment to a rigid lumbo-sacral component to maintain therapeutic alignment
- Rigid lumbo-sacral component wraps around the posterior pelvis, includes anterior closures
- Lumbo-sacral component extends from the distal sacrum to L2/L3
- Hip joints align the femurs in abducted posture, set by supplier
- Each thigh cuff attaches to the rigid distal upright of each hip joint, includes closures
- Product may be worn when seated and during ambulation

L1690 is also considered to be a complete product/device

## **Research**

### **AOPA Co-OP, the Compendium of O&P Update**

AOPA added new features to the AOPA Co-OP in Q4 designed to better inform AOPA members about published insurance policy updates, and to solicit input from O&P providers regarding the impacts of policy changes in their states. The new section titled, [Policy/Coverage Concerns](#) includes a list of recent policy review requests that AOPA has sent to insurance company medical directors.



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 in addition to other exclusive Co-OP opportunities.

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 monthly Co-OP tutorials. Members can find more information at [www.AOPAnet.org/co-op](http://www.AOPAnet.org/co-op) or register for one of the upcoming Co-OP tutorials using the links below:

- [February 5](#)
- [March 5](#)
- [April 2](#)

### **Medical Advisory Board and Steering Committee Update**

AOPA's Prosthetic and Orthotics Steering Committees and Medical Advisory Board (MAB) held successful virtual meetings on November 17 and 18. Agenda items included discussions on proposed projects in wound care vs early amputation, health disparities and inequities, and establishing evidence underscoring the value of O&P care (not just O&P devices). Workgroup updates and reports from ongoing AOPA-funded research in intervention-specific categories, including plagiocephaly, spinal injury, post-stroke and osteoarthritis were also discussed.

### **COPL Pilot Grant Program Funding Update**

The AOPA Board has approved \$95,000 in funding for the COPL Pilot Grant Program. As a central function of AOPA's Research and Quality Improvement Pillar, the AOPA Board felt it was important to fund the COPL program at the same level received last year. COPL Pilot Grants are awarded in to proposals in the \$15,000 and \$30,000 range. The FY2021 COPL Pilot Grant RFP is scheduled to publish on February 1, 2020.

### **Education**

#### **AOPAversity Mastering Medicare Webinars**

AOPA staff and guest speakers will keep you up-to-date with the latest rules and regulations during these one hour webinars. This year's webinar topics include ABNs, audits, and inpatient billing. And, back by popular demand, quarterly clinician's corner...you'll learn about the newest techniques or how to best treat your patients presented by one of AOPA's National Assembly presenters.

Not only do the webinars provide relevant content, but all staff can benefit. Bring all your staff at a single office location together monthly to refresh their skills for the price of one registration. Bonus, all participating staff can earn 1.5 business continuing education credits each month.

Don't miss out on what we have in-store for 2021. Webinars are scheduled for 1:00 PM ET on the second Wednesday of each month. The webinars are \$99 each for members and \$199 for non-members. If you sign up for the 2021 series by January 31 you'll get 30% off...total is \$831 for AOPA members and \$1671 for non-members. 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:

- January 13, 2021: ABNs - Strategies for Success
- February 10, 2021: Know Your Audit - Understanding the Difference
- March 10, 2021: Inpatient Billing - Working with Your Care Partners
- April 14, 2021: Pedorthic Clinician Corner
- May 12, 2021: Topic TBD
- June 9, 2021: Topic TBD
- July 14, 2021: Topic TBD
- August 11, 2021: Topic TBD
- September 1, 2021: Topic TBD



- October 13, 2021: Topic TBD
- November 10, 2021: Topic TBD
- December 8, 2021: Topic TBD

Learn more and register [here](#).

Questions about registration contact Ryan Gleeson at [rgleeson@AOPAnet.org](mailto:rgleeson@AOPAnet.org), questions about webinar content contact Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org).

### Online AOPAversity Learning Center – Newly Released Content

Get access to on-demand education for the CE Credits you need! Learn state-of-the-art clinical practices advancing the profession. Whether you are an Orthotist, Prosthetist, Technician, Pedorthist, Fitter or Business manager, you will be pleased with the variety of high-quality education available to you. Wanted to attend the National Assembly but had to miss out? Visit <http://bit.ly/aopaeducation> to register.

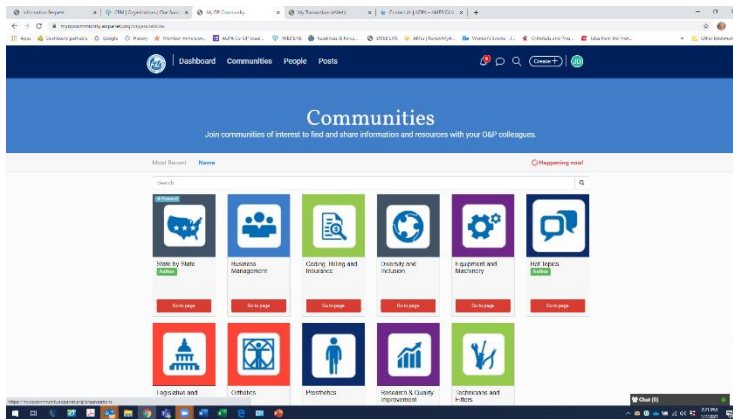
## Membership and Communications

### Membership Update

Did you know that as an employee of an AOPA member you have access to all AOPA member benefits? You do! And you can now access them easily and in one place through AOPA Connection, your one-stop-shop for all things AOPA.

Logging into AOPA Connection you will instantly have access to:

- AOPAversity
- Your Membership Record
- Your Individual Profile
- Event Calendar
- Bookstore (including past purchases)
- Co-OP



But, it doesn't stop there! We are pleased to introduce a new benefit accessible through AOPA Connection, **My O&P Community**. In this online community you can get guidance, share advice, have one-on-one conversations, and access resources among your O&P colleagues.

Accessing AOPA Connection is simple, all you need to do is set up your account [here](#) using your unique email and follow the instructions to link to your organization's name.

Once logged in be sure to complete your profile, this will help us better meet your needs as well as

allow others to connect with you. Once you do this, play around with all the features, re-familiarize yourself with all the AOPA benefits, check out the discussions happening in My O&P Community.

Questions? Check out these [Tips for Logging In](#). Still have questions? Contact Betty Leppin at [bleppin@AOPAnet.org](mailto:bleppin@AOPAnet.org) or 571-431-0876.

### New Members 2020 Q4

- Kelsey Prosthetics & Orthotics, LLC, Patient Care Facility in Greenfield, WI
- O&P Boost, Supplier Level 1, in Bakersfield, CA

- One Source, Patient Care Facility, Ocean Springs, MO

### O&P Almanac

The *O&P Almanac* combined the months of November and December. The combined issue covered giving within the O&P industry during COVID; expert advice for crafting effective patient communications; need-to-know information about the upcoming competitive bidding implementation; the 2021 AOPA Board of Directors; a researcher who is developing a customizable outcome measures electronic toolkit; and ; what to document when appealing a same or similar denial for replacement orthoses.



The October issue dove into changes in store for healthcare providers in the coming year; cost-effectiveness strategies; highlights from this year's Virtual National Assembly; AOPA's just-announced Driving Diversity and Inclusivity Initiative; the meanings behind the various acronyms related to Medicare contractors; statistics on consumer preferences in their healthcare experiences; and how to overhaul your emergency preparedness program.

To read these and other past issues visit [our bookshelf](#).

### 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, share what you are working on using the hashtags #prosthetics and/or #orthotics.

### Education Calendar

January 13–1 p.m. ET	ABNs: Strategies for Success
February 5– Noon ET	Co-OP Tutorial
February 10–1 p.m. ET	Know Your Audit: Understanding the Difference
March 5– Noon ET	Co-OP Tutorial
March 10–1 p.m. ET	Inpatient Billing: Working with Your Care Partners
April 2– Noon EST	Co-OP Tutorial
April 14–1 p.m. ET	Pedorthic Clinician Corner
<b>April 20-22 &amp; 27-29</b>	<b>AOPA Policy Forum</b>
May 14– Noon EST	Co-OP Tutorial
May 12–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
June 4– Noon EST	Co-OP Tutorial
June 9–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
July 2– Noon EST	Co-OP Tutorial
July 14–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
August 11–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
September–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
<b>September 9-12</b>	<b>AOPA National Assembly in Boston, MA</b>
October 13–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
November 10–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
December 8–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar

**\*Bold indicates event**