

## AOPA 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2021 Staff Report



**To: AOPA Membership**  
**From: Eve Lee, Executive Director**  
**Date: May 12, 2021**

I hope everyone's 2021 has been going well!

The first Quarter of 2021 has been a busy one for the AOPA staff. The Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act was introduced into the House of Representatives. Continued communication with regulators that led to the DME MACs no longer requiring brand name product selection for Medicare Prior Authorization. The launch of our partnership with the Journal of Rehabilitation and Assistive Technologies Engineering (RATE). And, we wrapped up our 2021 Membership renewals, thank you to you all for your continued support. Just to name a few.

In addition, the AOPA Board and staff continued to discuss and implement ways to support you in this new normal so that you can continue to provide quality care to your patients.

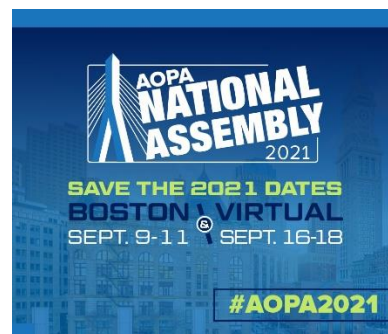
If you haven't yet, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with AOPA Connection, your one-stop-shop for all things AOPA. After logging in, you will instantly have access to all your AOPA benefits. AOPA Connection is available to all employees of AOPA members. Learn more including how you can access it [here](#).

Over the next couple of months, the Board will be undergoing a strategic planning process. The goal is to identify and understand our greatest opportunities and challenges both internally and externally. Although driven by the Board, the strategic planning process will involve the membership. Transparency and honesty are critical to us reaching a plan that is best for the Association and its members. I encourage all those contacted to be honest and transparent in your responses.

Finally, if you haven't heard we will be in-person in Boston, September 9-11. I look forward to seeing many of you there. If for some reason you are unable to join us in-person, the education content will be available for 90 days starting September 16. 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 National Assembly is the one show that has it all! With five exceptional education tracks designed specifically for prosthetists, orthotists, pedorthists, technicians or business managers/owners—you will have the opportunity to create a custom experience to meet your unique needs. It will be held in person, September 9-11 at the Hynes Convention Center in historic downtown Boston, MA. An online version of the meeting debuts on September 16-18 and will be available for 90 days. Register for a full conference and enjoy both.



Top-Ten reason you should attend the Boston Assembly:

1. Experience the Best of the Best in education as we celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Thranhardt Award.
2. Earn over 100 CE Credits
3. Participate in person, online or both.
4. Learn from top researchers, practitioners, and business experts
5. Special guest speakers include representatives from Medicare, Veterans Administration, and the DOD
6. Hear highlights from AOPA Funded Research
7. Peruse the exhibit hall
8. Catch up with old friends and colleagues while learning from new ones.
9. Partake in featured symposia such as, "Justifying Medical Necessity and Documentation," from our panel of physicians and experts.
10. Enjoy special events such as the Welcome Reception, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Thranhardt Celebration, Women in O&P event and the PAC Reception

Visit [www.AOPASsembly.com](http://www.AOPASsembly.com) often to view the program and travel information. Registration opens early June. Questions? Contact [Assembly@AOPAnet.org](mailto:Assembly@AOPAnet.org)

## **Legislative and Regulatory**

### **Legislative Updates**

#### Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act

On March 17, the House introduced the Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act (HR 1990). This bipartisan legislation would improve access to, and quality of, orthotic and prosthetic care while simultaneously combating fraud and abuse. The bill is identical to legislation introduced in the House (HR 5262) and Senate (S 4503) last year. Thank you for your help getting this vital legislation re-introduced. Introduction in the Senate is expected in late May/early June, providing us with a much greater window of opportunity to pass the bill.

#### 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. The next webinar will be held Wednesday, May 27 at 1pm ET.

#### 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. In late 2020, 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 117th 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 2021: Tina Carlson, CMP and James Young, Jr., CP, LP, FAAOP. 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).

\*This list was created on 02/28/2021 and includes only donations/contributions made/ received between 01/01/2021 and 02/28/2021. Any donations/contributions made/ received on/or after 02/28/2021 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 first quarter, our PAC meetings included:

- Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA) (\$2,500): Rep. Thompson sits on the Ways & Means Committee and is the lead Democratic sponsor of the O&P Patient-Centered Care Act.
- Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) (\$1,000): Sen. Schumer is the new Senate Majority Leader.
- 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.
- Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL) (\$1,000): Kelly is a member of the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee and chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust.
- Rep. Tony Cardenas (D-CA) (\$1,000): Cardenas is a member of the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee.
- Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA) (\$2,500): Eshoo is chair of the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee.

## **Regulatory Updates**

### Brand Name Product Selection Not Required for Prior Authorization Requests

As a result of AOPA's outreach, the DME MACs have indicated that they will be removing the requirement for inclusion of product selection information with your prior authorization requests. AOPA is pleased by this development that will ensure continued flexibility for product selection within the Medicare prior authorization program and is encouraged by the willingness of the DME MACs to engage in constructive and effective communication with AOPA on important issues.

### Clarification on Proper Billing of Prefabricated Orthoses

On March 11, 2021, the Durable Medical Equipment Medicare Administrative Contractors (DME MACs) and the Pricing, Data Analysis, and Coding Contractor (PDAC) published a joint correct coding bulletin regarding code descriptors that include the term "prefabricated, includes fitting and adjustment".

The bulletin indicates that HCPCS codes that include the term, "prefabricated, includes fitting and adjustment" are appropriately classified as custom fitted orthoses and therefore may only be used to describe orthoses that require customization and/or modification by a certified orthotist or other properly trained individual. Orthoses described by these codes that are delivered as OTS, without customization and/or modification must be billed using the appropriate not otherwise specified code (L1499, L2999, L3999).

View the video announcement [here](#) and read the announcement [here](#).

### New HCPCS Codes Effective April 1, 2021

As a result of the HCPCS code applications processed in CMS' Second Biannual 2020 non-drug and non-biological items and services review cycle, which includes orthotics and prosthetics, the following HCPCS codes will be effective for claims with a date of service on or after April 1, 2021:

- K1014 -Addition, endoskeletal knee-shin system, 4 bar linkage or multiaxial, fluid swing and stance phase control
- K1015-Foot, adductus positioning device, adjustable

### CGS Complex Post-Payment Reviews

CGS, the DME MAC for Jurisdictions B&C, has announced that they will be conducting complex post-payment reviews for a series of prefabricated ankle-foot-orthoses. The reviews will be focused on claims for the HCPCS codes: L1902, L1906, L1971, L4396, and L4397. They will also be conducting post payment reviews for select prosthetic replacement sockets. The two socket replacement codes selected for review are L5700 and L5701.

If you receive additional documentation requests as part of these reviews be sure to respond to them, however suppliers should be reminded that CMS has implied that the DME MACs may allow for flexibility with extensions based on the supplier's ability to complete the audit; based on the current public health emergency.

#### Noridian Complex Post-Payment Reviews

Noridian, the DME MAC for jurisdictions A &D, announced that they will be conducting post-payment medical record reviews of claims for the following three HCPCS codes: L0457, L0631, and L0650.

#### Lower Limb Prostheses Policy Updated

The Lower Limb Prostheses Policy Article now includes the following coding guidelines for L5968 (Addition to lower limb prosthesis, multiaxial ankle with swing phase active dorsiflexion feature) and L5986 (All lower extremity prostheses, multi-axial rotation unit ('mcp' or equal):

- L5968 describes a product that is used as an addition to L-code foot systems for lower limb prosthesis construction. The product provides multiaxial motion in the coronal and sagittal plane from articulating components. At transition of stance phase to swing phase, the product will increase the ankle's dorsiflexion angle and maintain it throughout swing phase. The product provides an accommodation of changing heel heights without the user's input. The predicate product is the Rincoe R-Hab Ankle.
- L5986 describes a product that is used as an addition to L-code foot systems for lower limb prosthesis construction. The product provides multiaxial motion in all three planes of motion, sagittal, coronal, and transverse. This code does not describe the multiaxial motion achieved from the inherent flexibility of the prosthetic keel or a split keel/heel prosthetic foot design. The predicate product is a device that was manufactured by Medical Center Prosthetic, which is represented in the coding narrative by "MCP."

#### Research

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

AOPA recently invested in a resource called GovPredict, which provides AOPA staff with alerts and tracking capability for all regulatory and legislative developments in the states. This new resource allows AOPA to update every state page on the Co-OP with relevant legislative and regulatory updates, in real time. Please check your state page to learn more about O&P-specific legislation in your state.



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:

- [May 14](#)
- [June 4](#)
- [July 2](#)

## **RATE**

In February, AOPA launched a new partnership with the Journal of Rehabilitation and Assistive Technologies Engineering or RATE. RATE is a peer-reviewed, open access, interdisciplinary journal, focusing on the engineering aspects and practical applications of rehabilitation and assistive technologies. As part of the partnerships, AOPA members will receive a 50 percent submission fee discount, and the journal of proceedings for AOPA's National Assembly will be published as part of a special collection. To learn more about the partnership, including how to submit visit <https://www.aopanet.org/rate-partnership/>

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

The FY2021 COPL Pilot Grant RFP was published in February and proposals are being accepted in 10 areas of orthotic and prosthetic research including an open topic. For 2021-2022, 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. Preference will be given to grants that address evidence-based clinical application in orthotics and prosthetics. Learn more <https://www.aopanet.org/resources/center-for-op-learning/>.

## **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, register for the 2021 monthly webinar series today. To keep the topics fresh, current and what you are asking for the monthly topics will be released on a rolling basis.

- May-Policy Changes and Updates: What Are You Missing?
- June-Documentation: Working with Your Referral Sources
- July-Prior Authorization: What We Have Learned & What You Need to Know
- August—Prosthetic Clinician's Corner

The previous month's webinars are still available for review and purchase.

- January-ABNs: Strategies for Success
- February-Know Your Audit: Understanding the Difference
- March—Inpatient Billing: Working with Your Care Partners
- April—Pedorthic Clinician Corner

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).

### **AOPAversity Virtual Coding & Billing Seminar**

The first Virtual Coding & Billing Seminar of 2021 was a success. The next AOPA Coding & Billing Seminar is scheduled for July 12-13, 2021. Registration details will be available soon.

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. Free and discounted education are available to both members and non-members. Newly released education include the following topics:

- Understanding the Wound Healing Continuum and Its Considerations in Returning Quality of Life with O&P
- Challenges of a Modern AK-Socket Design
- Unifying Stakeholder Perspectives: The Limb Loss Rehabilitation Continuum Framework
- Orthotic Spine Management

Visit <http://bit.ly/aopaeducation> to register.

## **Membership and Communications**

### **Membership Update**

A BIG thank you to all of the AOPA members who renewed their 2021 AOPA membership! BIG things are happening and we encourage all members, old and new alike, to try our new member portal called [AOPA Connection](#) and the new [MY OP Community](#), an online exchange of ideas and resources between AOPA members. Free online weekly tutorials are happening each Friday at noon in the month of April. Your participation will enhance your AOPA member experience.

### **New Members 2021 Q1**

Patient Care Facility Members:

- Baker Boot Co & Orthopedic LLC of Garden City, Kansas
- Kelsey Prosthetics & Orthotics, LLC of Greenfield, WI
- New Horizons Orthotics and Prosthetics of Kearney, NE
- One Source, Inc of Ocean Springs, MS
- Prosthetic & Orthotic Designs of Middletown, NY
- The Upper Extremity Institute of Blue Bell, PA
- Tropical Sky Orthotics & Prosthetics of Kissimmee, FL

Supplier Members:

- O&P Boost of Bakersfield, CA
- POMAC Inc of Moorestown, NJ
- VQ Orthocare of Irvine, CA

### **Member Volunteer Committees**

The Operating Performance Survey Workgroup met in March to plan their year ahead. The Compensation & Benefit Survey and the Operating Performance Survey will not be conducted this year. The committee plans to develop education for AOPA's Business Certificate Program and the 2021 Assembly in Boston. The committee will also explore ways to increase participation when the survey resumes in 2022.

AOPA's Member Services Committee also met this quarter and has provided instrumental feedback on planning for AOPA's Health Care & Compliance Celebration for members in January 2022 and on AOPA's virtual Coding & Billing Seminar.

## O&P Almanac

The January *O&P Almanac* dove into the COVID relief deal passed in Congress as well as survival tips and patient-centered care strategies for practices to explore in 2021. In February it explored how O&P facilities have adapted their patient-care practices and adopted new technologies for pediatric care in 202. It also looked at why more companies are adding mobile O&P services to their healthcare delivery model. Finally, the March issue featured O&P stakeholders' diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and educated readers about healthcare disparities that impact O&P patients;

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

May 12–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
May 14-Noon EST	Co-OP Tutorial
June 4– Noon EST	Co-OP Tutorial
June 9–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
July 2– Noon EST	Co-OP Tutorial
July 12-13	Virtual Coding and Billing Seminar
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 9-11, 16-18</b>	<b>AOPA National Assembly in Boston, MA and Virtual</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**