

## AOPA 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2021 Staff Report



**To: AOPA Membership**  
**From: Eve Lee, Executive Director**  
**Date: July 29, 2021**

Hard to believe we are halfway through 2021! It has been another busy quarter for the AOPA staff. We held our 2021 Virtual Policy Forum during which attendees met with their Senators and Representatives to advocate for the Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act. We have been following up on these meetings in hopes of getting this important legislation passed this Congress.

In April in response to recent government and media reports that indicated that the fraudulent provision of orthoses through lead generation and advertising schemes continued to pose significant risk to Medicare beneficiaries and the Medicare program, we issued a statement renewing our stance against fraud and abuse.

We were pleased to relaunch on partnership with the Amputee Coalition in June. The goal remains to provide AOPA members with additional resources to better serve their patients.

As you've hopefully read and/or heard, the Board is 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. To that end, you all should have received a link to complete a survey which I hope you will complete. The Board and staff will use these responses to better understand the current and future professional issues and experiences of all members and the value they receive from AOPA.

Finally, we have been hard at work planning the 2021 National Assembly. We have a great Assembly in-store and I hope many of you will join us, in-person in Boston, September 9-11. If 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).

Hope everyone is able to find some time to relax and recharge this summer!

### **2021 National Assembly**

Join your colleagues in Boston, September 9-11 as we reconnect as a profession for the 104<sup>th</sup> AOPA National Assembly. The planning committee has put together a stellar program and suppliers await to greet you in the exhibit hall.

Get those fist bumps ready for networking at special events, including the Welcome to Boston Celebration, Women in O&P Luncheon, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Thranhardt Award and the O&P PAC Reception.



Boston has so much to offer—why not come in a day early to take in a game at Fenway or walk the Freedom Trail, because once the show begins, you'll be captivated with sessions such as:

- Justifying Medical Necessity and Documentation
- Noise Abatement
- Diabetes and Obesity in the U.S.
- Human vs. Machine
- Muscle Tone and Hypertonus - Assessment & Relevance to Ankle-Foot Orthotic Management
- Awareness Drives Change: Recognizing Microaggressions and Biases in O&P
- Medicare Policy Update
- Non-Operative Management of Infantile Idiopathic Scoliosis
- Department of Veterans Affairs Update
- Symposium: Advancements in AFO Technology
- And so much more!

Visit [www.AOPAAsembly.org](http://www.AOPAAsembly.org) to check out the program and register today.

## **Legislative and Regulatory**

### **Legislative Updates**

#### Policy Forum

The American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association’s (AOPA) 2021 Virtual Policy Forum was a success! AOPA thanks all those that participated, their participation is vital to AOPA achieving its advocacy priorities. Over the two weeks, 150 advocates attended education sessions and met with their Senators, Representatives, and their staffs in hopes of gaining support for the Medicare Orthotics and Prosthetics Patient-Centered Care Act. The amount of knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm the advocates showed was truly inspirational and exactly what is needed to get this bill over the finish line this Congress. The Policy Forum would not have been possible without the Bronze level sponsors: Hanger, Ossur, Ottobock, SPS, and NAAOP and the Supporter Sponsors: Bulldog and Cailor Fleming.

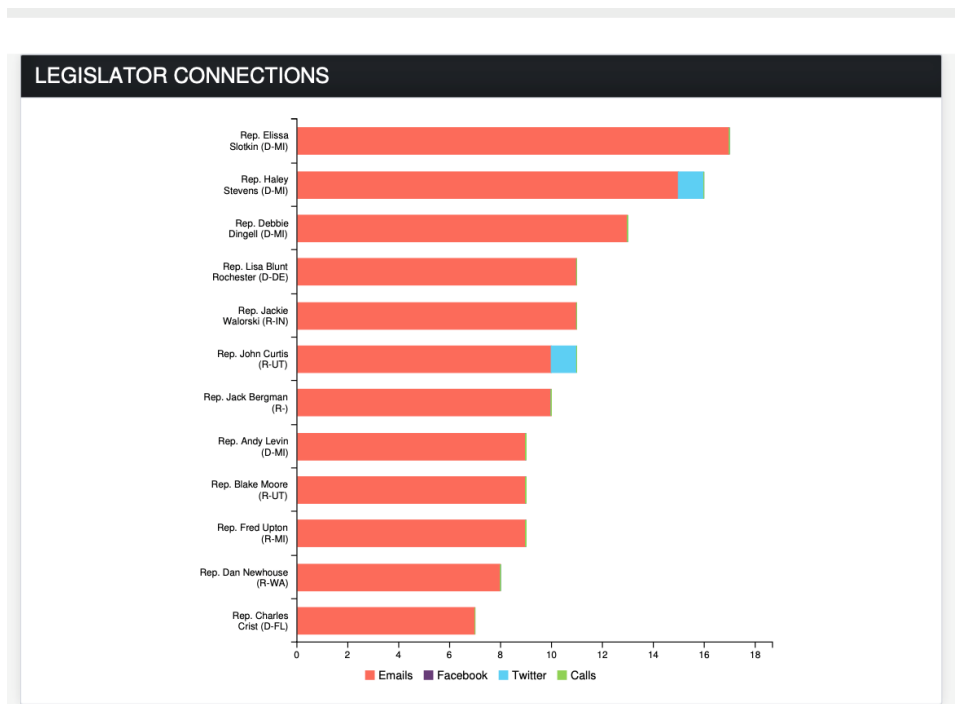
#### Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act

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. Senate introduction is expected before Summer recess. Please visit [www.AOPAvotes.org](http://www.AOPAvotes.org) for the most recent call to action related to this legislation.

#### Webinars

AOPA Monthly Webinars returned in July with a new name... AOPA Advocacy in Action. These webinars continue to provide

insights and updates on all things AOPA Advocacy, including, but not limited to what’s happening with the Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act and exciting developments in the states. Tune in to this monthly series to learn about legislation and regulation that impacts your practice and the patients you serve. [Watch](#) the first one.



### O&P Political Action Committee

The O&P Political Action Committee announces new PAC Board members:

- Rick Riley, Chair
- Scott Schneider
- Teri Kuffel, JD
- Maynard Carkhuff
- Mahesh Mansukhani
- Bernie Veldman, CO
- Arlene Gillis, CP
- Eve Lee, Treasurer
- Ashlie White, Staff Liason



The O&P PAC is AOPA's political action committee (PAC) representing the O&P profession on Capitol Hill. The O&P PAC focuses on seeking out key legislators on key committees, who have demonstrated an interest and concern for the issues facing the O&P community.

For additional information please visit [www.AOPAnet.org](http://www.AOPAnet.org),

AOPA would like to thank the following individual(s) for their contributions\* to the O&P PAC in 2021: Curt Bertram, CPO; George Breece; Tina Carlson, CMP; Michael Fenner, CO, BOCPO Steven Hoover, CP; Teri Kuffel, JD; Eve Lee, MBA, CAE; Brad Mattear, CFo, CPA; Joe McTernan; Wendy Miller, BOCO; James Weber, MBA 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](http://bit.ly/aopapac).

\*Due to publishing deadlines this list was created on 07/07/2021 and includes only donations/contributions made/ received between 01/01/2021 and 07/07/2021. Any donations/contributions made/ received on/or after 07/07/2021 will be published in the next update.

### **Regulatory Updates**

#### CMS Updates System Edits for Custom Fabricated and Custom Fitted Orthoses

CMS issued updated program instructions to the DME MAC contractors that will result in the creation of additional Medicare claim edits in the 17 states that currently require licensure and/or certification of orthotists and prosthetists. The updated claim edits will be implemented on October 4, 2021. In the 17 states that currently require licensure/certification, Medicare will only pay claims for custom fabricated orthoses (OR01) or custom fitted orthoses (OR02) when they are furnished by a provider that is enrolled under one of the following provider specialties: Medical Supply Company with Orthotics Personnel – Specialty Code 51; Medical Supply Company with Prosthetics Personnel – Specialty Code 52; Medical Supply Company with Orthotics and Prosthetics Personnel – Specialty Code 53; Orthotics Personnel – Specialty Code 55; Prosthetics Personnel – Specialty Code 56; Orthotics Personnel, Prosthetics Personnel, and Pedorthists – Specialty Code 57; Physical Therapist – Specialty Code 65; Occupational Therapist – Specialty Code 67; Pedorthic Personnel - Specialty Code B2; Medical Supply Company with Pedorthic Personnel - Specialty Code B3; and Ocularist – Specialty Code B5.

The updated program instructions are consistent with the legislative requirements of the Benefits Improvement and Protection Act (BIPA) of 2000, the implementation of which AOPA has supported since passage.

The CMS program instruction may be accessed [here](#).

Questions regarding this issue may be sent to Joe McTernan at [jmcternan@AOPAnet.org](mailto:jmcternan@AOPAnet.org) or Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org).

### Medicare Sequestration Suspension Extended Through the Remainder of 2021

The 2% sequestration-based reduction in Medicare reimbursement has been suspended for the remainder of the year. The sequestration suspension technically expired on March 31, 2021, but there was bi-partisan support to continue suspension of sequestration to reduce the burden on providers so they can focus on delivering necessary healthcare services.

Questions? Contact Joe McTernan at [jmctern@AOPAnet.org](mailto:jmctern@AOPAnet.org) or Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org)

### DME MACs Expand Post-Payment Reviews

As a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) the DME MACs had limited their post-payment reviews to focus on claims with dates of service prior to the beginning of the PHE on March 1, 2020. CMS has announced that Medicare Administrative Contractors, including the DME MACs, will now conduct post-payment reviews for later dates of service, including those after the declaration of the PHE. There is still no announced timeframe for the renewal of pre-payment audit activity through the Target, Probe, and Educate (TPE) program.

AOPA has contacted the DME MACs and has confirmed that post-payment reviews for dates of service during the PHE will take into account any policy waivers and regulatory flexibilities that were put in place by CMS to reduce provider burden, but all applicable statutory, regulatory and coding and billing requirements will be subject to review.

Questions? Contact Joe McTernan at [jmctern@AOPAnet.org](mailto:jmctern@AOPAnet.org) or Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org)

### Upper Limb Prostheses PDAC Coding Verification

The DME MACs and PDAC released guidance requiring mandatory coding verification for products described by HCPCS codes L6715 (Terminal device, multiple articulating digit, includes motor(s), initial issue or replacement) and L6880 (Electric hand, switch or myoelectric controlled, independently articulating digits, any grasp pattern or combination of grasp patterns, includes motor(s)). Effective for claims with a date of service on or after January 1, 2022, only products which have been verified and listed on the PDAC Product Classification List (PCL) may be billed to Medicare.

Manufacturers with products described by codes L6715 and/or L6880 should submit their products for verification review to the PDAC by August 31, 2021.

Questions? Contact Joe McTernan at [jmcternan@AOPAnet.org](mailto:jmcternan@AOPAnet.org) or Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org).

### **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

The graphic features a blue background with a globe at the bottom. On the left, it says "AOPA Member Benefit" and "AOPA's Co-OP is The Compendium of O&P" with "The" in red. Below this is a tablet displaying a human figure with a red line indicating a prosthetic limb. At the bottom left is the URL "www.AOPAnet.org/co-op". On the right, there is a circular logo for the American Occupational & Prosthetic Association and a text box that reads: "A confluence of coding, billing, and policy information, the AOPA Co-OP provides a cooperative space for collaboration among O&P colleagues. This easily accessible, online resource enables your organization to be successful in today's everchanging healthcare environment."

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 you can find more information at [www.AOPAnet.org/co-op](http://www.AOPAnet.org/co-op).

## **Research**

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

The Center for O&P Learning (COPL) received 35 entries in response to the 2021 Pilot Grant RFP. This is a significant increase from previous years and further highlights the importance of COPL's Pilot Grant program as a mechanism to increase evidence generation and maturation. Additionally, the COPL Board has committed to investing in young investigators who are interested in pursuing research careers in the field of O&P.

Proposal reviews are underway, and an award announcement is expected the first week of August.

## **Collaboration**

As part of its collaboration with the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (ACRM), AOPA is currently participating in the development of multidisciplinary clinician resource tool through the Limb Care Networking Group's (LCNG) Resource and Advocacy Task Force, and the development of a white paper on the Care Team Approach, with the LCNG Implementation Facilitation Taskforce. All collaborative work will be shared with AOPA members upon completion. For additional information about these ACRM projects, please visit <https://acrm.org/acrm-communities/>.

## **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, inpatient billing, policy updates and reviews, documentation and more. 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.

- August—Prosthetic Clinician's Corner
- September-Missed Revenue Opportunities
- October-KO Policy Review
- November- Orthotic Clinician's Corner
- December—The Year in Review & A Look Ahead

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
- 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

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 live and in-person Coding & Billing Seminar of 2021 will be held at the Tropicana Hotel & Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada on November 8-9.

Registration will open soon, but mark it on your calendars now!

Questions about registration contact Ryan Gleeson at [rgleeson@AOPAnet.org](mailto:rgleeson@AOPAnet.org), questions about seminar 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**

#### **New Members 2021 Q2**

AOPA officially welcomed the following new members during the second quarter of 2021.

New Patient Care Facility Members Welcomed this Quarter:

- Doctor in the House dba/The Upper Extremity Institute of Blue Bell, PA
- J.L. Artificial Limb & Brace, Bullhead, AZ
- Professional Orthotic & Prosthetic Services LLC of Manhattan KS
- Tropical Sky Orthotics & Prosthetics Maitland, FL.

New Supplier Level 1 Members Welcomed this Quarter:

- Comb O&P of Chardon, OH
- HiTek LLC of St. Peters, MO.

New Education/Research Members Welcomed this Quarter:

- Mecuris GmbH of Munich, Germany
- Impulse Technology LLC of State College, PA.



## 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.

## MY OP Community

AOPA staff demonstrated our newest AOPA benefit: MY OP Community. Members attending were excited about using the new collaborative community for sharing resources, connecting with peers, finding information and communicating with O&P colleagues. To request a demonstration for yourself or staff, contact Betty Leppin at [bleppin@aopanet.org](mailto:bleppin@aopanet.org).

## O&P Almanac

The May *O&P Almanac* featured recommended interventions and promising research for postamputation pain; previewed the education sessions from the upcoming AOPA National Assembly; provided information about successful meetings with legislators during the April Policy Forum and needed follow-up regarding the Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act; introduced a researcher who is studying the global prevalence of traumatic limb amputation; and gave updates from the National Supplier Clearinghouse.

Read the June/July issue to learn how prosthetists are partnering with their patient-athletes to prepare them for competition in Tokyo; get the latest on vertical integration in the O&P industry; meet a researcher studying socket suspension systems; refresh your reimbursement knowledge with updates on the PDAC's advisory articles; see local updates on important O&P advocacy efforts; and check out summer reading recommendations.

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

August 11–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
August 18-1p.m. ET	AOPA Advocacy in Action
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
<b>November 8-9</b>	<b>Coding and Billing Seminar in Las Vegas, NV</b>
November 10–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
December 8–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar

\***Bold indicates event**