

AOPA 3rd Quarter 2021 Staff Report



To: AOPA Membership
From: Eve Lee, Executive Director
Date: October 11, 2021

Happy Fall! AOPA staff was hard at work over the summer months.

We planned and executed the 2021 National Assembly. Thanks to all who helped make both the in-person and virtual components successful. A reminder, the educational content will be available for through December 18.

The Board continued the strategic planning process. The goal of which is to identify and understand our greatest opportunities and challenges both internally and externally and develop a plan that addresses these. The hope is to launch the new Strategic Plan in early 2022.

With the introduction of the Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act in the Senate in July, staff and our advocates have been meeting with Members of Congress to successfully gain additional co-sponsors.

Finally, late in September we issued some FAQs on the White House's COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement. AOPA will know more about this requirement once the actual proposed rule is published in mid-October. As soon as we have more of the specifics, we will share them.

You will find more details on all of these in the Staff Report that follows. As always, if you have questions, concerns, or needs do not hesitate to reach out to any of the staff at info@AOPAnet.org.

2021 National Assembly

The 104th AOPA National Assembly was held September 9-11 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston, MA. Over 1,100 individuals were excited to attend the first national gathering of the O&P profession. Another 300+ are registered for the virtual only component of the conference. Initial feedback has been very positive, attendees rated the education program and COVID safety protocols particularly high.



Some of the most highly attended education programs included

- The opening general session featuring former Congressman Erik Paulsen and patient advocate Nicole Ver Kuilen
- Muscle Tone and Hypertonus—Assessment & Relevance to Ankle-Foot Orthotic Management
- Medicare Policy Update
- Appeals and Denials
- Orthotic and Pedorthic Management of the Diabetic Foot
- Technical programming – Human vs. Machine
- Justifying Medical Necessity
- The Four Es to Successful Upper Limb Prosthetic Rehabilitation

Attendees enjoyed networking and celebrating success at the Welcome to Boston Celebration, Professional Women of O&P – Celebrating Success Luncheon, 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Thranhardt Award and of course in the exhibit hall.

If you missed the Boston Assembly, there is still plenty of time to take advantage of the online component which is available through December 18. The online component offers most of the same quality education, plus additional bonus programming. Once you register and begin participating you can go to your profile to view a list of the programs you participated in as well as the accompanying CE credits. AOPA will provide reports to ABC and BOC every 30 days.

Learn more at www.AOPAnet.org.



2022 AOPA National Assembly—Save the Date!

Mark your calendar for the 105th AOPA National Assembly which is scheduled to take place September 28 – October 1 in San Antonio, TX. The planning committee is already making plans to make this an exciting reunion and stimulating learning experience.

Legislative and Regulatory

Legislative Updates

Policy Forum

After the success of the 2021 Virtual Policy Forum, we are already looking to the future. AOPA hopes to host an in-person 2022 Policy Forum, subject to the most up-to-date public health guidelines. Please stay tuned for updates on date and location.

Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act

On July 29th, 2021, the Senate introduced the Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act (S. 2556), a piece of legislation identical to its counterpart in the House (H.R. 1990). Since its introduction by Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA), S. 2556 has found considerable bipartisan support, with five original cosponsors:

- Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA)
- Sen John Cornyn (R-TX)
- Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT)
- Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
- Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA)

During the third quarter H.R. 1990 has also continued to expand its roster of cosponsors, adding five over the past few weeks:

- Rep. David McKinley (R-WV-1)
- Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-OK-2)
- Rep. Dean Phillips (D-MN-3)
- Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-OH-2)
- Rep. Cindy Axne (D-IA-3)

Both bills would improve access to, and quality of, orthotic and prosthetic care while simultaneously combating fraud and abuse. Please visit www.AOPAvotes.org for the most recent call to action related these important pieces of legislation.

New Staff

AOPA has added a new member to their advocacy team! **Sam Miller**, MPA began working as the State and Federal Advocacy Manager in late August and will assist in seeking support for the Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act and monitoring the legislative landscape on behalf of AOPA membership.

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 couple [here](#).

O&P Political Action Committee

At the 2021 AOPA National Assembly in Boston, the PAC Board convened to discuss the future of O&P PAC fundraising. Together, the group has set an ambitious goal: raising \$75,000 in 2022. Through continued efforts to innovate fundraising strategy, the Board is confident that the PAC will achieve its aims.



AOPA would like to thank the following individual(s) for their contributions* to the O&P PAC in 2021: Curt Bertram, CPO; Gerald Bernar, CP; Jeff Brandt, CPO; George Breece; Joy Burwell; Erin Cammarata; Maynard Carkhuff; Tina Carlson, CMP; Jeff Collins; Thomas Costin; John Chad Duncan, PhD, CPO; Michael Fenner, LPO, CP; Arlene Gillis; Paul Gudonis; Kimberly Hanson; Scott Hebert, CPO; Denise Hoffmann; Shelly Hogan; Steven Hoover; Aaron James, CO, BOCPO; John Kenney, CPO, FAAOP; Therese Kuffel, JD; Eve Lee, MBA, CAE; William Leimkuehler, CPO; James Lewallen, CO; James Liston, CP; Melanie Liston; Mahesh Mansukhani; Brad Mattear, CPA, LO, Cfo; David McGill; Martin McNab, CPO; Matthew Nelson, CPO; Joe McTernan; Wendy Miller, LO, BOCO, CDME; Jon Naft, CPO; Michael Oros, CPO; Sara Peterson, PhD, CPO, FAAOP; Jeff Quelet, CPO; Rick Riley; John Roberts, CPO; Peter Rogerson, COA; Scott Schneider; Lesleigh Sisson, CFm; Mike Sotak; Frank Snell, CPO, FAAOP; Jack Steele, CO, FAAOP; Jason Tanner, CP; Bernie Veldman, CO; Greg Wahl; Dennis Williams, CO, BOC (O); Scott Williamson, MBA; James Weber, MBA; Paul Werner, LPO; Ashlie White; Shane Wurdeman, PhD, CP and James Young, CP, 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.

*Due to publishing deadlines this list was created on 09/21/2021 and includes only donations/contributions made/ received between 01/01/2021 and 09/21/2021. Any donations/contributions made/ received on/or after 09/21/2021 will be published in the next update.

Regulatory Updates

QIC Telephone Discussion/Reopening Demonstration Project Ending

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a reminder, that all activities associated with the Qualified Independent Contractor (QIC) Telephone Discussion and Reopening Process Demonstration Project will be ending on December 31, 2021.

The demonstration project gave elected suppliers who submitted second level appeals (reconsiderations) to the QIC a chance to participate in a formal telephone discussion. These discussions allow suppliers to present additional information, documentation, and facts about their appeal to support a favorable determination.

AOPA will continue to support programs that are designed to help suppliers and reduce the backlog of appeals at the Administrative Law Judge level. AOPA is currently working with several other associations to engage CMS and the QIC to ensure that this valuable demonstration project is extended or made permanent.

Questions? Contact Joe McTernan at jmcternan@AOPAnet.org or Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org.

TPE Audits to Resume

The Targeted Probe and Educate (TPE) program was temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), but the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in August authorized the DME MACs to resume the TPE program. In resuming the TPE program the DME MACs will also be closing all post-payment reviews. Currently, the DME MACs have not indicated which claims will be subject to TPE audits.

For a reminder on how the TPE program works or questions? Contact Joe McTernan at jmcternan@AOPAnet.org or Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org.

Select DMEPOS Supplier Enrollment Activities to Resume in October

Beginning in October 2021, CMS will resume certain provider enrollment activities that were paused during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), including: Application Fees, Fingerprinting/Background Checks, and Revalidations.

Suppliers who missed their original revalidation date because of the PHE will be notified of their new revalidation due date in two ways, a letter will be sent to the correspondence address on file in the Provider Enrollment Chain and Ownership System (PECOS), and The Medicare Revalidation Tool will be updated to reflect the new date. The letters and revalidation tool site will be sent and updated at least 3 months in advance of the new revalidation due date.

If you were originally scheduled to revalidate your location(s)/PTAN(s) during the PHE you will want to keep an eye out for your revalidation letter and begin checking the revalidation tool website starting in October, because a failure to respond to the revalidation request by the revalidation due date, will result in the deactivation of your Medicare billing privileges.

Questions? Contact Joe McTernan at jmcternan@AOPAnet.org or Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org.

Grace Period Granted for Provider Relief Fund Reporting

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the government agency responsible for administration of the COVID-19 Provider Relief Fund recently announced a 60 day grace period to allow providers additional time to file required reports relative to money received through the provider relief fund. The reporting deadline for funds received as part of the first round of funding (received between April 10 and June 30, 2020) remains September 30, 2021 but HRSA has announced that as long as the required reports are filed by November 30, 2021 no enforcement action will be taken.

As a reminder, providers who received more than \$10,000 from the COVID-19 Provider Relief Fund are required to file reports that document that the money was used to support business operations during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE).

Detailed information regarding the reporting requirements and how to complete the reporting process may be found on the HRSA Provider Relief Fund website which may be accessed [here](#).

AOPA recommends that members consult with their accounting professionals or financial advisors to ensure compliance with reporting requirements.

Questions regarding this issue may be sent to Joe McTernan at jmcternan@aopanet.org or Devon Bernard at dbernard@aopanet.org.

COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate May Include O&P Facilities

As part of President Biden's "Path Out of the Pandemic" Plan, the White House announced that COVID-19 vaccines will be required for all Medicare and Medicaid providers. AOPA's initial reading of this

announcement indicates that this requirement may apply to all entities that are enrolled as Medicare providers or suppliers, including O&P. AOPA will know more about this requirement once the actual proposed rule is published in mid-October. As soon as we have more of the specifics, we will share them.

We have put together this basic [FAQ](#) to help answer some preliminary questions.

Questions regarding this issue may be sent to Joe McTernan at jmcternan@aopanet.org or Devon Bernard at dbernard@aopanet.org.

New HCPCS Code

Beginning October 1, 2021 there is new HCPCS code for lower limb prostheses: K1022 (Addition to lower extremity prosthesis, endoskeletal, knee disarticulation, above knee, hip disarticulation, positional rotation unit, any type).

Questions regarding this issue may be sent to Joe McTernan at jmcternan@aopanet.org or Devon Bernard at 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 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.

Research

COPL Pilot Grant Program Funding Update

The Board of Directors of the American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association (AOPA) and the Center for Orthotic and Prosthetic Learning and Outcomes/Evidence-Based Practice (COPL) has selected its 2021 COPL Pilot Grant recipients.

Congratulations to:

- Joshua Burns, PhD, *Feasibility of smart ankle-foot orthoses with embedded wearable sensors to measure real-world function and compliance in childhood*
- Cole Cheney, MD, *Sciatic Block in Contralateral Limb for Treatment of Refractory Phantom and Residual Limb Pain; a Triple-Blind Randomized Crossover Controlled Trial*
- John Chomack, MS, *Advanced Wearable Fitness Tracker for Individuals with Transtibial Amputation: A Feasibility Study Using the Oura Ring*
- Michael Dillon, PhD, *Closing an evidence-practice gap: exploration of the barriers and facilitators influencing use of telehealth for orthotic/prosthetic services in the United States of America*

- Graci Finco, CPO-L, *Wearable Sensors in Prosthetic Practice: Can Walking Symmetry Supplement Clinical Measures to Assess Fall Risk?*
- Szu-Ping Lee, PhD, *Socioeconomical Disparities on Post-Amputation Outcomes in Individuals with Lower Limb Amputation*
- H. Edward Garrett Jr., MD, *Investigating Mobility and Prosthetic Utilization Outcomes in Patients with Lower Limb Amputation and Vascular Comorbidities Under Physician-led Collaborative Care Model*
- Cody McDonald, PhD, *Racial bias in orthotics and prosthetics*
- Taavy Miller, PhD, *Do corrective scoliosis TLSOs fabricated using 3D scanning show a greater percentage of in-brace curve correction compared to TLSOs fabricated from a traditional casting method of image capture?*
- Andrew Sawers, PhD, *Improving documentation of falls in people living with lower limb amputation: Reconstructing fall events with the Lower Limb Prosthesis User Fall Survey*
- Fanny Schulte, CPO-L, *Controlled Intervention Study of Community-Based Rehabilitation for People with Amputation in the Houston, Texas Area*
- Shane Wurdeman, PhD, *Care patterns and total cost of care associated with diabetic foot ulcer and lower limb amputation among Medicare beneficiaries: A 5-year cohort analysis*

Education

Certificate in O&P Business Management

AOPA is very excited to announce a new partnership with the University of Hartford to launch the NEW certificate in O&P Business Management.

This joint certificate program will provide you with a unique leadership experience, fresh insights and the education you need to advance your career while learning proven techniques for developing better business practices and improving your company's returns.

The Certificate in O&P Business Management is a comprehensive certificate program that offers a series of business and management courses to provide business owners, managers, and practitioners of O&P patient care facilities, O&P manufacturers and distributors an opportunity to explore crucial business challenges—from finance, sales and marketing to business operations, reimbursement policies and management.

The NEW and IMPROVED Certificate in O&P Business Management is similar to non-degree continuing education programs that universities offer in conjunction with their MBA programs. The courses will be offered online, at the AOPA National Assembly, and at targeted seminars throughout the country (such as the Mastering Medicare: Essential Coding and Billing Techniques Seminar).

The program consists of four areas of learning (finance, sales and marketing, business operations, and reimbursement policies and management.) To earn your certificate, you must complete (and pass a quiz) one core course and one elective course from each area of learning. Core courses will be offered through the university and the elective courses will be offered through AOPA.

The upcoming Mastering Medicare: Essential Coding and Billing Techniques Seminar qualifies as an Elective course. Why not get started?

[Learn more.](#)

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.

- 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
- August—Prosthetic Clinician's Corner
- September-Missed Revenue Opportunities

Have any suggestions for 2022 topics, let us know!

Questions contact Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org.

AOPAversity 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. Hotel rooms are available for as low as \$59 plus the \$25 resort fee and taxes.

Registration is [now open](#).

Questions contact Devon Bernard at 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

AOPA officially welcomed the following new Patient Care Facility members during the third quarter of 2021. Professional Orthotic & Prosthetic Services in Manhattan, KS; Davidson Prosthetics & Orthotics /dba Renew Prosthetics & Orthotics of Mooresville, NC; Integrity Orthotics & Prosthetics in Placitas, NM; Stability Prosthetics in McKinney, TX; California State University in Normal, IL, and Gouterman Orthopedic Appliances in Rockville, MD.

MY OP Community

AOPA staff can demo our newest AOPA benefit: MY OP Community, a new collaborative community for sharing resources, connecting with peers, finding information and communicating with O&P colleagues. To request a demo for yourself or staff, contact Betty Leppin at bleppin@aopanet.org.

O&P Almanac

The August *O&P Almanac* featured what some facilities are doing to formalize their outcomes measurements protocols; how to protect your facility from cyber breaches; the 25 years of Thranhardt Awards; companies that exhibited at the 2021 AOPA National Assembly in Boston; a DoD researcher; and how to optimize business practices to maximize profits.

Read the September issue to see photos and highlights from the 2021 AOPA National Assembly; exclusive interviews with the 2021 Thranhardt Award honorees; the latest research regarding balance issues and injuries among limb loss patients; tips for successful prior authorization; how Team USA's female competitors fared at the Paralympic Games.

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

October 13–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
October 27-1 p.m. ET	AOPA Advocacy in Action
November 8-9	Coding and Billing Seminar in Las Vegas, NV
November 10–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
November 18-1 p.m. ET	AOPA Advocacy in Action
December 8–1 p.m. ET	Monthly Webinar
December 16-1 p.m. ET	AOPA Advocacy in Action

***Bold indicates event**