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## CMS Announces Initial Implementation of Prior Authorization Program

No Prosthetic Codes Included

CMS announced on Dec. 19 the initial implementation of the Medicare prior authorization program that was authorized through the final rule published on December 30, 2015.

CMS has chosen a cautious approach in implementing its prior authorization program. There are initially only 2 codes subject to prior authorization, both of which describe power wheelchairs. CMS has also chosen to implement the prior authorization process in two phases. The first phase will be implemented on March 20, 2017 and will require prior authorization for the two codes above in one state within each DME MAC jurisdiction. The second phase will be implemented on July 17, 2017 and will expand the prior authorization program for the two codes above nationwide.

While the initial implementation of the Medicare prior authorization program does not include any lower limb prosthetic codes, the expectation remains that prior authorization for most lower limb prostheses will become reality at some point in the future.

## AOPA Celebrates its 100th Anniversary

Celebrating a Century; Envisioning the Next

AOPA is celebrating its 100 year anniversary in 2017! We will celebrate throughout the year with special *O&P Almanac* features, events at the World Congress, a commemorative website, Throwback Thursdays on social media, and a special Membership Directory.



The 100th Anniversary Who's Who Commemorative Directory will be printed and distributed as a gift to all of our AOPA members. In it, you will see your company name, address, and employee names plus O&P history, technology timelines, and photographs that will showcase our members' proud heritage. AOPA is also offering congratulatory and product ads. [Learn more about ads.](#)

We are also collecting photographs, memorabilia, and personal stories to be used on the commemorative website, social media, and at the AOPA World Congress. [Please share here.](#)

## AOPA Submits Comments on AHRQ Systematic Review of Lower Limb Prostheses

AOPA's Comments Included Input from the Medical Advisory Board

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) announced in December that it was soliciting public comment on the key questions that would be used in its previously announced systematic review of clinical literature relative to lower limb prostheses.

AOPA, with significant input from its Medical Advisory Board and its expert steering committee and Board members, developed and submitted detailed comments that addressed both the systematic review in general as well as responses to the 8 key questions on which the AHRQ had requested comments. In addition to its own comments, AOPA actively contributed to comments developed and submitted by the O&P Alliance. Many other organizations and individuals have also submitted comments on this very important topic. Comments were submitted on the December 20, 2016 deadline. [Read the AOPA comments.](#)

## Amputee Coalition Welcomes New Board Members, Board Leadership

Welcome New Members Seth McLaughlin and Matt Swiggum

Seth McLaughlin and Matt Swiggum have joined the Amputee Coalition board of directors, adding their executive marketing and sales experience to the talent and support that the board brings to the organization. The board's executive leadership has changed as well, with Dan Berschinski serving as board chair and Tom Coakley stepping into the role of treasurer.



Matt Swiggum



Seth McLaughlin

McLaughlin's background encompasses executive and consulting roles focused on marketing, with especially strong skills in consumer branding. McLaughlin lives in Wyoming, Ohio and owns the consulting firm Springfield Advisors. Matt Swiggum is the president & CEO of Ottobock North America and lives with his family in Austin, Texas. He has worked in the field of prosthetics since 1999, and his wife, Heather, is a certified prosthetist.

## Join the Coding & Billing Experts in Nashville

Discounts for AOPA members

Join AOPA January 23-24 in Nashville to advance your O&P practitioners' and billing staff's coding knowledge. Join AOPA for this 2 day event, where you will earn 14 CEs and get up to date on all the hot topics. [Learn more and register.](#)



## Call for Papers for AOPA World Congress

Business Submissions Due February 1; All Others March 1

AOPA is seeking high-quality educational and research content for the Second O&P World Congress to be held September 6-9, 2017 at the Mandalay Bay Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA.

Your submissions will set the stage for a broad curriculum of high-value clinical and scientific offerings at the 2017 World Congress. All abstracts will be considered for both podium and poster presentations. Receive a complimentary one-day registration (or 50% credit towards a full conference registration) when your free paper is selected as a podium presentation. Those presenting more than one Podium Free Paper will receive a Full Complimentary registration. Poster Presenters will receive a 40% discount off their full conference registration. [Learn more about presenting.](#)



American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association | 330 John Carlyle St., Ste 200 | Alexandria | VA | 22314