



American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association

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AOPA In Advance SmartBrief

Breaking News

April 11, 2017

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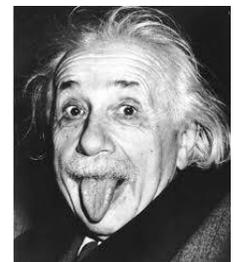
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Nominate an O&P Inventor or Innovator

AOPA is celebrating its 100th Anniversary in 2017 and we are pulling out all stops during the September 6-9 World Congress, where we will showcase significant milestones of the Association and Profession through our "Walk Through Time" historical display, as well as awards to honor those who have made a significant contribution to patient care through the invention of a device or technique.



Your opinion matters and we encourage the profession to nominate an inventor or innovator through our easy nomination process. **The deadline for submissions is May 31, 2017.**

[**Nominate an inventor or innovator now.**](#)

AOPA Submits Comments on Connecticut Medicaid Policy Changes on Cranial Orthoses and other L Codes

On March 30, AOPA submitted comments on two recently announced [Connecticut Medicaid policies](#). The proposed changes include the elimination of some L-Codes from the Connecticut Medicaid fee schedule due to lack of utilization, as well as a 10% reduction in the fee schedule for several custom fitted or custom fabricated orthosis HCPCS codes.

One proposed reimbursement change that is of particular concern is a 40% reduction in Connecticut Medicaid reimbursement for cranial remolding orthoses described by HCPCS code S1040. The notice from Connecticut Medicaid states that the 40% reduction is to "ensure consistency with reimbursement rates of other states and to contain costs." In addition to the proposed 40% reduction in reimbursement for cranial remolding orthoses, there are also proposed changes to the prior authorization process for cranial remolding orthoses that may lead to unnecessary and inappropriate delays in the provision of quality care.

AOPA submitted comments on the March 30th deadline and provided a letter that 73 AOPA members in Connecticut plus supplier members submitted through the AOPAVotes website. [Read AOPA's comments.](#)

Dale Yasukawa Scholarship Deadline May 15 for NUPOC Students

The OPAF Dale Yasukawa Scholarship Fund is now accepting applications from Northwestern University students currently enrolled in the O & P masters degree program. The \$1,000.00 scholarship is intended to assist NUPOC students attend their local chapter or society meeting of the Academy. More information is located on the OPAF website at: <http://www.opafonline.org/programs/scholarship.htm>

Scholarship applications are due by May 15.

This scholarship program is currently open to all full-time master's program candidates enrolled in Northwestern University's Prosthetic Orthotic Center (NUPOC). The chief purpose of the scholarship is to encourage student participation in their local annual meeting of the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists (AAOP). It is expected that the award will be used specifically to defray meeting registration fees of their local AAOP meeting and assist in the purchasing of books, supplies, and equipment needed for ongoing studies at NUPOC. In November 2001, a memorial fund was established at OPAF in the name of Dale Yasukawa CP. In cooperation with Linda Yasukawa, PT, MS, OPAF has created a scholarship program connected to Dale's memorial fund.

Jurisdiction D DME MAC Releases Quarterly Audit Results for Spinal Orthosis

Noridian, the DME MAC for Jurisdiction D, recently released the results of their ongoing service specific review of Spinal Orthosis (L0450, L0452, L0454-L0458, L0460, L0462, L0464, L0466-L0470, L0472, L0480, L0482, L0484, L0486, L0488, L0490-L0492, L0621, L0623, L0625-L0643 and L0648-L0651). Between October 2016 and February 2017 Noridian reviewed 680 spinal orthoses claims, and 674 were denied. Here were the results:

- The TLSO review had an overall claim potential improper payment rate of **97%**.

- The LSO review had an overall claim potential improper payment rate of **100%**.
- The SO review had an overall claim potential improper payment rate of **69%**.
- The LO review had an overall claim potential improper payment rate of **100%**.

Based on these results Noridian will continue its prepayment reviews for the above codes. You may view the complete audit results [here](#).

The ABN Form Has Been Updated

The Advance Beneficiary Notice of Noncoverage (ABN) form has recently been updated and approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). There were no substantial changes made to the content or directions for use of the ABN form (CMS-R-131). The primary revision was to include new language informing patients of their rights to Medicare nondiscrimination practices, and how to request the ABN in a different format if required. The revised ABN will become effective on June 21, 2017 and may be downloaded [here](#).

Sign Up for the April 12 AOPA Webinar

Don't miss this month's webinar: [Grassroots Advocacy](#)

What do you need to know about documentation? Earn 1.5 credits during the Wednesday, April 12th webinar and learn everything you need to know. [Click here to register](#).

April 2017

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1:00 PM Eastern

- How to effectively lobby for fair treatment of O&P on the local and national level
- How to work with patients to help them become advocates for their own cause
- How to effectively communicate with representatives in Washington, DC and in your office
- How to act locally to change things nationally

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House Positioning on H.R. 1628, the 'American Health Care Act'

As you are aware from the major news outlets, after a substantial 'run-up' and negotiations, the House leadership cancelled votes that had been slated for both Thursday and Friday on the House legislation to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA), entitled H.R. 1628, the "American Health Care Act" (AHCA). What will this mean, at least in the short term, for O&P patients and providers?

While not in the original bill, one turn in the negotiations was announced as an amendment to the bill so that H.R. 1628 would have resulted in repeal of the ACA's "essential health benefits." There is a general consensus that this action would have posed potentially significant challenges for some, perhaps many of our patients and would likely have been detrimental for O&P. The assurance that "habilitative and rehabilitative services" (it was one of the ten categories in the ACA that every federally-approved health plan was required to include) must be included in health plans would have been eliminated.

This action, coupled with the bill's plan to change the federal Medicaid matching funds provided to the states could have been expected to prompt a renewal of more state efforts to slice Medicaid, similar to AZ a few years back dictating 'no microprocessors, and no orthotic coverage for anyone over 18.' When Medicaid was enacted decades ago, the law did not articulate an explicit assurance of an O&P benefit for these patients... the ACA's 'essential health benefits' did serve as a fairly explicit assurance for O&P care, which largely blocked such state Medicaid O&P cutback efforts.

Another component of the House repeal and replace plan was authorization for the sale of health insurance policies across state lines, a step that concerned many in the patient community. It would have resulted in requiring 'falling back' largely on what protections are offered via state-by-state parity law protections. The much-discussed selling of insurance across state lines would also have an important impact, as it would create a 'least common denominator' effect. Hypothetically, if CA has a strong parity law with patient protections, and UT does not, when that UT carrier sells a policy in CA, it will not have to measure up to the stricter CA parity provisions.

With no vote having occurred on H.R. 1628, there is at present not a bill on any fast track in either House or Senate to repeal and/or replace the Affordable Care Act, so in the short term, the status quo prevails, albeit with limitations as to the number of options enjoyed on the insurance exchanges by patients in many areas of the country, and other shortcomings of the ACA. Obviously, this is a complicated picture, with lots of uncertainties as to if and when other legislative initiatives may move on this. AOPA will continue to keep you informed of significant developments. Those who tracked the House proceedings, and who have attended recent AOPA Policy Fora saw a couple of familiar faces often referenced in the H.R. 1628 deliberations. Both Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC) the Chair of the House Freedom Caucus, and Rep. Charlie Dent (R-PA) have spoken at the AOPA Policy Forum in recent years. Both were interviewed frequently, and their views often mentioned in accounts of the House process and proceedings. Don't be left out - come to the AOPA Policy Forum, in Washington D.C., May 24-25. Become an insider on what is happening in health care, and assure that your voice is heard! [Learn more about the Policy Forum.](#)

AOPA Pilot Research Grants – Deadline April 28th

The American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association, in partnership with the Center for O&P Learning & Evidence-Based Practice (COPL), is proud to announce a Request for Pilot Grant Proposals in 16 potential areas of orthotic and prosthetic research including an open topic.

There are 16 topics total with a few examples listed below:

- Study community outcomes of patients, such as activity, social interactions, depression and anxiety
- Understand the effects of prosthetic component selection on community activity levels rather than in the lab
- Study the origins/clinical goals and prevalence of prosthesis prescribing patterns
- Link biomechanical performance measures to functional levels
- Open Topics - Beyond the Above Priorities, Top Quality Clinical O&P Research Topics Considered
- [See the rest of the topics in the full RFP.](#)

AOPA and COPL will give preference to grants that address evidence-based clinical application in orthotics and prosthetics. Please post this RFP and share it with your colleagues. *The deadline for proposals is April 28, 2017.* [Read the full eligibility and application process.](#)

Register Now for the AOPA 2017 Policy Forum

Registration is now open for the 2017 AOPA Policy Forum! The Policy Forum will take place May 24-25 in Washington, DC. The Policy Forum is your best opportunity to learn the latest legislative and regulatory details and how they will affect you, your business and your patients. Once you are armed with the facts, we as a profession will educate our members of Congress to offer common sense solutions and share how the O&P profession restores lives and puts people back to work. [Learn More and Register Now.](#)



Check out AOPA's Commemorative Centennial Website!

We are pleased to present our new website commemorating our 100 year anniversary – www.AOPA100.org. The website features AOPA's history, an interactive timeline, photo gallery, O&P stories from AOPA members, and AOPA's plans for the future. Listen to stories from other AOPA members and submit your own, and share photos for our photo gallery.



Don't forget to follow AOPA on social media for Throwback Thursday posts all year long! #aopa100!

Exhibit at the 2017 AOPA O&P World Congress in Las Vegas



AOPA is currently accepting exhibit applications for the 2017 AOPA O&P World Congress, which is to be held September 6-9, 2017 in Las Vegas, Nevada in conjunction with AOPA's 100th Anniversary Celebration. Now is your chance to sign up and showcase your products at the largest O&P tradeshow in the Western Hemisphere. This world-wide convention opportunity features 4 days of high-level networking, exhibits, the latest techniques in O&P treatment, and the

finest industry specific business and clinical training programs. We hope you make plans to join us. The first Congress was a great learning experience for all and with your participation we can create a larger and even more successful event.

Why you should attend:

- Research and Development expenditures in the United States are more than \$95 billion, making the United States the leader in medical innovation and creating the ideal location for a unique gathering of high visibility and importance.
- Superior Clinical Education featuring the best speakers from around the world. Hear from physicians, researchers and top-notch practitioners.
- Practical Learning and live demonstrations
- Learn how U.S. Health Care reform continues to influence patient care and global health policy.
- Networking with an elite and influential group of professionals.
- Largest Display of exhibits in the United States for the orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic profession.
- Ideal U.S. Location chosen for travel ease and popularity.

Exhibiting at this important global event will give you the opportunity to:

- Build your customer base and increase sales;
- Experience face-to-face time with existing customers to answer questions and build relationships;
- Enjoy sponsored networking opportunities, including an opening reception in the exhibit hall;
- Take advantage of fun traffic building opportunities;
- Increase visibility for your company/organization in a targeted market;
- Host a Manufactures Workshop and/or Product Preview Theater;
- Take advantage of education sessions to learn what's happening with health care reform, Medicare, and other regulatory agencies that affect your bottom line;
- Speak to AOPA coding experts to learn what' is happening with U.S. government sponsored healthcare programs and what you need to do to sell your products in the U.S.

[Sign up today to exhibit at the 2017 AOPA O&P World Congress.](#) Contact Kelly O'Neill with any questions at koneill@AOPAnet.org or call (571) 431-0852.

Upcoming AOPA Events

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| April 12, 2017 | <i>Grassroots Advocacy</i>
AOPA Webinar
Learn more and register here |
| May 24-25, 2017 | AOPA Policy Forum
Washington, DC
Learn more and register here |
| July 17-18, 2017 | <i>Coding & Billing Seminar</i>
Pittsburgh, PA
Learn more and register here |