



American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association

AOPA in Advance

Breaking News for O&P Professionals

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Newsletter Feedback

We invite your comments and questions. Please contact Steven Rybicki at srybicki@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0835.

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O&P NEWS

Briefing AOPA Members on Dynamic Health Care Environment

AOPA's engagement in Washington's health policy debate has been continuous, but sometimes the news around the Hill moves so quickly that keeping members abreast in real-time of analysis of developments is challenging. Last week, after sending members [this Special Edition AIA](#), there were several small actions in a period of 24 hours, which relate in one way or another to health care reform and provide a glimpse of how much can happen in such a short span of time:

1. Following up on the bi-partisan Health Care Summit held last week, the White House has announced that they will incorporate several ideas raised by Republicans into their health care package. They mandate greater scrutiny of physician billings for fraud, state level studies on malpractice reform, improvements to provider payments under Medicaid, and greater visibility for high-deductible plans that are compatible with GOP-favored health savings accounts.
2. Tuesday night (March 2), after Sen. Bunning (R-KY) dropped his "hold" over several days duration, the Senate passed a jobs package that included an extension of unemployment benefits, but also a stripped-down, stopgap one-month "doc fix" just to avoid having to pay all Medicare physician claims with the 21% reduction. Efforts for a longer-term fix through the end of the year will follow.
3. Wednesday (March 3), Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY), the Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, relinquished his Chairmanship, at least temporarily, in response to allegations of ethics violations relating to reimbursement of travel costs for visits he and a few other House members made to the Caribbean. Rep. Sander Levin (D-MI) has assumed the role as Temporary Chair of this most important of the House Committees, which has jurisdiction over tax and Medicare matters. Rep. Fortney "Pete" Stark (D-CA), who actually has greater seniority than Rep. Levin, instead of advancing to the Temporary Chair position, will remain as Chair of the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee. A change in a key committee on the eve of the "do or die/up or down" vote on the reconciliation plan for health care reform is something few Democrats would welcome.
4. Finally, we should note that there was an amendment proposed by Sen. Grassley (R-IA) to the Jobs Bill mentioned above which would encourage the Secretary of HHS to essentially exempt pharmacies from accreditation standards for DME and O&P sales, creating the option for the Secretary to write separate regulations with requirements (presumably less onerous) applicable to pharmacies where the volume of DME/O&P business is less than 5% of the pharmacy's overall sales. This amendment was rejected by a 54-45 vote. However, that decision was based, not on the Senate's perceptions of the merits of this action, but because it would have impacted the financial calculus of costs for the health care reform bill. The actual text authorizing a special separate regulation for pharmacies is included in the Senate health care reform bill, so it seems that if the Senate bill ends up being enacted and signed, this provision would become law nonetheless. AOPA will continue to monitor this, including possible discussions with Sen. Grassley's staff, over the coming weeks.

AOPA will continue to keep members updated with health care news in DC as well as analysis of its importance to O&P.

Additionally, this past week **AOPA** Executive Director Tom Fise hosted an information session for employees of **AOPA** member company [Endolite](#) at the request of Chris Nolan, Endolite's Vice President and General Manager. Mr. Fise briefed the group on all the critical political issues in which **AOPA** is involved and the general regulatory and political environment facing O&P. Big-thanks are owed to Mr. Nolan for suggesting this forum and also for a question Mr. Nolan asked regarding the O&P PAC contributions list for 2009/2010, which is reproduced below so that all members are able to see the record of 2009/2010 PAC activity.

[Click here for the 2009/2010 PAC Donations list.](#)

If any other members would like to participate in and schedule a company-wide briefing hosted by **AOPA** Executive Director Tom Fise, please contact **AOPA**. **AOPA** will also be hosting a 2010 Policy Forum (details below) which will also focus on the crucial issues facing O&P on the national and state level in 2010.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at srybicki@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0835.

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Breaking News: 2010 Policy Forum Scheduled

The 2010 **AOPA** Policy Forum will be held Wednesday and Thursday, May 26-27, 2010 at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. This exciting Capitol Hill location will provide a new experience for returning attendees as well as a memorable first time for those who have not attended before. Call (800) 233-1234 or (202) 737-1234 before May 4 and mention the 2010 **AOPA** Policy Forum in order to receive the special room rate of \$259 per night.

As of this writing, health care reform has not been enacted at the federal level. However, 18 states have passed prosthetic parity legislation since Colorado became the first state to do so in 2001. 12 other states have introduced legislation so far this year and several more may do so before the year is out. Policy Forum attendees will still be lobbying their representatives on Capitol Hill during the Policy Forum on behalf of their individual businesses and the industry as a whole. This year's advocacy training, though, will focus on what you can do at the state level to advocate for O&P, whether your state has passed parity, is considering it, or is late to this particular party.

[Click here to access the registration form](#) and further details about the 2010 Policy Forum are forthcoming. Come to Washington, tell Congress what you'd like to see happen, and learn how to take that message back home with you like AOPA member and Director (4-10 Facilities) Rick Fleetwood at a recent fundraiser for Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-AK), Sen. Mark Pryor (D-AK) and Rep. Vic Snyder (D-AK).

[Click here to see Rick Fleetwood with Senators Lincoln and Pryor.](#)

[Click here to see Rick Fleetwood with Sen. Lincoln and Rep. Snyder.](#)

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at srybicki@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0835.

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Capitol Connection Benefits from AOPA Member Rodney Pang's Generous Gift

AOPA member Rodney M.K. Pang, CPO, sent **AOPA's** Capitol Connection fund a check in the amount of \$10,000 on behalf of the Pacific Rim Conference and in memory of Chuck Childs, CPO and Jerry Fullerton, CPO. Mr. Pang noted, Mr. Childs's "enthusiasm and encouragement helped make the first Pacific Rim Conference possible," and that Mr. Fullerton was "one of the initial organizers of the conference who worked tirelessly, together with his family, on every Pacific Rim Conference until it was turned over to US-ISPO at the end of the 2006 Conference."

The Capitol Connection is the O&P political education arm which sponsors the AOPAvotes.org Web site. It is not permitted to make direct campaign donations because it is permitted to accept corporate contributions. This contrasts with the O&P Political Action Committee (the O&P PAC), which can only accept contributions from individuals and may contribute directly to campaigns.

For more information on donating to the Capitol Connection, contact Kathy Dodson at

kdodson@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0810.

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Reminder: O&P Outreach to Haiti Continues

Al Ingersoll, CP, of Winkley Prosthetics, Orthotics & Pedorthics in Golden Valley, Minnesota, is currently in Haiti and has given **AOPA** permission to post his on-the-ground account of the coordination of materials and care; an outline of the protocols that are being developed to provide care to disaster victims; and instructions as to how O&P can further donate time, talent, and materials to this outreach effort.

[Click here to access the letter from Al Ingersoll, CP.](#)

Additionally, **AOPA** has received [this photograph](#) of Frank Shirley, CO, from Boston, and Al Ingersoll at Port au Prince's General Hospital, working with a young amputee. As **AOPA** receives more information from Mr. Ingersoll we will continue to post the updates for the public.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at srybicki@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0835.

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ABC Upgrades Credential for Registered Technicians

A certified designation will now be available for registered technicians reflecting changes in the day to day activity of their work as more and more practitioners focus on diagnosis and treatment plans instead of fabricating devices. Many of these supporting tasks are increasingly performed by technicians or outsourced - a transition that is occurring in many O&P facilities. All currently registered technicians will automatically receive this new certification, as will future candidates.

This transition to what the **AOPA** strategic initiative on The Ideal Office of Tomorrow advocates as the "care-extender" model always had the limitation of whether a supply of properly trained and credentialed professionals would be available in sufficient numbers for the model to be adopted. This change by ABC should help resolve that issue.

[Click here for more details from ABC.](#)

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Reminder Regarding Unsolicited Contact of Medicare Beneficiaries by Telephone

The office of Inspector General (OIG) of the Department of Health and Human Services has recently released an *Updated Special Fraud Alert* regarding the prohibition on DMEPOS suppliers from making unsolicited telephone contact with Medicare beneficiaries.

Medicare regulations only allow suppliers to initiate contact with Medicare beneficiaries via telephone under one or more of the following circumstances:

1. The beneficiary has given written permission to the supplier to make contact by telephone.
2. The contact is regarding a covered item that the supplier has already furnished the beneficiary.
3. The supplier has furnished at least one covered item to the beneficiary during the preceding 15 months.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has clarified that suppliers may contact Medicare beneficiaries via telephone based on a physician's preliminary written or verbal order as long as the physician notifies that patient that a supplier will be contacting them to arrange the provision of

their DMEPOS item or service.

It is important to remember that the restrictions only apply to telephone contact and do not prohibit marketing via other methods.

Questions? Contact Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0854 or Joe McTernan at jmcternan@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0811.

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Updates to Lower Limb Prostheses Policy

The Lower Limb Policy has been updated for claims submitted on or after January 1, 2010. According to the updated policy the code L5973, a new code for 2010, is only to be used for patients with a functional level of 3 or above. Claims submitted for the L5973 must also include the appropriate K-Level modifier, K3 or higher.

L5973- ENDOSKELETAL ANKLE FOOT SYSTEM, MICROPROCESSOR CONTROLLED FEATURE, DORSIFLEXION AND/OR PLANTAR FLEXION CONTROL, INCLUDES POWER SOURCE

The Lower Limb Policy will be revised, once again, for claims that are submitted on or after April 1, 2010. On or after April 1st, the repair code, L7520, will not be allowed to be used when billing for the time it takes to program electronic components.

Also, beginning April 1, 2010 the codes for ultra-light materials, L5940-L5960, may only be used to describe the fabrication of the socket. The ultra-light material codes may no longer be used to describe the components of a lower limb prosthesis. The codes will still be limited to one unit of service per limb.

Questions? Contact Devon Bernard at dbernard@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0854 or Joe McTernan at jmcternan@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0811.

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March 10 Audio Conference: "Billing for Refused/Returned Devices and Deluxe Features"

The next **AOPA**iversity audio conference, "Billing for Refused/Returned Devices and Deluxe Features," will be held on Wednesday, March 10 from 1-2 p.m. EST. Refusals and returns are unpleasant, but they can and will happen to you from time to time. Join us for this informative session to:

- Learn how to bill for items that a patient wants to return
- Deal with unforeseen circumstances prior to delivery such as:
 - ◊ Patient death
 - ◊ Patient refusal of delivery
 - ◊ Changes in patient condition
- Learn how to bill for deluxe features of an O&P device
- Understand the difference between returned devices and refused devices
- Get tips on determining salvage value of refused/returned devices

The cost of participation is just \$99 per line for members (\$199 for non-members). Any number of employees may listen on a given line. Those needing continuing education can earn 1.5 credits by returning the provided quiz within 30 days and scoring at least 80%.

[Click here to register.](#)

Questions? Contact Erin Kennedy at ekennedy@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0876.

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Upcoming Coding & Billing Seminar - May 24-25 in Pittsburgh

The second "Mastering Medicare: Advanced Coding & Billing Techniques" seminar of 2010 will be held May 24-25 at the Hyatt Regency Pittsburgh International Airport. Bring your toughest coding questions and get the answers from **AOPA's** staff experts as well as practitioners from **AOPA's** Coding & Reimbursement Committee. Practitioners and staff alike will be able to have their questions answered during breakout sessions where each group will meet with their peers to discuss their specific concerns. You will also:

- Join in-depth discussions on compliance with Medicare billing rules and documentation expectations;
- Learn how to assess compliance risk areas and deal with them;
- Learn successful appeal strategies and hints on avoiding claim denials; and
- Get detailed information on hot topic issues in O&P

Plus, earn 14 CE credits in 2 days. (**Be sure** to sign in each morning and each afternoon to receive all credits.)

Seminar attendees receive **AOPA's** special negotiated rate of \$105/night (single/double occupancy).

[Click here to make reservations](#) at the Hyatt Regency Pittsburgh International Airport Hotel. You may also call the Hyatt directly at 402-592-6464 / 888-421-1442.

Questions? Contact Erin Kennedy at ekennedy@AOPAnet.org or (571)431-0876.

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2010 AOPA National Assembly to Be Most Luxurious Yet!

The profession is buzzing about **AOPA's** 2010 National Assembly, which will be held September 29 - October 2 at the luxurious Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando, Florida. Don't miss the opportunity to attend the biggest industry show of the year in the most fabulous venue yet! With a terrific golf course right on the premises, this year's Thranhardt Golf Classic won't require a bus trip anywhere. (The proceeds will benefit OPAF and **AOPA's** Capitol Connection and a great time will be had by all.)

Want to be a part of this year's Exhibit Hall? It's already 90% sold out. Call Kelly O'Neill at (571) 431-0852 today to secure your space.

More information on the education program, special events, and all the details of the 2010 **AOPA** National Assembly will be in upcoming issues of **AOPA in Advance**, and registration will open at the beginning of May at www.AOPAnet.org. Watch this space for more details.

Questions? Contact Erin Kennedy at ekennedy@AOPAnet.org or (571)431-0876.

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O&P RESOURCES FROM AOPA

2010 AOPA Coding Products Now Available

Don't get caught with out of date coding references. Update your **AOPA** coding products today. The 2010 **AOPA** coding products are now available through the **AOPA** bookstore and may be ordered by calling (571) 431-0835.

The 2010 *Illustrated Guide*, *Quick Coder* and *Coding Pro* include all of the newly released HCPCS codes that describe O&P items. In addition, the 2010 *Coding Pro* contains expanded medical policy references and the 2010 *Quick Coder* includes a new section that lists all of the current modifiers used in O&P billing.

As an added bonus, if you purchase all three **AOPA** coding products at the same time, you will receive a bundled discount of \$50 off the regular retail price of the three items as sold separately.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at srybicki@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0835.

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Check the AOPA Job Board for New Opportunities

If you need a position filled at your business or are interested in looking at other job possibilities within the O&P field, check out the [AOPA Online Job Board](#). In the past month the Job Board has been viewed over a thousand times. If you want people to find out about a job opening at your facility or are interested in posting your resume for employers to view for potential openings, visit the [AOPA Online Job Board](#) today.

And remember: if you advertise on the Online Job Board and decide to also advertise in the *O&P Almanac*, then you'll receive a 5% discount on the cost of advertising in the *Almanac* and on the Job Board.

Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at srybicki@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0835.

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Are You Registered for AOPA's 2010 Series of Medicare Audio Conferences?

Numerous offices have benefited from their participation in **AOPA's** Medicare Audio Conferences. These one hour sessions come to you in the comfort of your office on the second Wednesday of each month at 1:00 pm Eastern. This series provides an outstanding opportunity for you and your staff to stay abreast of the latest hot topics in O&P, as well as gain clarification and ask questions on topics that you may not understand as fully as you would like to.

Seminars are still priced at just \$99 per line for members (\$199 for non-members). Buy the series and get two free; members pay just \$990 and non-members pay \$1990. If you purchase all the conferences, all conferences from months prior to your purchase of the set will be sent to you as CDs.

These convenient one hour telephone seminars are designed to fit easily into your busy schedule. Any practitioners needing credit can get 1.5 per audio conference by returning the provided quiz within 30 days and scoring at least 80%. Billing staff and others who don't need credit nonetheless can gain information they will use right away. The topics for 2010 are:

- January 13: Red Flag Rules: Are You In Compliance? (Available on CD)
- February 10: Hints on Passing Your Supplier Standards Inspection (Available on CD)
- March 10: Billing for Refused/Returned Devices and Deluxe Features

- April 14: Documenting for Success: Chart Notes, Prescriptions and Physicians' Records
- May 12: New Rules for HIPAA: Are You Still Compliant?
- June 9: When Disaster Strikes: Implementing a Contingency Plan
- July 14: Medicare Appeals Strategies
- August 11: Medicare's Knocking: How Good Is Your Compliance Plan?
- September 8: Missed Billing Opportunities: Are You Billing Everything You Can?
- October 13: You're Going To Pay Me WHAT?...Hints on Managed Care Contracting
- November 10: The Ins and Outs of Billing in a Part A Setting: Hospital, SNF and Hospice
- December 8: 2011 New Codes and Medical Policies

If you miss an audio conference, it will be available on CD after the fact. Cost is the same as if you participate live (\$99/\$199). We hope you'll be able to join us for this year's series.

[Click here to register for any or all of the 2010 AOPA audio conferences.](#)

Questions? Contact Erin Kennedy, ekennedy@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0876.

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O&P INSIDER'S TRACK

The Only Up-to-the Minute O&P Newsline

Businesses in the News

The torch relay for the [2010 Paralympics](#) started last week. Competitions begin on March 13th in and around Vancouver, Canada. [Click here for news about the 2010 Paralympics.](#)

[PrimeFare West](#), was held on February 19-20 and featured 33 exhibitors.

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Send Us Your News!

The next **AOPA in Advance** will arrive in your inbox on March 23. So if you have a new employee or a new office, tell us! Share your news with the over 15,000 readers of the *O&P Almanac* and **AOPA In Advance** newsletter. Contact Steven Rybicki at srybicki@AOPAnet.org.

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