



**American Orthotic &  
Prosthetic Association**

# AOPA in Advance

## Breaking News for O&P Professionals

April 16, 2010

SPECIAL EDITION

### O&P News

#### **BREAKING NEWS: Senate O&P Parity Bill Introduced**

The Federal Prosthetics and Custom Orthotics Parity Act (S.3220) was introduced April 15 by Senators Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Tom Harkin (D-IA). These same Senators had introduced a prosthetic only bill in the prior Congress championed by the Amputee Coalition of America (ACA).

**[The text of S.3220 will be posted here as soon as the official version is released.](#)**

ACA and AOPA, with important support from the O&P Alliance, have worked hard over the past year to get the bill introduced. Special kudos go to members of the O&P Alliance, each of whom signed on early, and especially to Peter Thomas who did yeoman's work in building the list of other supporting organizations. Lining up to support the legislation in addition to the Alliance members and ACA are 25 other non-profit organizations with a stake in O&P patient care outcomes.

When the American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association (AOPA) developed data demonstrating that the cost per insured of adding orthotics was so insignificant, the ACA and the Senators opted for the more comprehensive O&P parity coverage. ACA and AOPA have partnered on a number of opportunities, including an extensive co-branded advertising campaign, which has advanced the interests of O&P patients.

ACA from the onset has championed very effectively parity efforts at the state level for several years and to date 18 states have enacted some form of parity legislation - some with orthotics and prosthetics covered and some with only prosthetics. Parity bills do not mandate that insurers offer O&P coverage but if the insurer offers coverage, it must be on the same terms with their other medical and surgical benefits in their policy. Without parity insurers could continue penalizing O&P patients with lifetime caps or other coverage limitations.

The importance of Federal parity legislation has grown dramatically with the passage of the recent health care reform law which permits health insurers to sell across state lines under "health insurance compacts." These multi-state arrangements allow the insurer to select the lowest common regulatory denominator. It is feared that states without parity laws would often be the insurer's regulatory venue of first choice. This choice would in effect rescind or override any parity laws that may have been passed in other states served by the "health insurance compact." That makes a Federal parity law virtually indispensable both in filling in the gaps created as to ERISA plans that are unaffected by state laws as well as reinforcing existing state laws most crucial to preserve patient care that is not subject to lifetime limits or other arbitrary benefit caps.

The House version of parity, H.R. 2575, was introduced last year by Reps. Andrews (D-NJ) and Rep. George Miller (D-CA) who is also chair of the Education and Labor Committee.

At this critical point, with a House bill and now a Senate bill both introduced, the AOPA Policy Forum on May 26-27 looms as even more important with the opportunity for AOPA members during their Capitol Hill visits to make a specific "ask" of their legislator. Amputee Coalition of America

The prospect of passing parity legislation in this Congress makes your participation in the 2010 AOPA Policy Forum even more necessary. The 2010 Policy Forum will be hosted at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill on Wednesday, May 26 through Thursday, May 27.

[Click here to access the registration form for the 2010 AOPA Policy Forum.](#)

AOPA would like to acknowledge and thank the organizations who have been supportive of the Parity Act:

- American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- American Association of People with Disabilities
- American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists
- American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics & Pedorthics
- American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
- Adapted Physical Activity Council
- Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
- Brain Injury Association of America
- Center for Medicare Advocacy
- Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation
- Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
- Easter Seals
- National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics
- National Association of Social Workers
- National Commission on Orthotic & Prosthetic Education
- National Council on Independent Living
- National Spinal Cord Injury Association
- Orthotic and Prosthetic Alliance
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Research Institute for Independent Living
- Spina Bifida Association
- The Arc of the United States
- United Cerebral Palsy
- United Spinal Association

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

## Send Us Your News!

The next **AOPA in Advance** will arrive in your inbox on April 20. 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](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org).

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