



**American Orthotic &  
Prosthetic Association**

# AOPA in Advance

Breaking News for O&P Professionals

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Volume 15, Number 9

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#### Newsletter Feedback

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

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## O&P NEWS

### AOPA Sends Letter to Secretaries Sebelius and Solis Regarding Flawed Report

Last week **AOPA** delivered a letter and packet of materials to Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), and to Hilda Solis, Secretary of Labor. The packet was a response by **AOPA** to a report from the Department of Labor issued to HHS as part of the HHS effort to define what is an "essential health benefit" under the new health care reform law. The report from labor speculated that approximately 50 percent of employer plans provided coverage for orthotics and prosthetics. **AOPA** argued to both departments that the number of plans which offer coverage for prosthetics and customized orthotics is, in fact, much higher.

The **AOPA** response raised questions about the flawed Department of Labor report on the basis of it having two major problems. First, the report conducted a search for the coverage of orthotics and prosthetics by using a superficial and limited set of search terms. **AOPA** argued a more robust and accurate set of search terms would have made it more apparent that a high number of private employer health plans cover O&P. Second, **AOPA** pointed out that the Department of Labor did not conduct a current survey of employer health plans in order to compile this report. Instead, it relied on only the historical data it possessed. Furthermore, this historical data was collected only from employers (and not from insurers) on a voluntary basis and so there is no way to know the extent to which their data is complete or of representative plans in general.

The packet also contained a background study on this same question conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management that showed approximately 75 percent of employer plans offer O&P coverage. Also included was a letter from Rep. Rob Andrews (D-NJ) supporting including of O&P as an essential health benefit, and similar supportive statements in the Congressional Record by Reps. Miller and Pascrell.

[Click here to access the entire packet AOPA sent to HHS and Labor.](#)

**AOPA** will keep members updated as to all continued interaction with both the departments of Health and Human Services and Labor.

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

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### Minnesota Commissioner Sends Letter to State Legislature Critical of Current Budget Cut Proposals

As state legislatures across the country are considering cuts to Medicaid programs, **AOPA** was alerted to a budget proposal being debated in Minnesota that would, "eliminate 'optional' services, including therapies, eyeglasses and prosthetics." Members from various organizations have gotten involved in speaking out for O&P in the state and and this week **AOPA** received news that Lucinda Jesson, Commissioner of Minnesota's Department of Human Services, sent a letter to the Minnesota House and Senate expressing concerns over some budget proposals, including the one that would cut O&P. As it relates to O&P, Commissioner Jesson writes:

**Proposal to eliminate "optional" services, including therapies, eyeglasses and prosthetics.** Ending coverage for these services creates significant holes in coverage, especially for people with disabilities who often depend on Medical Assistance for much of their lives. If optional services that help people to be more independent are eliminated, some

people will substitute more expensive long-term care services such as home care assistance to meet their needs. Additionally, this proposal creates an incentive for people to go into a facility to receive therapy. Nursing homes and intermediate care facilities (that are obligated to meet people's care needs) would have to provide therapies within their current rates.

[Click here to see the letter from Commissioner Lucinda Jesson to the Minnesota Legislature.](#)

As the budget process is ongoing in Minnesota, **AOPA** will continue to monitor this situation and keep members updated.

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

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## **AOPA EXTENDS FOR 10 DAYS DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR CLINICAL RESEARCH GRANTS: One-Time Grants of up to \$7,500 for Pilot Research Available from AOPA and COPL**

The leadership of **AOPA**, working in conjunction with the Center for Orthotic and Prosthetic Learning and Outcomes/Evidence-Based Practice (COPL) and its Board of Directors comprised of representatives from eight leading O&P organizations issued an RFP for pilot-type research grants seeking original evidence based or outcomes research in orthotics and prosthetics. **AOPA** has extended the deadline for receipt of grant proposals for an additional ten days to assure that all interested parties have the opportunity to apply. **AOPA** is seeking proposals for one-time grants in amounts up to \$7,500 in the following six areas

- a. Microprocessor Knee - Stumble Recovery Benefit for Non-Variable Cadence Ambulators, and Does Restricted Access for K-1 and K-2 to Hydraulic Controls Adversely Impact Patient Safety?
- b. Validity of Energy Storing Feet - AK/BK , Clinical Appropriateness and Efficacy of Dynamic Response Feet for K-3 Patients, and Defining Appropriate Levels of Variable Cadence
- c. TLSO, Reduction of Fall and/or Injury Related to Different Types of Spinal Devices Post Surgery
- d. Socket Interface: Methods for Measuring Proper Socket Fit and Alignment.
- e. Vacuum-Assisted Socket Suspension Systems
- f. Open Topics - Beyond the Above Priorities, Top Quality Clinical O&P Research Topics Considered

**AOPA** and COPL will give preference to grants that address evidence-based clinical application in orthotics and prosthetics. To learn more about eligibility requirements, [click here to read the entire RFP.](#)

**The original deadline, which had been listed as April 30, 2011, for these pilot research grant proposals has been extended to Wednesday, May 11, 2011.**

Successful applicants will be notified by June 15, 2011, with availability of this support to take place as shortly thereafter as feasible. The study must be completed within 1 year of the date of the award.

**Inquires should be sent in writing to:**

Thomas F. Fise, Executive Director  
RFP Number EBP- 043011  
American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association  
330 John Carlyle Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314  
P: 571-431-0802 F: 571-431-0899  
[tfise@AOPAnet.org](mailto:tfise@AOPAnet.org)

Questions should be directed to: Thomas Fise, at the address above, or [tfise@AOPAnet.org](mailto:tfise@AOPAnet.org).

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## AOPA Announces Second Coding and Billing Seminar: June 16-17 in San Antonio, Texas

The second Coding & Billing seminar of 2011 has been announced for June 16-17 at the [San Antonio Marriot Rivercenter](#) in San Antonio, Texas. At this seminar, **AOPA** experts will provide the most up-to-date information to help O&P practitioners and office billing staff learn how to code complex devices, including repairs and adjustments, through interactive discussions with **AOPA** experts and your colleagues and much more. Meant for both practitioners and office staff, this advanced two day event will feature break-out sessions for these two groups, to ensure concentration on material appropriate to each.

### What You Will Learn

- How to use Medical Policies to improve your reimbursement
- Hints on what, when, and how to document your interaction with patients
- How to develop and execute a successful compliance plan
- How to properly perform self audits of your charts and what to do when you discover problems

### In the breakout session Practitioners will cover:

- General Coding Principles
- "Hands on" coding of specific devices
- Proper coding for repairs and adjustments
- Reimbursement for unlisted codes
- Codes that are mutually exclusive and should not be billed together

### In the breakout session Administrators will cover:

- Updated Quality and Supplier Standards
- Strategies for handling appeals and denials
- How to handle unique billing situations
- Documentation Requirements
- Medicare as Secondary Payer

[Click here to register for the San Antonio Coding & Billing Seminar.](#)

[Click here for more information on the San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter and to take advantage of the low rate Coding & Billing rate of \\$159 per night.](#)

Questions? Contact Ann Davis at [adavis@AOPAnet.org](mailto:adavis@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0876.

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## AOPA Promote Committee Looking to Recruit Patients as O&P Media Contacts

**AOPA's** Promote Committee is searching for O&P patients who are willing to share their personal stories of thriving with prosthetic and/or custom orthotic devices, thanks to Medicaid coverage. As you know, we are facing an increasing number of proposals for state Medicaid cuts to O&P care. To combat this, **AOPA** is looking to pitch personal stories of success to local and national media outlets thanks to coverage of Medicaid budget debates.

**If you have a patient that fits the following criteria, please email Steven Rybicki (at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org)) a brief overview of his/her story along with contact information and any relevant links that will help us understand that person's story** (ex. links to any previous online news coverage featuring that person, an online bio, a LinkedIn page, personal website, etc.).

The patient should possess the following traits/characteristics:

1. Articulate and outgoing
2. Happy/positive
3. **Thriving with prosthetic or custom orthotic device that was paid for in part by Medicaid coverage**
4. Preferably maintains a full or part-time job
5. Willing and comfortable with sharing personal details of their story and the impact of being an amputee
6. Has a well-maintained physical appearance
7. Over age 21
8. Has given you permission to send us his/her story and contact information

The patient should NOT possess the following traits/characteristics:

1. Quiet, gives one word responses to questions
2. Sarcastic, cynical, or negative
3. Curses frequently
4. Openly and irrationally critical of others, including government organizations or a previous care provider

Our objective is to show the successes that people with limb loss or difference can achieve once provided the appropriate tools. Studies have shown that providing O&P services actually saves states money by restoring personal independence and productivity and by reducing secondary and life-threatening complications. Now, we're looking to personalize those findings by telling the stories of those who are living proof.

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

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## May Issue of the *O&P Almanac* in Mailboxes Soon

Check your mailboxes for the May issue of the *O&P Almanac*. This month's issue focuses on marketing your O&P facility. Features include:

- "Marketing Strategies for a New Business Climate," Anya Martin explores strategies for establishing your brand and attracting new business in today's economic climate. Discover how several established O&P companies are tapping new media and tried-and-true marketing tactics to bring in new patients.
- "Extreme Makeover O&P Edition," Jill Culora profiles how O&P professionals are updating their practices from the building to their patient care models to better serve patients and increase their competitive advantage.

Those features, plus the monthly "Reimbursement Page" and "AOPA Answers" columns are at your fingertips today.

[Click here to access the online version of the May issue of the \*O&P Almanac\*.](#)

If you have any questions about your Almanac subscription, contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

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## Complete the 2011 Operating Performance and Compensation/Benefits Reports Today!

Watch for the *2011 Operating Performance Compensation and Benefits Report* survey questionnaire

that should be in your mail box next week. By completing the questionnaire you automatically reserve your FREE copy of the survey, your customized *Company Report* and you obtain an opportunity for a one-to-one consultation with **AOPA's** consulting experts, Industry Insights.

Industry Insights has conducted this survey for almost a decade and has a wealth of experience in analyzing the data and providing "top performer" comparisons with your own performance. The lessons learned can be invaluable to your management decision making process and represents the most useful benchmarking information available in the O&P field.

Remember - all data is absolutely confidential and no one from **AOPA** or any other entity sees the data except the Industry Insight consultants who are bound by a strict confidentiality agreement.

So why would you as a member pay \$295 (\$425 for non-members) for this "must have" information when you can get your own free copy along with your *Company Report* which analyzes your business and qualifies you for the personal consultation.

There are three ways to participate - (1) Complete the hard copy survey questionnaire and return it to Industry Insights; (2) Go online to [www.AOPA-Survey.com](http://www.AOPA-Survey.com) for the convenient "save and return" way of providing your data; or (3) Send your financial statements to Industry Insights and they will enter your data.

**AOPA** and Industry Insights conduct the Operating Performance Report survey every year. In the odd number years such as this year, the Report is expanded to include the operating data plus the all important compensation and benefits information. This is the year for reporting the entire package which makes it even more persuasive to participate and get the full benefit of your free report, analysis and personal consultation.

Leading this project are **AOPA** members chaired by Mike Hamontree including Candy Carlson, Craig Wright, Jim Weber and Bob Leimkuehler joined by Industry Insight experts, Scott Hackworth and Michael Becher.

If you have any questions about how you can participate in this year's survey, contact Steven Rybicki at [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0835.

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## Join AOPA for the May 11 Audio Conference "Which Box to Check? The Negative Effect of the CMS 855S on Reimbursement"

Medicare provider enrollment is a confusing and often frustrating process. Simple mistakes such as checking the wrong box may have a long term negative impact on your ability to provide O&P services to Medicare beneficiaries. **AOPA** is here to help you understand the Medicare enrollment process and avoid some of its potential pitfalls. Join **AOPA** on May 11, 2011 at 1 p.m. EDT for aits **AOPA**iversity Mastering Medicare Audio Conference "Which Box to Check? The Negative Effect of the CMS 855S on Reimbursement." Topics for discussion include:

- Proper completion of the CMS 855S DMEPOS Provider Enrollment Application
- Common mistakes that may cause the loss of time and money
- PECOS and its role in DMEPOS provider enrollment
- Proper self reporting of your business type(s)
- Accreditation and Surety Bonds

The cost of participating \$99 per line for **AOPA** members (\$199 for nonmembers) and any number of employees may listen on a given line. Listeners can earn 1.5 continuing education credits by returning the provided quiz within 30 days and scoring at least 80 percent. Contact Devon Bernard at [dbernard@AOPAnet.org](mailto:dbernard@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0854 with content questions.

[Click here to register online.](#)

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Questions? Contact Ann Davis at [adavis@AOPAnet.org](mailto:adavis@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0876.

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## First AOPA Advanced Coding and Billing Seminar of 2011: May 19-20 in Las Vegas

Don't miss the opportunity to experience two days of valuable O&P coding and billing information from **AOPA** experts. The Advanced Coding and Billing Seminars include breakout sessions for practitioners and administrators that will focus on each group's specific interests and educational needs.

The first **AOPA** Advanced Coding and Billing Seminar of 2011 will be held at the Mirage Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada on May 19-20, 2011 Early bird registration for the Las Vegas seminar is now open and attendees who register prior to April 20, 2011 will receive a \$25 discount off the regular tuition price. **AOPA** has secured a very attractive room rate of \$125 per night at the Mirage.

### What You Will Learn

- How to use Medical Policies to improve your reimbursement
- Hints on what, when, and how to document your interaction with patients
- How to develop and execute a successful compliance plan
- How to properly perform self audits of your charts and what to do when you discover problems

### In the breakout session Practitioners will cover:

- General Coding Principles
- "Hands on" coding of specific devices
- Proper coding for repairs and adjustments
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### In the breakout session Administrators will cover:

- Updated Quality and Supplier Standards
- Strategies for handling appeals and denials
- How to handle unique billing situations
- Documentation Requirements
- Medicare as Secondary Payer

[Click here to register for the May 19-20 AOPA Advanced Coding and Billing Seminar.](#)

Questions? Contact Ann Davis at [adavis@AOPAnet.org](mailto:adavis@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0876.

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## 2011 National Assembly News: New Video! Ultra-Low, \$135 Per Night Room Rates! And Registration is Now Open!

Check out [AOPA's brand new 2011 National Assembly advertisement](#) and mark your calendars now for the American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association's 94th National Assembly September 19-22, 2011! If you are involved in O&P research or the delivery of O&P care and services-don't miss this chance to join your colleagues in Las Vegas, Nevada, at the country's largest and most prestigious O&P meeting. Registration is now open for the September 19-22 meeting.

[Click here to register now!](#)

The comprehensive programming and energized atmosphere of the Scientific Sessions provides cutting-edge education and information for all members of the O&P community-orthotists,

prosthetists, pedorthists, physicians, scientists, researchers, technicians, managers, business owners, office staff, nurses, nurse practitioners, podiatrists, and other health care professionals. And you won't want to miss the business management sessions headlined by the Sam E. Hamontree, CP, Award-winning lecture.

**AOPA** has secured a room rate of \$135 per night for the 2011 National Assembly. That's right, \$135: it's not an optical illusion - it's the Mirage room rate for this year's assembly. Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy AAA Four Diamond luxury for the fantastic room rate of only \$135 per night.

Science, Business, Fantastic Networking Opportunities and an incredible \$135 per night room rate at the Mirage Resort, September 19-22, 2011. To reserve your room today call (800) 627-6667 or (702) 791-7111 and mention the **AOPA** registration code "AOPMB." You can also reserve a room online by [clicking here](#).

Questions? Contact Ann Davis at [adavis@AOPAnet.org](mailto:adavis@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0876.

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## O&P RESOURCES FROM AOPA

### 2011 AOPA Coding Products Now Available

Don't get caught with out of date coding references. Update your **AOPA** coding products today. The 2011 **AOPA** coding products are now available through the **AOPA** bookstore and may be ordered by calling the AOPA Bookstore at (571) 431-0876, or by [downloading the 2011 Product Catalogue](#) and faxing your order to (571) 431-0899.

The 2011 *Illustrated Guide*, *Quick Coder* and *Coding Pro* include all of the newly released HCPCS codes that describe O&P items. **In addition, the 2011 *Coding Pro* contains a new, interactive glossary that allows you to click on selected terms within a code descriptor and immediately view the O&P based definition of the selected term.**

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.

**AOPA's** Coding products have long been considered the definitive coding resources for the O&P industry. Make sure yours are current and up to date!

Questions? Contact Ann Davis at [adavis@AOPAnet.org](mailto:adavis@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0876.

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## Check Out the AOPA Job Board for New Opportunities in O&P

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](#). The online job board sports a freshly updated look and an easy-to-navigate profile creation system.

In the past month the Job Board has been viewed over 8,000 times by more than 1,500 unique users. 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 percent discount on the cost of advertising in the *Almanac* and on the Job Board.

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

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## The 2011 Audio Conference Series from AOPA

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 can nonetheless gain information they will use right away. The topics for 2011 are:

- January 12: How to Meet the New Medicare Supplier Standards (Available on CD)
- Feb. 9: Using the Lower Limb Medical Policy to Your Advantage (Available on CD)
- March 9: Enhance Your Claims Success, Two Letters at a Time (Available on CD)
- April 13: Improving Clinical Documentation (Available on CD)
- May 11: Which Box to Check? The Negative Effect of the 855S on Reimbursement
- June 8: Preventing Audit Disasters
- July 13: Don't Rile the OSHA Police
- August 10: How to Get Paid for Miscellaneous and Repair Codes
- September 14: Don't Run Afoul of the KO Rules
- October 12: Developing Your Medicare Billing Compliance Plan
- November 9: Happy Holidays: Kickbacks and Gifts in O&P
- December 14: Are You Ready for the New Year? 2012 New Codes and Policies

[Click here to register for any 2011 Audio Conference.](#)

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.

Questions? Contact Ann Davis at [adavis@AOPAnet.org](mailto:adavis@AOPAnet.org) or (571) 431-0876.

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## O&P INSIDER'S TRACK

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

## In Memoriam

**AOPA** *in Advance* received this remembrance from [AmpSurf](#):

We are saddened to share that Laura Ann Cieszynski, one of our inspirational participants, found peace on Thursday, April 21 at the age of 34 years and was laid to rest yesterday. She awed us this past year by what she was able to accomplish at the VA Summer Sports Clinic where she enjoyed the amazing sport of surfing and the rejuvenating power of the ocean. She was also a US Air Force hero and veteran of the Gulf War. Laura truly exemplified courage by not only serving her country but also through her willingness to live life and focus on her abilities, as demonstrated by her participation in the Summer Sports Clinic. Her experience there meant so much to her that she chose to be buried in her AmpSurf rash-guard, a true honor to our organization and a true testament to the fact that lives can be changed by these programs. We offer our condolences to her family as well as our gratitude that our own lives were touched by such an amazing woman.

were touched by such an amazing woman.

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## People in the News

[College Park Industries](#) announced the hiring of **Steven Hoover, CP, LP, COA**, as Technical Service Manager.

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## Businesses in the News

[The Amputee Coalition](#) announced its public awareness program for lawnmower safety.

[Essentially Women -GPO](#), announced the success of its April 4-6 trade show Focus on the Future in Glendale, Arizona.

[Hanger Orthopedic Group, Inc.](#) announced that the trailer for the major motion picture titled *Dolphin Tale* was recently released and can be viewed on [Hanger's YouTube](#) page. The film is inspired by the work volunteered by Hanger's Vice President of Prosthetics Kevin Carroll and Sarasota, Florida Practice Manager Dan Strzempka to the Clearwater Marine Aquarium and provided Winter's prosthetic tails since 2006.

The [Orthotic & Prosthetic Assistance Fund](#) (OPAF) and the First Clinics welcome new 2011 sponsors for their support of adaptive recreational pursuits:

- [Becker Orthopedic](#) of Troy, Michigan (Bronze Level Sponsor)
- [O & P Business News](#) (Patron Level Sponsor)
- [Cardinal Prosthetics and Orthotics](#) of Winchester, Virginia (Signature Level Sponsor)

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## Send Us Your News!

The next **AOPA in Advance** will arrive in your inbox on May 17. 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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