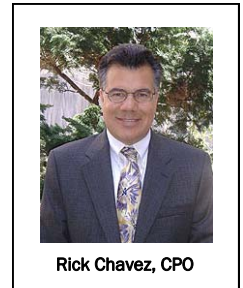


# THE COPA CONNECTION

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE RICK CHAVEZ, CPO



Rick Chavez, CPO

Orthotic and Prosthetic Colleagues:

The COPA Board of Directors and invited guests met in Sacramento on Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> to begin a formal Strategic Planning process that would enable us to begin "The Retooling of COPA" in order to increase the value of membership and position ourselves to achieve thriving practices for our patients.

The process involved being presented with learning modules that would enable members and stakeholders to better understand the environment in which our members operated and how COPA could position itself to create more value for membership. This exercise will make our association even more relevant to the O&P community in which we serve. As a result of information packed agenda, coupled with vibrant discussions and brainstorming, COPA identified a set of values, vision and mission statements and three overarching goals. Further work done by staff added objectives, action items, measurements and due dates that will enable COPA to create their first Annual Report to its membership, stakeholders and the community at large.

Please take a moment to review the COPA Strategic Plan Executive Summary contained in this newsletter and contact COPA Executive Director Bryce Docherty at (916) 446-4343 or [bryce@thedochertygroup.com](mailto:bryce@thedochertygroup.com) regarding any questions, comments or concerns.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *The COPA Connection*.

## UNDER THE DOME BRYCE W.A. DOCHERTY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/LOBBYIST



### "THE BUDGET CARTHARSIS"

#### THE SUMMARY

**Alas!** Where to begin? Let's begin at the end. The \$40 billion plus budget was finally passed by the Senate just before dawn on Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup> and the Assembly quickly followed suit. The budget fixes the current mid-year deficit and keeps the state afloat through July 1, 2010. One can assume that there may need to be "minor" budget adjustments at this time next year but nothing as politically daunting as the current crisis.

The three needed Republicans in Senate to support the nearly 30 bill package were: Dave Cogdill (Modesto), Roy Ashburn (Bakersfield) and Abel Maldonado (Santa Maria). In the Assembly the three needed Republicans included: Mike Villines (Modesto), Anthony Adams (Hesperia) and Roger Niello (Fair Oaks). For all practical purposes the political careers of these six Republicans are over. They put the state affairs above their independent political aspirations and should be commended. However, Sen. Maldonado supported the budget kicking and

*(Continued on page 2)*

**BOARD MEMBERS**

[Rick Chavez, CPO](#)  
**President**

[Ralph Nobbe, CPO](#)  
**Vice President**

[Kel Bergmann, CPO](#)  
**Secretary/Treasurer**

[Tom Beall, CPO](#)  
**Board Member**

[Gary G. Bedard, CO, FAAOP](#)  
**Board Member**

[Harry Brandt, CO, BOCO](#)  
**Board Member**

[Mark Conry, CPO](#)  
**Board Member**

[Lars Jensen, CP](#)  
**Board Member**

[Robert Jensen, CPO](#)  
**Board Member**

[Karl Lindborg, CPO](#)  
**Board Member**

[Ed Rogers, CPO](#)  
**Board Member**

[Bryce W.A. Docherty](#)  
**Executive Director/  
Lobbyist**

***Under the dome, cont'd.***

screaming. He also kept Senate Democrats hostage and wouldn't support the package until the following agreements were made:

- A constitutional amendment that would require and open primary. The two top vote getters in any primary would face off in the general election. For example, Maldonado (a moderate Republican) would have a better chance of winning a statewide election in 2012 when he's termed out. NOTE: This constitutional amendment would appear on the June 2010 Primary Election ballot.
- A constitutional amendment banning legislative pay increases in deficit years. NOTE: This constitutional amendment would appear on the May 19, 2009 Special Election ballot.
- Elimination of the 12-cent additional gas tax, which was estimated to bring in \$2.1 billion through June 2010. The money will be replaced with a 0.25 percent increase in the state

income tax, federal stimulus dollars and more than \$600 million in line-item vetoes.

Full implementation of the budget provisions will not take effect until five ballot measures are approved by voters during the May 19<sup>th</sup> Special Election. Early polling numbers indicate that voters will likely NOT support these ballot measures. Much of the estimates in this budget assume substantial backfill from the federal stimulus package.

**THE NUMBERS**

- 5 days of nearly lock down negotiations and deliberations by the Legislature.
- 45 ½ hour Senate Session - the longest in state history.
- Nearly 30 bills and 5 ballot measures.
- \$15 billion in cuts; \$14 billion in tax increases; \$10 billion in borrowing and \$1 billion in reserves.

**THE SHENANIGANS**

In Shakespearian fashion and

cloaked in the darkness of night on February 17<sup>th</sup> the Senate Republican caucus ousted their leader Dave Cogdill in favor of conservative Dennis Hollingsworth (Murrieta). Four Senators: Cogdill, Maldonado, Ashburn and Dave Cox (Sacramento) all walked out of the caucus meeting before the vote was taken. Hollingsworth immediately demanded that budget negotiations be reopened. His overture was denied by Sen. President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) and Gov. Schwarzenegger.

**THE END**

Now that the budget is passed all legislators and Capitol denizens (including yours truly) want to turn the page. On a positive note, this will make all other legislative deals this year (i.e. healthcare reform) seem like child's play!

*"If you miss a day "Under the Dome" –you miss a lot!"*

**DID YOU KNOW?****Medi-Cal Fiscal Year 2008-2009 March Payment Hold**

In addition to the small program claims being held at the direction of the State Controller's Office, effective March 12, 2009 (the second warrant release date of March), reimbursement to Medi-Cal institutional providers except for small and rural hospitals, designated public hospitals, and local education agencies, will be held during the month of March and released one week at a time the following month beginning April 9, 2009. A total of three check writes will be held as a result of the March Payment Hold. Each check write that is affected in March will be delayed by four weeks. Payment held in the second week of March will be released in the second week of April; payment held in the third week of March will be released in the third week of April and payment held in the fourth week of March will be released in the fourth week of April. Payments to Medi-Cal non-institutional providers will not be held.

Beginning the week of March 16, 2009 providers whose held amount is \$5,000 or more will receive a Value of Claims (VOC) Letter from the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). The letter will specify the amount of their claims payments \$5,000 and above being suppressed as a result of the March hold. The purpose of these letters is to assist providers in working with their fiduciary institutions during this payment hold. This notice has also been published on the Medi-Cal Web site, <http://www.medi-cal.ca.gov>, as a link from the home page Newsroom section.



# AOPA in Advance

Breaking News for O&P Professionals

## O&P Community Shows Resiliency to Economy

AOPA's monthly Business Conditions Survey continues to indicate O&P has not been severely affected by the economic turmoil with 68.2 percent indicating business is the same or greater in January 2009 than the same month last year. 15.2 percent registered gains of more than 10 percent; 24.2 reported increases in the 6 to 10 percent range and 13.6 percent said their business was up between 1 and 5 percent. Business was the same for 15.2 percent of those responding. Those reporting decreases represented 31.9 percent of the sample with 9.1 percent indicating a 1 to 5 percent decline; 6.1 percent in the 6 to 10 percent decline range; and 16.7 percent in the more than 10 percent decrease column.

Despite the somewhat rosy picture on revenue, 59.7 percent felt their business has been affected by the economic turmoil citing the doubling of charity care from last year; hesitancy in incurring co-pays and deductibles; slower pay on co-pay and self pay; slower preauthorization and payment; layoffs and company closings leaving more people without insurance; more repairs rather than replacement; people afraid to spend money with referral doctors' offices seeing about 60 percent of the normal patient load; non-emergency care being deferred; and an unwillingness in comparison to previous years to pay for items not covered by insurance.

When asked what percentage of their revenue came from Medicare reimbursements in 2008, 50 percent of those participating indicated more than 35 percent came from Medicare reimbursements. In fact, 28.1 percent received more than 45 percent of their revenue from Medicare reimbursements; 15.6 percent indicated 40 to 45 percent from Medicare and 6.3 percent reported 35 to 40 percent. 23.4 percent of the respondents reported receiving less than 25 percent of their revenue from Medicare and 12.5 percent were in the 25 to 30 percent range.

Perhaps another reflection of the times is that 38.8 percent of those responding expect to give no raises to employees in 2009 and 44.8 percent expect to give increases of 3 percent or more with 5 percent planning to give increases of more than 5 percent. 14.9 percent plan 2 percent increases and 1.5 percent plan on giving 1 percent wage increases.

Employee health plan premiums went up more than 5 percent for 68.2 percent of those responding, 37.9 percent of firms indicated increases of 11 percent or more. 7.6 percent said their increase was more than 20 percent. Only 21.1 percent said they had no increase and 18.2 percent said their increase was in the 1 to 5 percent range.

Your participation in this easy to take two or three minute monthly survey is urgently requested. More and more members are participating each month but the relevancy and accuracy of information is dependent on your responses.

If you are not receiving the online survey, please contact Steven Rybicki at (571) 431-0835 or [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org).

## Stimulus Package Includes Funding that Impacts 2 AOPA Initiatives

Two of the 11 AOPA strategic initiative areas are addressed in the \$787 billion economic stimulus bill approved by Congress and signed by the President February 17. It provides \$1.1 billion for researchers to compare various drugs, medical devices, surgery and other treatment outcomes which are the thrust of AOPA's strategic initiative on Research & Evidence-Based Outcomes Practice. The Ideal Office of the Future strategic initiative is also touched by provisions in the \$2 billion appropriated for health information technology (HIT).

There are concerns that the outcomes findings could be used by insurers or the government to deny coverage for more expensive treatment so the question of whether costs should be considered in addition to the clinical merits is still a huge issue. Privacy issues related to intruding into a person's health care by enforcing clinical guidelines and treatment protocols have also been raised.

Funding for the outcomes comparisons will primarily go to existing research organizations that will review current published information and develop protocols for trials where appropriate.

The HIT funds are in the form of grant programs for HIT infrastructure, training and dissemination of best practices and direct grants to states for low-interest loans to help providers finance HIT investment. Medicare incentive payments will begin in 2011 to encourage doctors and eligible hospitals to adopt and use electronic health records. The incentives could be phased out and replaced by penalties if doctors and hospitals are not using certified electronic health records.

AOPA's outcomes and evidence-based practice project will be seeking funding for broader based research. It is still unclear whether any funding in the stimulus package could make its way to the O&P field either in developing outcomes research or transitioning to electronic health records.

[Click here for a summary of the Stimulus spending.](#) Questions? Contact Steven Rybicki at (571) 431-0835 or [srybicki@AOPAnet.org](mailto:srybicki@AOPAnet.org).

**The above articles appear through the courtesy of the American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association (AOPA), where it appeared recently in their publication "AOPA-in-Advance."**

## *SCOPA Strategic Plan 2009-2011 Executive Summary*

### STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 – 2011

#### COPA Values

Integrity, Quality Orthotic and Prosthetic Management, Professional Excellence, Optimal Patient Care, Patient Advocate

#### Vision

Advancing the quality of life for Orthotic and Prosthetic patients.

#### Mission

Promoting the art and science of Orthotic and Prosthetic practice to create and communicate innovative solutions for a positive patient experience.

#### GOAL 1: COPA sustains unprecedented member value.

##### Objectives:

- *Develop and implement member education events that optimize the practice of O&P.*  
**Action Plan:** Schedule, plan and execute an educational/information rich annual conference independently or in conjunction with other O&P provider organizations. **MEASUREMENT:** Number of attendees compared to previous year(s). Funding increases by source. Non-dues generating revenue increases. **DUE DATE:** May 2009, 2010 and 2011.
- *Continue to provide products and services that demonstrate the value and benefits of COPA membership.*  
**Action Plan:** Ongoing production of The COPA Connection newsletter specifically pertaining to O&P provider/industry/patient issues, activities and updates. **MEASUREMENT:** Member satisfaction and comment link in every issue. **DUE DATE:** January/February, March/April, June/July, August/September, October/November, 2009, 2010 and 2011.

#### GOAL 2: COPA ensures patients receive the information and access to care that will lead to quality outcomes.

##### Objectives:

- *Develop patient communication products that demonstrate COPA is the trusted leader in ensuring high quality O&P practice.*  
**Action Plan:** Create user friendly "O&P Patient Tool Kit" that can be downloaded from COPA website. **MEASUREMENT:** On time and approved by COPA Board of Directors. **DUE DATE:** June 2010.
- *Continue advocacy programs that support O&P professional practice.*  
**Action Plan:** Maintain retention of full-time professional lobbyist to actively monitor legislation and regulations that promote and protect the O&P profession and patients. **MEASUREMENT:** Periodic legislative reports to COPA Board of Directors and posted online for patients. **DUE DATE:** Ongoing throughout 2009, 2010 and 2011.

#### GOAL 3: COPA supports an inclusive governance and staff structure that ensures and enhances member value.

##### Objectives:

- *Increase the diversity, volunteerism and effectiveness of COPA leadership to reflect the growing practice of orthotics and prosthetics.*  
**Action Plan:** Develop COPA Board and Committee Member Duties and Responsibilities. **MEASUREMENT:** On time and approved by COPA Board of Directors. **DUE DATE:** June 2010
- *Support organizational systems that contribute to growth and financial stability.*  
**Action Plan:** Conduct "Best Practices" survey of other O&P state associations (i.e. New York, Florida, Texas, Ohio and Illinois). Effort spearheaded by Tom Beall who will assign volunteers for each state. **MEASUREMENT:** Survey analysis and recommendations presented to COPA Board of Directors. **DUE DATE:** June 2010.

*NOTE: The COPA Strategic Plan 2009-2011 is a dynamic work-in-progress based on the COPA Vision, Mission and Goals. With the continued guidance of the Board of Directors and management by the Executive Director, COPA maintains an active "radar screen" to detect issues, opportunities and access challenges facing O&P providers, patients and the industry at-large that will need to be addressed within the coming years.*

### Asm. Health Committee Chair Dave Jones Tours Facility

If you would like to invite your local legislator to tour your facility, please contact COPA Executive Director Bryce Docherty at (916) 446-4343 or [bryce@thedochertygroup.com](mailto:bryce@thedochertygroup.com).



COPA Board Member Lars Jensen and his associate Bryan Hayes opened up their Sacramento facility for a tour by Asm. Health Committee Chair Dave Jones (D-Sacramento). The tour included a robust discussion of legislative and regulatory issues facing the O&P industry. Lars and Bryan eloquently conveyed the despair many O&P providers face regarding the severely declining Medi-Cal reimbursement rates. Asm. Jones not only toured the front office but also the Hanger Prosthetics & Orthotics fabrication workshop. Asm. Jones was very impressed by the “art” of O&P as well as the “science” involved with restoring the functionality to so many different types patients.



### AOPA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**April 22-23, 2009**

AOPA Policy Forum. Hyatt Regency Crystal City. Arlington, VA. \$75 per-person registration fee. To attend contact Erin Kennedy at (571) 431-0834 or [ekenneekennedy@AOPAnet.org](mailto:ekenneekennedy@AOPAnet.org)

**September 20-23, 2009**

AOPA National Assembly. Seattle. Washington State Convention & Trade Center. Four days of education, exhibits and networking. To attend contact Kelly O’Neill at (571) 431-0852 or [koneill@AOPAnet.org](mailto:koneill@AOPAnet.org). Visit [www.AOPAnet.org](http://www.AOPAnet.org) for details.

***Call for COPA  
Board of Directors  
Nominations***

The COPA Nominating Committee is now accepting nominations for six seats on the 2009-2010 Board of Directors. Nominations will be accepted until Thursday, April 30, 2009. The slate of candidates will be published in the next issue of The COPA Connection and adopted by proclamation to take effect Wednesday, July 1, 2009. For further information, please contact COPA Executive Director Bryce Docherty at (916) 446-4343 or [bryce@thedochertygroup.com](mailto:bryce@thedochertygroup.com).

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

## CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES: \$1,200 Annual Dues (please check applicable category)

- Corporate – Patient Care:** Any firm or corporation that is principally engaged in the business of providing O&P direct services is eligible for this membership category.
- Corporate – Supplier:** Any firm of corporation that is principally engaged in supplying O&P businesses is eligible for this membership category.
- Corporate – Allied Health:** Any organization, firm or corporation that is engaged in the allied health field that serves O&P clients and businesses is eligible for this membership category.
- Corporate – Associate:** Any organization that represents consumers of orthotic and prosthetic care or other professionals who may also provide services to orthotic and prosthetic consumers is eligible for this membership category.

## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES: \$120 Annual Dues (please check applicable category)

- Individual – Certified:** Any practitioner who is currently certified and in good standing with the American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics (A.B.C.) and/or the Board for Orthotist/Prosthetist Certification (B.O.C.) is eligible for this membership category.
- Individual – Technician/Fitter:** Any technician currently registered with the A.B.C. or any fitter certified by the B.O.C. is eligible for this membership category.
- Individual – Associate:** Any person with a professional interest in orthotics and prosthetics is eligible for this membership category.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, Company)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address, City, State, Zip)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Phone, Fax, Email)

NOTE: Please check here \_\_\_ if you decline to have 25% of your annual dues dedicated to the COPA Political Action Committee. Contributions or dues payments to COPA or COPA PAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes. COPA estimates that 10% of your membership dues will be allocated to lobbying expenditures for the fiscal year 2008/2009, and are not deductible as business expenses.

Please make checks payable to: **COPA**

***SHARE*** this membership application with your colleagues so they can become a member of the premier orthotics and prosthetics association in California.

Click here to view: [\*\*\*Membership Registration Online!\*\*\*](#)

# POLITICAL ACTION CONTRIBUTIONS

## COPA POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE *CORPORATE* CONTRIBUTION FORM

**President’s Club (\$2,500-\$6,000):** These prestigious members include manufacturers, patient care businesses and individuals who want to be constant and consistent actors in the issues surrounding the O&P industry. In addition to receiving all of the benefits provided to Leadership Board and Golden State Club members also receive a specially designed President’s Club lapel pin; complimentary admission to all COPA events and Complimentary admission for one guest to attend a President’s Club event. In addition, President’s Club members may be included in “invitation only” receptions and functions with legislators whenever possible.

**Leadership Board (\$1,000-\$2,499):** These members receive a specially designed Leadership Board lapel pin; invitations to legislative briefings and receptions featuring key legislators who are active in healthcare policy and special recognition throughout the year at events and in COPA publications.

**Golden State Club (\$500-\$999):** These members receive a specially designed Golden State Club lapel pin and special recognition throughout the year.

### STATE LAW REQUIRES THE FOLLOWING:

---

(Name, Company)

---

(Employer or Occupation)

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(Address, City State, Zip, Phone)

## COPA POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE *INDIVIDUAL* CONTRIBUTION FORM

**Silver Dollar Club (\$365 One Dollar per Day):** These prestigious members receive a specially designed Silver Dollar Club lapel pin and special recognition throughout the year.

**Future Framers Club (\$25):** These student members receive a Certificate of Appreciation for their contribution and education and training about effective advocacy and professional communication with legislators.

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(Name)

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(Employer or Occupation)

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(Address, City State, Zip, Phone)

NOTE: COPA PAC contributions are NOT deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Contributions may not exceed \$6,000 in one calendar year.

Please make checks payable to: **COPA PAC (ID#791961)**

*Click here to view:*

[COPA/PAC Corporate Contribution Pledge Form](#)

*Click here to view:* [COPA/PAC Individual Contribution Pledge Form](#)

California Orthotics and  
Prosthetics Association

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We're on the web!  
[www.oandp.com/  
copa](http://www.oandp.com/copa)

## COPA'S MISSION...

*Promoting the art and science of Orthotic and Prosthetic practice to create and communicate innovative solutions for a positive patient experience.*

## A PLACE FOR EVERYONE AT COPA...

Strength is measured by numbers. COPA has galvanized support from the O&P business community by encouraging businesses of all sizes to join as corporate members. Today the organization is moving forward in representing the needs of the individual practitioner in all areas of career development, including educational seminars and a renewed commitment to licensure for California. In order to facilitate individual contributions to support COPA, new membership categories have been added to allow students, technicians and practitioners at all levels of the career path to join COPA and share in the march toward professional recognition in California.

## STANDING ON SUCCESS...

COPA has a proven track record in legislation, association governance and membership responsiveness. Representing the field since 1970, COPA is an organization that has the resources to bring the community of O&P together as one voice to strengthen and solidify the unique characteristics that typify O&P professionals today. An Uncertain Future Without Your Support... For many years, the few have supported the many while all have prospered. The burden has now become too great and the pool of resources must be widened to ensure continued success.

The threats to the O&P community are real. This year alone, practitioners have been sanctioned by the Board of Pharmacy and the Physical Therapy Licensing Board. Individual lawsuits have been brought against practitioners who now stand in legal limbo with no statutory scope of practice.

Limited state resources to treat the poor and those injured on the job are being bargained away to those with stronger voices and wider support.

***What will history say about your commitment to O&P?***