

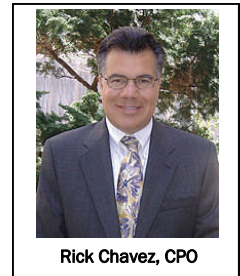


THE COPA CONNECTION

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE RICK CHAVEZ, CPO



Rick Chavez, CPO

Orthotic and Prosthetic Colleagues:

First and foremost, I would like to thank all of you that renewed your COPA membership. Without your continued support, COPA cannot take the vital steps necessary to providing you with a meaningful membership and ensure that your profession is protected.

Before informing you on the critical issues taking place surrounding California's budget deficit, I wanted to share with you that I attended the AmpSurf Operation Restore III on August 16 & 17. It was an excellent event, in support of an excellent non-profit, and I encourage all COPA members to learn more about AmpSurf by visiting: <http://ampsurf.org/>.

As was mentioned in the last issue of *The COPA Connection*, California still faces a \$15.2 billion dollar deficit for the 2008-2009 fiscal year as both Republicans and Democrats refuse to come out of their

political corners and compromise. Republicans have made it quite clear that they will refuse to accept any budget plan that includes tax increases as was illustrated when all but one Republican signed a pledge stating as such in late August. Democrats have publicly declared that the budget deficit cannot be solved by spending cuts alone, while the Governor has proposed a temporary 1 cent sales tax increase over the next three years to help close the gap.

With the state legislature convening all bills for the 2007-2008 legislative session on Sunday, August 31, both the Assembly and Senate will solely focus on the budget until it is signed, sealed, and delivered to the Governor. Fortunate for COPA members, a federal judge has enjoined the 10% Medi-Cal cut to reimbursement rates for nearly all health care providers, including doctors, dentists, pharmacists, clinics, and adult day health care centers. The injunction applies to all services provided since July 1, so you can expect an

automatic retroactive reimbursement for services rendered between July 1 and now.

However, things remain critical as other health care cuts remain on the chopping block in budget discussions, potentially including Medi-Cal eligibility and benefits. Despite a Senate and Assembly conference committee's vote to restore the cuts, the Senate may take up a budget which includes as much as \$2 billion in additional cuts, much of which will come from health care.

With all these critical issues happening, please rest assured, COPA, in collaboration with Alliance for Patient Care, will continue to advocate for you and your patients.

Best Wishes,
Rick Chavez, CPO

UNDER THE DOME

BRYCE W.A. DOCHERTY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/LOBBYIST



LIGHTS, CAMERA, POLITICAL ACTION

It has been described as the "mother's milk of politics" and can be directly attributed to how successful a candidate for office will be in getting elected or reelected. This all refers to

political action in general but a political action committee or PAC in particular.

The ultimate... *continued on page 2*

BOARD MEMBERS

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UNDER THE DOME, CONTINUED

motivation of any candidate for elected office or current elected official is to actually get elected or reelected respectively. In order to get elected or reelected you need three things in order to mount a credible and successful campaign. First is money, second is a message and third is the ability to "get out the vote" or GOTV. It is the PAC dollars that fund the candidate message and GOTV activities. For example, without significant PAC funds the other two aspects and the campaign itself are doomed to fail not matter how good the candidate may be on the issues that affect physician assistants.

Successful organizations like COPA have a multi-faceted advocacy program in order to successfully accomplish their

objectives in and around the State Capitol. The facets of this advocacy program include lobbying, grassroots and political action. It has been described as the "three-legged stool" of advocacy. Therefore, without all three legs the stool will never stand properly. The following is a brief overview as to the purpose and role a PAC can play as part of an effective advocacy program.

PAC dollars are used by special interests to get those candidates and elected officials elected or reelected who are sympathetic to their needs. To put this in perspective there are 80 members of the State Assembly and 40 members of the State Senate. According to statistics compiled by Assembly Chief Clerk Dotson

Wilson, the Assembly has averaged 32 new legislators every two years since the mid-1990s.

Of course the ultimate political action success for all facets of the O&P industry is to make a generous contribution to COPA PAC today!

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

Contact Bryce Docherty at:
bryce@thedochertygroup.com
or (916) 446-4343

Click Below to Donate Now:

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

**ADJUSTMENTS TO THE DMEPOS SECTION OF THE
OFFICIAL MEDICAL FEE SCHEDULE TO CONFORM TO CHANGES
IN THE MEDICARE PAYMENT SYSTEM ARE POSTED ON THE
DWC WEBSITE**

The Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) has posted an order adjusting the durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics and supplies (DMEPOS) section of the Official Medical Fee Schedule to conform to changes in the Medicare payment system as required by Labor Code section 5307.1. The order effective July 7, 2008 is the Medicare quarterly update for the current year.

The order adopting the adjustments can be found at: <http://www.dir.ca.gov/DWC/OMFS9904.htm>.

COPA CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Learn how to become active on COPA state-level committees. Volunteer your time and in return receive valuable professional, leadership, and career development. Committee terms begin in January 2009 and end in December. Take this great opportunity to network with your peers and give back to your profession. To volunteer, simply email Philip Swanger at philip@thedochertygroup.com with any of the following committee(s) you are interested in serving:

- **Agency Liaison** – Focus on 3rd Party Payors and Fiscal Matters.
- **Government Affairs** – Focus on State Legislative and Regulatory Matters.
- **Consumer Liaison** – Focus on Consumer Satisfaction, Consumer Education, and Emergent Issues of Patient Care.

VOLUNTEER TODAY!



AOPA in Advance

Breaking News for O&P Professionals

September 17 Business Audio Conference: "HOW NOT TO GET SUED"

Liability is a reality that must be faced by all practitioners, no matter how conscientious. Other than becoming a hermit and living somewhere in a cave in Utah, you probably are at risk. Matthew Smith, Esq. of Smith, Rolfes and Skavdahl will present some tips to minimize that risk.

Key points we will consider:

- Keeping communications open and staying on good terms with your customers/patients - the potential plaintiffs who may sue you!
- Identifying the "problem" issues which are the seeds from which lawsuits grow, and how to handle those early on.
- Alternatives to the litigation process when disputes arise.
- Documenting you treatment, issues and problems.
- Protecting yourself and your practice through insurance, counsel and prompt notification.
- What the litigation process may entail including preservation of evidence and documents, discovery and testimony.

As always, the cost of this audio conference is just \$99 for members (\$199 for non-members) and an unlimited number of people can participate at each location. For those needing CE credit, 1.5 units are available to those who submit the quiz (provided in advance) within 30 days and score at least 80%.

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

LCodeSearch.com: Quick Response to Coding Questions

LCodeSearch.com is gaining momentum as more and more AOPA members are logging into this Web-based quick reference site to find appropriate coding for hundreds of O&P products. AOPA member manufacturers are adding their products and codes to the site and the AOPA Coding and Reimbursement Committee is verifying accuracy and resolving any coding questions.

If you don't see products of a favorite manufacturer already on the site, remind them that as an AOPA member their products can be added to the site free of charge. All manufacturers will be given an opportunity to enhance their listings, enabling them to communicate extensive product information and post pictures, for a modest annual fee, covering all products posted on the site.

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

Stamped Signatures Prohibited

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has now prohibited the use of "stamped signatures" on any medical record. Medicare will still accept electronic signatures, or faxed copies of the original documents. Faxed copies of the electronic signatures will also be allowed. Remember that at anytime Medicare may request to see the original signature. They may make this request if the signature is illegible, or they believe the document has been altered in any way.

What does this mean for you? All your detailed written orders must now be physically signed by the physician, or be signed electronically. The same is true for the statement of certifying physician when providing diabetic shoes.

Questions? Contact Devon Bernard at Dbernard@AOPAnet.org or (571) 431-0854

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



AMP SURF PRESENTS

Association of Amputee Surfer's will host a series of weekend surf clinics for amputees and those with Disabilities wanting to learn to surf.

These events are FREE to all with disabilities*.

NEXT EVENT: September 27 & 28 in San Diego-La Jolla Shores 9:00am-1pm

*Donations are accepted

If you want to participate, or volunteer, visit www.ampsurf.com

We need your help! Please go to www.ampsurf.com and learn how to volunteer or help sponsor these events.

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)

(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.

(Name)

(Employer or Occupation)

(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](#)
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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.

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!](#)

California Orthotics and
Prosthetics Association

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We're on the web!

www.oandp.com/

[copa](http://copa.com)



COPA'S MISSION...

To improve the business climate in California for orthotic and prosthetic companies by:

- o Striving for fair reimbursement from private and public payors;
- o Ensuring competent and ethical treatment of patients;
- o Educating the public about the unique skills and knowledge base of the Orthotist and Prosthetist and the contributions they make;
- o Emphasizing a high degree of professionalism, and;
- o Fostering fair and open competition.

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?