



COPA

Quarterly Newsletter
California O&P Association

CONNECTION

Fall 2021

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

COPA 2021 BOARD

PRESIDENT

Spencer Greene, MS, CPO
Hanger Clinic

VICE PRESIDENT

Mahesh Mansukhani
WillowWood

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Carlo Luetto
Allard USA, Inc.

LOBBYIST

Bryce W. A. Docherty

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Pat Rosengren

BOARD MEMBERS

Linda Collins
Össur Americas

Kenya Desautels, CPO, MPO
Clinical CPO

Glen Ellis, MBA, CPO
Orthotic and Prosthetic
National Network

Brendan Erickson
SPS

Richard Myers (Rick)
Southern California
Prosthetics

Riley Liddell
Pacific Medical

Rick Riley
O&P Boost

Trevor Townsend, CPO
Valley Institute of
Prosthetics & Orthotics

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Maynard Carkhuff
Medical Creations

Dear COPA members and O&P colleagues,

We are less than two weeks away from having the opportunity to see each other at COPA's in-person Education Symposium. Since our last meeting in Nov. 2019, so much has changed. Back then, very few of us were participating in virtual meetings. We would have never used the term "in-person" when promoting our annual educational symposium (because of course, it was in-person).

Our board will be meeting the evening before the symposium begins to review COPA's accomplishments and to start setting our goals for 2022. As evidenced by the articles in this issue, we've had a busy and successful year. Each of our committees have been active, meeting by video conference every month; COPA membership has grown; and we have made fiscally responsible decisions that have kept our non-profit organization financially healthy without reducing services to our members. We never took our foot of the gas – always striving to bring value to our members, the O&P community, and the patients we serve.

During the pandemic, we have actually expanded our education and advocacy efforts, pursuing strategies that enable us to effectively raise awareness for O&P care among elected officials. We can't be voiceless or an unknown profession when decisions are being made about policies and budgets. Decision makers must know more about our profession and how the care and technology we provide increases mobility and function – and can have a substantial impact on a person's general health and quality of life.

I was involved in several of the tours organized this summer at member clinics, targeting elected officials as guests who are in leadership roles or who are members of key committees in the state Assembly and state Senate. It is interesting and encouraging to see their reactions, especially when they have never been inside an O&P clinic. Hopefully this will give them new perspectives as we pursue legislation and Medi-Cal fee schedules that are more favorable to O&P providers and their patients.

I have been blessed to serve as COPA's President and will continue to support our members moving forward. We welcome more O&P providers to join COPA, and we encourage our existing members to become even more engaged. Together we are doing important work that can benefit O&P providers and their patients here in our home state.

See you in Tracy!

Spencer Greene
Spencer Greene, MS, CPO
sgreene@hanger.com
209-573-1806

UPCOMING EVENTS

YOU ARE INVITED TO

*A Virtual
Happy Hour*

Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021
5:30 - 6:30 pm
via Zoom



WEDNESDAY • OCT. 6 • 5:30 - 6:30 PM COPA VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR

Member-Only Event

All COPA members are invited to a complimentary Virtual Happy Hour – a great time to mix business with pleasure! COPA Board Members will be there for a discussion, Q&A, or advice on topics or issues of interest to you! If you have not received your email invitation, please call us at 626.244.2696

THURSDAY & FRIDAY • OCT. 14 & 15

Register now for our two-day in-person

COPA EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

17 O&P Exhibitors • Total of 22 CEUs • Jam-Packed Sessions • 2-hour Clinical Courses • Professional Panelists Discussion • Happy Hour & Dinner
REGISTER TODAY at californiaoandp.com.

We can't wait to see you there!

COPA ANNUAL FALL SYMPOSIUM

ADAPTING THE O&P PROFESSION HOSTED BY

Yes! In-Person
Education Symposium

Pacific Medical Inc.
1700 N. Chrisman Rd.
Tracy, CA



Advertisers
in this
Newsletter
are proud
supporters
of COPA.

COPA ANNUAL FALL SYMPOSIUM

ADAPTING THE O&P PROFESSION

HOSTED BY



Do Not Miss This Education & Networking Opportunity!

**OCTOBER 14 & 15
PACIFIC MEDICAL, TRACY**

In a few weeks, COPA members and clinicians from throughout California will have the opportunity to learn and network face-to-face, something that wasn't possible last year.

This year's event, October 14 and 15, will be held at Pacific Medical's education center in Tracy. The beautiful facility annually accommodates education and surgical training courses for O&P clinicians and orthopedic surgeons. It is an ideal venue for safely staging this event, with plenty of space for courses, exhibitor tables and socializing.

Similar to what attendees recently experienced at the American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association Assembly in Boston, coming together feels good. It is an opportunity to see colleagues, participate in live classes (not by computer), and see/touch exhibitors' products. COPA is committed to having a safe meeting, following current state guidelines, and will expect all participants to abide by the rules.

Face masks are required for all attendees; when eating or drinking the face mask can be removed. Please be respectful of the space and comfort level of other attendees. In an effort to keep the event as safe as possible, we encourage people to limit physical contact with other attendees. We also ask that if you are not feeling well, please stay home.

"It has been two years since our last COPA meeting held in San Francisco, and it is exciting to be back together at an in-person meeting. COPA is very grateful to Pacific Medical for hosting this event and for sponsoring the happy hour and dinner for participants on Thursday evening," said the co-chair for this year's meeting, Kenya Desautels, CPO. "We are also very excited about the response from suppliers as we have 17 O&P exhibitors."

"It really is a nice facility with a large auditorium for classes, a cadaver lab for training physicians, and a room called the Pub with a bar and games for our social gathering on Thursday evening," said event co-chair Riley Liddell, Director of O&P Services for Pacific Medical.

"Attendees will not be disappointed. It will be a productive and refreshing meeting at a great venue."

"We hope our members and many other clinicians will show their support for COPA and our exhibitors. In addition to the educational benefits for clinicians, proceeds from this event help fund COPA's member services and advocacy activities," Kenya added. "We have worked diligently to create a diverse education program and an enjoyable event. We are hoping clinicians will continue to register, including on-site registration."

Tracy is very accessible for clinicians who work in the Bay Area, Sacramento, Northern and Central California. We also hope to see some of our colleagues from Southern California. If you haven't already registered or want to learn more about the event and lodging, visit COPA's website:

californiaoandp.com

FAST FACTS ABOUT COPA'S 2021 ANNUAL MEETING

- The theme for this year's meeting is **Adapting the O&P Profession with a one-hour panel discussion Thursday afternoon about the future of our profession. Panelists include Ambrose Cavegn, Ashlie White, Tom Karolewski, Eve Lee, Spencer Greene, and Mahesh Mansukhani.**
- The meeting has been approved for **11.5 CEUs by BOC and 10.5 CEUs by ABC.**
- Attendees are eligible for **up to 4.25 BOC CEUs and 1 ABC CEU for visiting the exhibitor tables.**
- **17 companies will be exhibiting their products and services.**
- Education sessions include presentations by **Naked Prosthetics (Treating Partial Hand and Finger Amputations), Medical Creations (Socket Strength Testing), Monetek (R&D Tax Credits), Becker Orthopedic (GEO AFO), Össur (Payer Contracts), Comb O&P (Scanning and 3D Technology), Spokane Falls Community College (O&P Technician Education), as well as two-hour concurrent courses Friday morning by WillowWood (Go Beyond. Go META™.) and Thuasne (Best Casting Practices for AFOs & KAFOs).**

GRATITUDE GOES TO THESE SUPPLIERS WHO ARE SUPPORTING OUR PROFESSION

These companies have made financial contributions to COPA and will be exhibiting at our annual meeting on October 14 and 15. If you are unable to attend the meeting, we hope you will join us in thanking these companies by considering the use of their products and services. Visit their website for more information.

APIS Footwear
www.apisfootwear.com

SPS
www.spsco.com

Monetek
www.monetek.com

Naked Prosthetics
www.npdevices.com

Össur
www.ossur.com

Becker
www.beckerorthopedic.com

Thuasne
www.thuasneusa.com

Rooke Products/Osborn Medical
www.rookeproducts.com

Royal Knit, Inc.
www.royalknit.com

WillowWood
www.willowwood.com

Allard USA
www.allardusa.com

Spinal Technology Inc.
www.spinaltech.com

Fillauer
www.fillauer.com

Proteor
www.proteor.com

Cascade Orthopedic Supply, LP
www.cascade-usa.com

Blatchford
www.blatchfordus.com

College Park
www.college-park.com



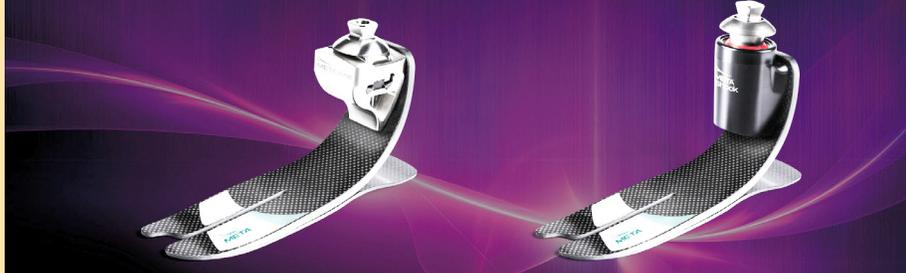
NAKED
PROSTHETICS

JOIN CHELSEA WELCH AT THE COPA SYMPOSIUM:
The O&P Practitioner's Role in Treating Patients
with Partial-Hand and Finger Amputations

THURS, OCT 14 | 9:45AM - 10:45AM

Go beyond. Go META.

Discover the amazing (and growing) META family of products.



META Arc
ONE REVOLUTIONARY FOOT. ONE GIANT STEP FORWARD.
The first-ever unibody foot design meets the first-ever polycentric ankle. It's the ultimate in performance, adaptation, and stability. Learn more at meta-arc.com.

META Shock
IT DOESN'T JUST PUSH THE LIMITS. IT ABSORBS THEM.
Unibody design + maximum deflection/minimum build height + responsive absorption = one dynamic foot. Learn more at meta-shock.com.

WillowWood
willowwood.com 1.800.848.4930



WHY MUST WE ADVOCATE FOR OUR PATIENTS AND PROFESSION

She told her story to Assemblyman Vince Fong and members of his staff, and a few weeks later described her first year as an amputee to a member of Senator Shannon Grove's staff in Bakersfield. She was soft spoken, yet the details of her story were loud and clear. She helped advocate for COPA and other patients by providing a detailed chronology of the challenges she experienced as a Medi-Cal MCO patient who was unable to get approval for a definitive prosthesis after exhausting the life of her preparatory prosthesis.

The conversations with members of the State Assembly and Senate were organized by the patient's prosthetist, Trevor Townsend, CPO, co-owner of Valley Institute of Prosthetics and Orthotics (VIPO) in Bakersfield and a COPA board member. The meetings were part of a statewide effort lead by COPA's board and its Sacramento-based lobbyist, Bryce Docherty, who has worked with COPA for more than a decade. VIPO's patient is representative of other Medi-Cal beneficiaries who face denials, delays and inadequate access to care and technology that could substantially improve their quality of life.

As a young woman not yet 30 years old, VIPO's patient had to make the difficult but necessary decision to have her leg amputated due to diabetes. After her surgery in January 2020, she was fit with a preparatory prosthesis and started learning how to experience life as an amputee. Then she became pregnant, gained weight, and developed an ulcer on her residual limb that took several months to heal.

With all of these significant changes in her life, it is no surprise that her preparatory prosthesis no longer fit, yet her Medi-Cal MCO denied the request for a new prosthesis. She had been using crutches for months while her ulcer healed, and she had hoped to be walking again before her baby was born. She gave birth in December 2020 while still trying to get approval from her MCO.

She told Assemblyman Fong and Senator Grove's representative how she made many phone calls and had multiple medical appointments, trying for months to work with her primary care doctor, surgeon and VIPO's staff to gain authorization. She described her fear of being too outspoken or doing something that would cause her caregivers to no longer want to treat her. She talked about the challenges of taking care of a newborn when she couldn't pick him up or hold him when supported by her crutches.

She talked about the despair she felt as she waited months for a new prosthesis to be approved. She eventually consented to her MCO's requirement to drive from Bakersfield to USC for a second opinion consult with a physician. It was six hours of travel for what ended up being 10-minutes with a therapist, not the physician she had an appointment to see. The therapist readily acknowledged the obvious need for a new prosthesis.

When authorization was received, VIPO worked quickly to make and fit her new prosthesis. She tearfully described being able to stand up and hold her baby for the first time during the fitting at VIPO. Her story was very impactful. Assemblyman Fong and the legislative staffers were shocked and saddened that she had gone through such an ordeal to simply be able to stand and walk while holding her baby.

"She was a new mother who waited five months to be able to stand on her own legs and hold her baby. This is why we advocate. This is why COPA's board, with support from our members, is diligently working to improve access for Medi-Cal patients," Townsend said. "We started this initiative two years ago, seeking legislation and budget increases that will provide reasonable and adequate reimbursement so that patients can get the care and technology they deserve."

"Hopefully, these elected officials who met our patient and toured our facility, and the state Assembly and Senate members who have toured other COPA member facilities in recent months, will support changes that will benefit patients and O&P providers in California," added Townsend.



Assembly member Vince Fong listens to VIPO's patient describe her challenges.

LEGISLATORS AND THEIR STAFF LEARN ABOUT O&P CARE



Trevor Townsend, CPO (left) tours Assembly member Vince Fong through VIPO's facility in Bakersfield.



Christopher Quinones, (right) field representative for Senator Shannon Grove, enjoyed learning more about O&P care from Trevor Townsend, CPO.

Facility tours were provided this summer or are scheduled this fall with California legislators and their staff to educate them about O&P care and the technology provided to patients. We thank COPA's board and our members, as well as our lobbyist Bryce Docherty, for their efforts. Tours include:

- Nadia Villafana, senior field representative for State Assembly member Tom Daly (tour of Southern California Prosthetics in Santa Ana)
- State Assembly member Heath Flora (tour of Hanger Clinic in Modesto)
- State Assembly member Vince Fong (tour of Valley Institute of Prosthetics & Orthotics in Bakersfield)
- Assembly member Carlos Villapudua (tour of Pacific Medical in Tracy)
- Chris Quinones, field representative for State Senator Shannon Grove (tour of Valley Institute of Prosthetics & Orthotics in Bakersfield)
- State Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman (tour of Hanger Clinic in Stockton scheduled in October)
- Audrey Momoh, district director for Senator Nancy Skinner (tour of O&P Services at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital in Oakland)
- State Senator Tom Umberg (tour of Southern California Prosthetics in Santa Ana)
- Assembly member Adam Gray (tour of Hanger Clinic in Merced)

Other meetings are pending.

MORE THAN DISTRIBUTION

Clinical Services
 Online CEUs
 PDAC Approval Resources
 Student Scholarships
 SPS Xpress Publication
 The SPS Blog
 Business Review
 and more



To learn more, visit spsco.com/resources or call Craig



Craig Born
 Sales Account Manager
 541.207.6498
spsco.com

SPS
 MORE THAN DISTRIBUTION
 PARTNERSHIP



COPA ACHIEVES 2021

GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY GOALS

Despite limitations imposed by the pandemic, COPA's Government Affairs Committee has achieved its 2021 goal of conducting more than 20 education advocacy meetings this year with state legislators and their staff.

While many of the meetings were video-conferences or phone conversations, several face-to-face meetings and tours were conducted this summer when elected officials were on recess and back home in the communities they represent. While the annual goal has already been achieved, additional meetings are still being scheduled as part of COPA's ongoing efforts to improve access to O&P care for Medi-Cal patients. COPA is seeking a long-overdue increase to reimbursement fees. The last increase was more than 25-years ago. The current reimbursement is barely over 50% of the Medicare allowable, and is among the lowest of any state in the country.

Spencer Greene, a regional manager for Hanger and COPA's current President, asked the chairs and members of each of COPA's standing committees to develop strategic goals and work plans for 2021. The Government Affairs Committee, chaired by board member Rick Riley, owner of O&P Boost, proposed the goal of organizing 20 or more interactions with elected officials. This goal aligned with the need to educate legislators and their staff members about O&P care and technology to build support for COPA's proposed legislation.

"This is a Medi-Cal budget issue, so we have tried to target members of the Senate and Assembly who lead or serve on committees of jurisdiction," said Bryce Docherty, who is COPA's lobbyist in Sacramento. "We relied on the board to take the lead in organizing meetings with elected officials who represent their home communities. We used what our board members have learned to fine-tune our message and improve the literature that can be used by other COPA members to reach out to their local Assembly member and state Senator."

Docherty has helped guide COPA's advocacy strategy and worked with the board to develop the education materials that present the reasons why unreasonably low Medi-Cal fees are progressively reducing the number of providers who accept Medi-Cal patients. Fees are sometimes less than the cost of delivering care and sometimes influence decisions about the devices that can be dispensed.

"In a state that has higher taxes and spends more per person on social programs than many other states, it is unfortunate that elected

officials overlook O&P providers and their patients when making annual budget determinations," Riley said.

Considering the costs of operating an O&P business in California, and how expenses continuously increase for materials, labor, equipment, utilities and overhead, this 25+ year stagnation of fees has progressively made it more difficult for Medi-Cal patients to get the same level of care as patients covered by Medicare or private insurance policies.

"Every meeting with our elected representatives is an opportunity to tell our story, to educate and to advocate, on behalf of COPA members and the patients they serve. We know our efforts also benefit O&P providers who are not COPA members and hopefully more will be encouraged to join COPA," said Docherty. "You don't need to be a COPA member to be one of our advocates. We have developed the tools that our members and other O&P providers in California can use. We need more O&P professionals in our state to take an active role in advocating for fair reimbursement."

O&P clinic tours that include interactions with patients, clinicians and technicians, can dramatically increase a legislator's awareness of orthotic and prosthetic care and technology, as well as the challenges faced by Medi-Cal patients. The message needs to be clear — so if you are doing this for the first time, it is important to organize a prep call to ensure the meeting is productive and aligned with COPA's legislative proposal. COPA's lobbyist and members of COPA's board can provide coaching and support.

allard^{USA}

More AllardAFOs with
1/2 Heel Height AND
Lower Toe Lift

ToeOFF® 2 1/2

BLUEROCKER® 2 1/2

NEW CAMO

BIRCH

BLACK

ToeOFF® 2 1/2 addition

Email info@allardusa.com to receive your FREE Product Selection Guide