



# COPA

Quarterly Newsletter  
California O&P Association

# CONNECTION

Summer 2022

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear COPA Members & Colleagues,

I have worked in the O&P field since November of 2003 and have enjoyed camaraderie with colleagues, serving patients and collaboration with allied health professionals. I thought that I had a good handle on the O&P field until I joined COPA in 2017. I began to interact with O&P professionals beyond the company that I work for, with leaders of manufacturing partners, with AOPA representatives, California legislators and beyond. Serving with COPA has given me a much broader view of our field and inspired me to tackle challenges that impact the field at large.

As a small profession within healthcare, our challenge is to have our voice heard. AB 1892 (Flora) has helped put a spotlight on the O&P industry in California and we now have an opportunity to further increase awareness. Consider getting to know your California State legislators and take them on a tour of your O&P

business. Talk with them about our field and how we impact patients' lives. COPA has assisted with multiple legislator visits in their districts and will guide you through the preparation process.

Without involvement, we will remain in the shadows of other larger, more engaged healthcare providers. I encourage you to take a step forward and contact COPA to see how you can help. Together we can make sure our elected representatives and their staff members understand our expertise and the essential services we provide.

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

## SAVE THE DATE

# COPA 2022 SYMPOSIUM

## "No Limits!"



## November 3 & 4, 2022

At the  
**Deni + Jeff Jacobs  
Challenged Athletes Center**  
9591 Waples St, San Diego, CA

HOSTED BY





# THE JOURNEY OF A BILL *By Spencer Greene, COPA President*

The COPA-sponsored California Orthotic and Prosthetic Patient Access and Fairness Act (AB 1892), authored by Assemblymember Heath Flora (R-Ripon), has been on a wild ride through Sacramento this year. I have had the opportunity to work with our expert lobbyist, Bryce Docherty and the COPA board to get this bill through the process. It has been an eye-opening experience. Most notably was the in-person testimony that I was privileged to give in support of AB 1892.

On April 5, 2022, Sean Harrison (patient advocate) and I were each given three minutes to provide testimony to the 14 members of the Assembly Health Committee. The hearing was held in a new government “swing space” building in downtown Sacramento, as renovations to the State Capitol are ongoing. The hearing room was at full capacity and the list of bills on the docket was lengthy. When we reached AB 1892 on the agenda, Sean and I joined Assemblymember Flora at the microphone to discuss our bill. Assemblymember Flora gave an overview of the bill and its merits then turned the time over to me for my three minutes of testimony. Each of the committee members seemed engaged as I recounted the touching story of a woman from Bakersfield and further described the importance of increasing access to quality O&P care in California.

When I wrapped up my comments, Sean Harrison drove the point home by talking about his personal journey as an amputee and how access to quality care has impacted his own life. If he didn't already have the attention of the committee, he surely did when he removed his prosthesis, held it up in the air and said, “this is why this bill is important.” He told them that without access to a prosthesis he could not be as independent and productive as he is. Without a prosthesis he wouldn't have the same ability to mentor and coach other amputees to reach their own potential. When Sean finished the room was silent. We thanked the committee for their time and left the building. Within two hours we learned that AB 1892 passed with a unanimous 14-0 vote.

Since the Assembly Health testimony, AB 1892 has also passed the Assembly Floor and the Senate Committee on Health with unanimous votes. Next steps are votes by the Senate Appropriations Committee, the Senate Floor and then off to Governor Newsom for signature or veto. Nothing is for sure until this bill clears on the remaining hurdles and gets signed into law. With the budget surplus, we hope this is the time, this is the year, providers of O&P care to Medi-Cal beneficiaries finally get the opportunity to receive fair compensation that is more similar to what providers in other states receive for treating Medicaid beneficiaries. Nearly three decades without any increase, and being next to the bottom among all states, California – the state that seems to pride itself on social justice – has done an injustice to our profession and the vulnerable Medi-Cal patients who don't receive the best products for their needs because providers are already losing money.

It has been a massive and herculean effort by Bryce and our board on behalf of COPA members and other California providers (non-members who will also benefit from this legislation). If we accomplish this mission – which has been ongoing for more than three years – hopefully the financial gains for providers will reinforce the value of being a COPA member. Even the effort is worthy of the dues being paid. We hope more O&P providers and suppliers will consider the benefits of membership. COPA is our industry's ONLY voice in Sacramento!

Thank you to all that emailed, called, and submitted letters of support for AB 1892. We may need your continued support as this journey continues.

[<< WATCH AB 1892 BILL HEARING & VOTE HERE >>](#)

[<< READ AB 1892 BILL INFORMATION HERE >>](#)

[<< READ AB 1892 BILL FACT SHEET HERE >>](#)



The COPA board is sad to report that Sean Harrison, a Hanger employee who testified on behalf of our members at the Assembly Health Committee Hearing in April, recently passed away.

**IN MEMORY OF SEAN HARRISON**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE**



## BIG MEDI-CAL WIN FOR COPA MEMBERS!

While it is still our goal to achieve an even bigger win, COPA has already achieved a significant victory for California O&P providers that is worth celebrating. Way back in 2011, due to the fiscal impacts of the recession, the State Legislature and then Governor Jerry Brown cut Medi-Cal fees for healthcare providers in California by 10%. Effective July 1, 2022, thanks to COPA, that 10% is going back into the coffers of O&P providers in our state – including clinics that have chosen not to pay dues for the representation COPA provides.

This didn't just happen. If it wasn't for COPA's efforts to influence legislators and Governor Newsom, O&P would not be getting a restoration of these Medi-Cal fee. Other types of providers – much larger with more lobbying dollars – had previously got back the 10%. The remaining providers still enduring this 10% reduction (despite the state's record budget surplus), all were pushing strongly in hopes this reduction would go away this year. A month or so ago we thought all the remaining providers, including our relatively small profession, were going to get the 10% restored. But when the state did the financial analysis, suddenly it seemed the 10% wasn't going to be approved. Due to relationships COPA has built with some of the key members of the Assembly and Senate Budget Committees, how we have raised awareness for the O&P profession in Sacramento, and also thanks to the work of our association's lobbyist Bryce Docherty, O&P has a BIG WIN!

The restoration was signed into law by Governor Newsom on June 30, 2022. And, unless there is new legislation proposed and passed in the future, we hope this 10% is back for good!

One caveat. This restoration of the 10% only applies to direct Medi-Cal patients. We want to assume the rate increase will impact the reimbursements O&P providers receive for treating Medi-Cal managed care beneficiaries. But that isn't something COPA can influence. COPA can't be involved in contracted rates providers negotiate with insurers. The rate restoration is definitely a topic O&P providers should discuss with these entities or consider when negotiating future contracts.

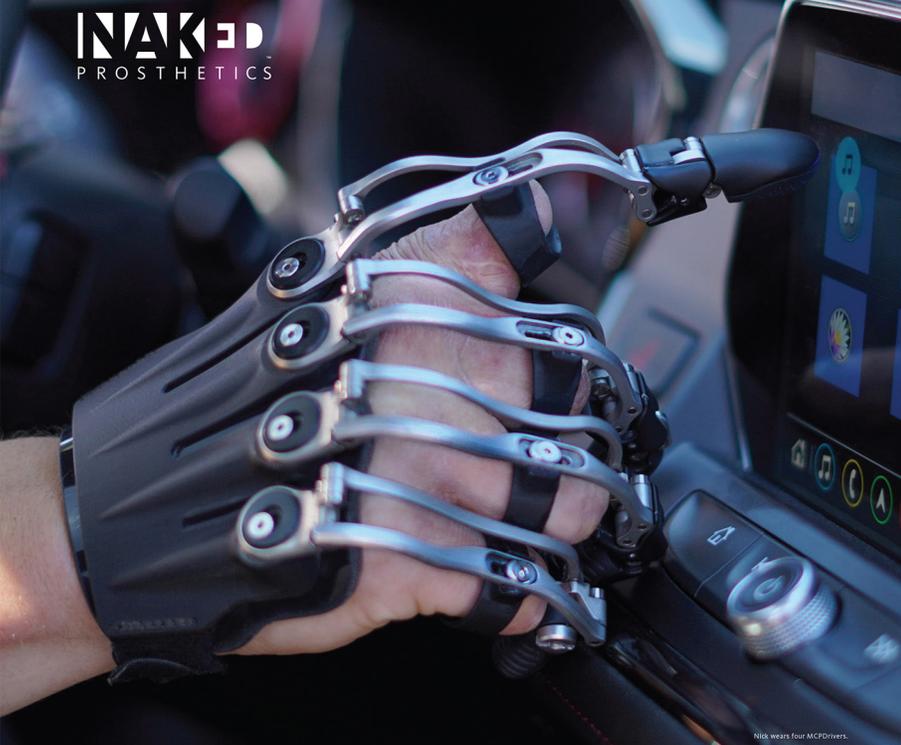


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# COPA CONTINUES A DUAL STRATEGY FOR FAIR MEDI-CAL REIMBURSEMENT

As described in detail in the last issue of the COPA Connection newsletter (still available to read or download on the COPA website, [www.californiaoandp.com](http://www.californiaoandp.com)), our association has been feverishly pursuing two avenues to gain a more fair and reasonable reimbursement for O&P providers who treat Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

If you want all the details about these efforts, the content in the last issue of the newsletter was devoted to describing COPA's efforts as the state's only association fighting for fee reform. Among all 50 states, California ranks 49th with a paltry average fee of 53% of the Medicare allowable. The State Legislature and former State Governors have continuously overlooked O&P (perhaps unintentionally), never granting any annual adjustment. Most likely this is because our industry is smaller and doesn't have the "lobbying voice" of the associations representing physicians, physical therapists, and hospitals that wouldn't tolerate more than 25 years of no increase to their fee schedule.

In the last issue of the newsletter, COPA's President Spencer Greene acknowledged the work of board members and our association's lobbyist, and the support that has been achieved by forging relationships with state legislators and their staff members primarily through tours of O&P clinics. Several members of the State Assembly and Senate who are on committees of jurisdiction have become champions for our cause and are helping COPA fight for a fee schedule increase that will help ensure Medi-Cal beneficiaries have access to a similar level of care and technology as patients who have private insurance or are eligible for Medicare.

"We just completed a long pass with the elimination of the 10% cut that the state imposed on our profession back in 2011," said COPA board member Glen Ellis during the board's recent July Zoom meeting, using a football analogy to describe the big gain for O&P providers in California related to legislation that went into effect July 1, 2022, (see related article in this issue of the newsletter). "We are now down in the red zone, and we still intend to score a touchdown for our members. The goal is to get the O&P fees increased to at least 80% of the Medicare allowable, which would be a much more substantial increase to the payments for treating Medi-Cal beneficiaries."

As noted by COPA President Spencer Greene, the COPA board, our lobbyist and several members worked hard last year to increase awareness for the O&P profession. This year there has been an even more time-consuming and strategic push – more effort than ever in the association's history – to gain

legislative approval in both the Assembly and the Senate for the California Orthotic and Prosthetic Patient Access and Fairness Act (AB 1892).

But that isn't the only strategy. There is also a budget initiative. The current surplus would seemingly make it plausible, almost expected, that money could be allocated – especially this year. Considering how low the rates are, and have been for decades, as costs to operate an O&P business in California go up every year, why couldn't O&P be included in the state's next budget?

Unfortunately, as noted in the last issue of our newsletter, if there is no advocate for O&P providers, our state's elected officials just ignore the reality that O&P providers lose money if they do what is in the best interest of their Medi-Cal patients.

"It takes a strategic action plan, it takes well thought out tactics, it takes relationships, and it takes PAC money. COPA needs a robust PAC to politically support our assertive legislation and request for a budget increase," said Bryce Docherty, COPA's lobbyist. "We are using public declarations of the State Legislature, Governor Newsom and countless healthcare patient advocates about advancing health equity and improving population health, and we are seeking an increase to most of the L-codes that is long overdue. If we can't get it through our bill, we are trying to get it included in the State Budget."

"We are close to the goal line. We have executed our plan, and our members probably don't realize just how much effort has gone into getting us to where we want to be. In the end zone," said Ellis. "Bryce has quarterbacked us to near the goal line, and our team has made key plays these past months. Now the ball is in the hands of the legislators we have tried to educate and influence. We hope and trust they will carry the ball across the goal line. We deserve this. Our members deserve this."

Stay tuned. We hope there will be great news to report in the coming days.

## On the Road to Partnership

### Meet your new SPS Sales Manager



**Michelle Purvis**

Sales Account Manager  
AZ, CA, HI, NM, NV, UT  
346.266.5148  
[mpurvis@spsco.com](mailto:mpurvis@spsco.com)

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# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEGISLATORS

Every COPA member is encouraged to seek opportunities to interact with the State Senator and Assemblymember in their home district – as well as their staff (who are often more accessible than the elected legislator).

Relationships matter. Legislators want to hear from their constituents, and we need elected officials and their staff to understand O&P care and realize our profession transforms lives. Often, it is easier to communicate with local members of their staff or try to meet with the Senator or Assemblymember when they are in their home community, and not in Sacramento.

Over the past two years, COPA members have actively sought opportunities to engage with members of our state government. The most impactful meetings occurred in O&P clinics when a Senator or Assemblymember was invited to take a tour and talk about the essential services provided by O&P professionals.

Sometimes, if you are attending public or charitable events in your local community, you will see an elected representative in attendance. You may find an opportunity to have a casual conversation or simply introduce yourself, indicate you are a constituent and say you would

appreciate the opportunity have the legislator come take a tour of your clinic where you provide essential services to persons with limb loss.

COPA board member Glen Ellis, CEO of Capstone Orthopedic Inc., recently attended a fundraiser for the campaign of Senator Susan Eggman (D-Stockton). Senator Eggman has been supportive of COPA's efforts to achieve a long overdue increase to Medi-Cal reimbursement for O&P providers.

"My dinner with Susan Eggman was quite enjoyable. She is very accomplished, experienced, sophisticated and articulate," said Glenn. "What I really appreciated, however, was how genuine she was. I could tell she was very concerned about the needs of amputees. She was completely focused and driven to do whatever she could to help with their access to care. The more time I spent with her, the more enjoyable the conversation was. I never felt that she was simply trying to pacify a constituent. She showed a genuine concern about the needs of our patients."

COPA board members, who have experience with the process for organizing and conducting clinic tours, welcome engagement with members about how to achieve the most impact from these opportunities. Please contact the COPA staff if you have interest in speaking to a board member.

## DO YOU LIVE IN A DISTRICT REPRESENTED BY THESE ASSEMBLYMEMBERS AND SENATORS?

The lists below include the names and districts of lawmakers serving on key committees. Educating these legislators about O&P care will benefit COPA's legislative efforts. If you live in one of these districts and are a CONSTITUENT of one of these elected representatives, COPA is counting on you to support its grassroots advocacy campaign. You can reach out by email to COPA's home office in Pasadena or any board member to indicate your willingness to participate in advocacy activities.

### MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY HEALTH COMMITTEE

Member	District	Contact:
<a href="#">Aguiar-Curry, Cecilia (D)</a>	4	<a href="https://a04.asmdc.org/">https://a04.asmdc.org/</a>
<a href="#">Arambula, Joaquin (D)</a>	31	<a href="https://a31.asmdc.org/">https://a31.asmdc.org/</a>
<a href="#">Bigelow, Franklin (R)</a>	5	<a href="https://ad05.asmr.org/">https://ad05.asmr.org/</a>
<a href="#">Carrillo, Wendy (D)</a>	51	<a href="https://a51.asmdc.org/">https://a51.asmdc.org/</a>
<a href="#">Flora, Heath (R)</a>	12	<a href="https://ad12.asmr.org/">https://ad12.asmr.org/</a>
<a href="#">Maienschein, Brian (D)</a>	77	<a href="https://a77.asmdc.org/">https://a77.asmdc.org/</a>
<a href="#">Mayes, Chad Vice-Chair (I)</a>	42	<a href="https://www.assembly.ca.gov/assemblymemberchadmayer">https://www.assembly.ca.gov/assemblymemberchadmayer</a>
<a href="#">McCarty, Kevin (D)</a>	7	<a href="https://a07.asmdc.org/">https://a07.asmdc.org/</a>
<a href="#">Nazarian, Adrin (D)</a>	46	<a href="https://a46.asmdc.org/">https://a46.asmdc.org/</a>
<a href="#">Rivas, Luz (D)</a>	39	<a href="https://a39.asmdc.org/">https://a39.asmdc.org/</a>
<a href="#">Rodriguez, Freddie (D)</a>	52	<a href="https://a52.asmdc.org/">https://a52.asmdc.org/</a>
<a href="#">Santiago, Miguel (D)</a>	53	<a href="https://a53.asmdc.org/">https://a53.asmdc.org/</a>
<a href="#">Waldron, Marie</a>	75	<a href="https://ad75.asmr.org/">https://ad75.asmr.org/</a>
<a href="#">Wood, Jim (Chair)</a>	2	<a href="https://a02.asmdc.org/">https://a02.asmdc.org/</a>

### ASSEMBLY BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 1 ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Member	District	Contact:
<a href="#">Arambula, Joaquin Chair (D)</a>	31	<a href="https://a31.asmdc.org/">https://a31.asmdc.org/</a>
<a href="#">Mathis, Devon (R)</a>	26	<a href="https://ad26.asmr.org/">https://ad26.asmr.org/</a>
<a href="#">Patterson, Jim (R)</a>	23	<a href="https://ad23.asmr.org/">https://ad23.asmr.org/</a>
<a href="#">Ramos, James (D)</a>	40	<a href="https://a40.asmdc.org/">https://a40.asmdc.org/</a>
<a href="#">Rubio, Blanca (D)</a>	48	<a href="https://a48.asmdc.org/">https://a48.asmdc.org/</a>
<a href="#">Wood, Jim (D)</a>	2	<a href="https://a02.asmdc.org/">https://a02.asmdc.org/</a>

### SENATE BUDGET AND FISCAL REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 3 ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Member	District	Contact:
<a href="#">Eggman, Susan Talamantes Chair (D)</a>	5	<a href="https://sd05.senate.ca.gov/">https://sd05.senate.ca.gov/</a>
<a href="#">Melendez, Melissa (R)</a>	28	<a href="https://melendez.cssrc.us/">https://melendez.cssrc.us/</a>
<a href="#">Pan, Richard (D)</a>	6	<a href="https://sd06.senate.ca.gov/">https://sd06.senate.ca.gov/</a>

# 2022 ANNUAL COPA SYMPOSIUM

**"No Limits!"**



**Save The Date For This West Coast Industry Event!**

**NOVEMBER 3 & 4, 2022**

**DENI + JEFF JACOBS CHALLENGED ATHLETES CENTER**

9591 Waples Street, San Diego, CA

It has been several years since COPA has had the opportunity to host its annual meeting in the most populated end of the state. Our board is pleased to announce this year's Education Symposium will be in San Diego. This year's theme is *NO LIMITS!*

"We are looking forward to giving SoCal O&P providers convenient access to compelling CEU presentations, to see their colleagues, and interact with suppliers who support COPA as members and exhibitors," said board member Maynard Carkhuff, who has worked with the volunteers who serve on COPA's Education Committee to secure a space that can accommodate attendees and exhibitors.

A notice was recently posted on COPA's website to announce the dates and location. COPA is fortunate to have the opportunity to have this year's event at the Deni + Jeff Jacobs Challenged Athletes Center in San Diego. This is a beautiful complex with space for the CEU courses and for exhibitors to have table displays.

"It wasn't easy finding a suitable location. We are very pleased to have partnered with the Challenged Athletes Foundation to have our meeting back in Southern California," added Carkhuff. "The annual symposium is one of the many benefits we offer to our members, and it is also one of the primary sources of revenue for our association, funding our programs and services throughout the year."



Meeting registration information isn't posted on the website, and registration will likely begin toward the end of the summer (approximately two months before the conference). You should mark your calendar and be poised and ready to register. COPA's board and the members of the Education Committee that are organizing the event, anticipate there will be strong interest since our meeting hasn't been in Southern California since 2018. If there is an overwhelming response, space limitations and safety protocols could mean some late-comers won't be able to sign up (there may be a cutoff and no opportunity for same-day registration).

In addition to the general announcement, COPA's website does have the application information for presenters to submit information to be considered for the education program. There is no posted deadline for the submissions, but those interested in giving a presentation are encouraged to submit their presentations by August 1.

More information will be coming via emails and in the next issue of the newsletter with details about the courses, number of CEUs, networking opportunities, and the companies that will be exhibiting. Suppliers that are COPA members will have priority in registering to be an exhibitor, and non-members will only be considered if the available tables aren't all reserved by members.