



COPA

Quarterly Newsletter
California O&P Association

CONNECTION

JUNE 2024

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear COPA Members & Colleagues,

As an association, COPA has been on a journey to make a positive impact on the field of O&P in California. A few areas of impact have been – sparking camaraderie among members that share a geography, raising awareness to the field of O&P with legislators in Sacramento, and organizing a well-rounded educational event each Fall. During my tenure as the President of COPA, I have gained tremendous insight into the power of collaboration. As a small industry within the healthcare segment, it is important that we are rallying around common priorities and raising our voices together to elevate the same issues. If we exist as a fragmented industry with divergent priorities, our voices will become background noise.

It is easy for competition between companies to create separation. However, it is important that we keep our eyes focused on the big picture. The big picture includes reasonable reimbursement for all providers, efficient access to O&P care for

all patients in CA, and healthcare policy that encourages the best patient outcomes. In this scenario, we all win and our industry has a sustainable future.

For the benefit of our industry, I am encouraging each of you to engage in “coopetition”. This new term is defined as “the act of cooperation between competing companies by forming a strategic alliance designed to help both companies”. There is value in getting to know your competition, and to find ways to work together toward a shared vision.

We hope to see you at the next COPA happy hour where you can meet other people that are also interested in making the O&P field in CA better tomorrow than it is today.

In service,

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

COPA Happy Hour

Urban Roots Brewery
1322 V St
Sacramento

 Wednesday
July 31, 2024

 5:30 - 7:30 PM

COPA invites you to our Happy Hour event!

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Governor Newsom's "May Revision" Adds Another Hurdle

On Friday, May 10, 2024, Governor Gavin Newsom released his proposed May Revision to the 2024-25 State Budget (and there is disappointing news for most everyone). In January, the California Department of Finance (DOF) projected the State Budget shortfall to be \$38 billion, though later the state Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) projected the shortfall to be as high as \$73 billion. In April, the Legislature and the Governor took early budget action to reduce the projected shortfall by \$17.3 billion through some cuts to existing programs, new revenue (such as an increase of \$1.5 billion to the Managed Care Organization Tax), internal borrowing, and funding delays or shifts. During the May Revision press conference, Governor Newsom stated that we currently have a \$27.6 billion deficit for the 2024-25 budget year and project a deficit of \$28.4 billion for 2025-26.

Last year, the Governor and the Legislature agreed to a historic, multi-year investment in the Medi-Cal Program to increase provider reimbursement rates. Medi-Cal provider rate increases initially focused on primary care, obstetrics and non-acute mental health went into effect on January 1, 2024. The more significant rate increases for primary care, specialty care, emergency department care, family planning and abortion, behavioral health, public hospitals, clinics, workforce investment, and hospital outpatient services such as hopefully O&P were slated to begin January 1, 2025.

Despite the budget shortfall, the Governor's budget proposal released in January 2024 honored the budget agreement made last year and provided \$2.6 billion to invest in Medi-Cal provider rates (which coupled with federal matching dollars would provide approximately \$6 billion of investment). This revenue is only available due to last year's passage of the Managed Care Organization (MCO) Tax set to last from April 1, 2023 through December 2026. This was by far the largest MCO Tax the state has ever adopted. In the past, the tax was

\$1.5 billion to \$1.7 billion annually vs. the one just passed last year, which generates an average of \$5.5 billion annually. The agreement reached last year provided funding for both the State General Fund and the historic investment in the Medi-Cal Program to improve access to care for 1 in every 3 Californians enrolled in Medi-Cal, including half of California's children.

However, in the May Revision, Governor Newsom proposed to sweep all the MCO Tax revenue of \$7 billion and the federal matching funds and use them to help close the deficit and maintain Medi-Cal eligibility for beneficiaries, rather than investing some of the revenue from this MCO Tax into improving access to care, including an increase in reimbursement O&P devices. This is a very disappointing development, and COPA will continue the relentless advocacy to convince the Legislature that "Mobility Saves!" and to strongly push back on Governor Newsom for not following through on his commitment to increase access to those Californians suffering from limb loss and limb indifference!

The Legislature must pass a State Budget by June 15, 2024, and will likely continue negotiations with Governor Newsom after its passage, as he has until July 1, 2024, to sign a budget, which can include line-item vetoes. In a budget climate such as the current one, negotiations on additional budget bills and budget trailer bills could potentially continue until the Legislature adjourns for the year on August 31, 2024. We will continue our unrelenting engagement with Governor Newsom and the Legislature during the remainder of the budget process to fight for an increase in reimbursement for O&P devices in the Medi-Cal Program.

"If you miss a day 'Under the Dome,' you miss a lot!"

COPA's Upcoming Happy Hour Events

COPA's Happy Hour events are informal gatherings held in both northern and southern California throughout the year. These events are open to everyone in the O&P industry to meet and greet peers, colleagues, and friends, and discuss anything and everything O&P.

Come out and join us. Have a beer, see some friends, tell some stories, and let COPA know how we can do better! Snacks and the first round of beer are always complimentary.

Here are some of the upcoming Happy Hour events. Save the dates and plan to attend one that is near to you.

RSVP: californiaoandp.com

Wednesday, July 31, 2024
5:30 pm
at Urban Roots Brewery
1322 V St., Sacramento, CA
Sponsor: Blatchford

Wednesday, August 14
5:30 pm
at Woody's Brewing Company
1257 Oregon St., Redding, CA
Sponsor: Fillauer

Wednesday, August 14
5:30 pm
at Golden Road Brewing
2210 E Orangewood Ave., Anaheim, CA
Sponsor: SPS



BREAKING BARRIERS: WOMEN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ORTHOTICS AND PROSTHETICS

By Dana Vera, Loma Linda University Student

The future of O&P is heading towards a very bright future and leading the way are the brilliant women who are showing us anyone can be successful. When I was first introduced into the world of O&P, I noticed the clinic I was shadowing at had a staff consisting only of males. Of course, everyone was very welcoming and encouraging, but it was still a little intimidating. Before the 2000's, women in O&P only made up about 5% of the work force. Today, we see over 50% of women entering the field striving to be successful clinicians, being able to provide exceptional devices, and participating in research opportunities. To further the future of O&P, we must continue breaking barriers and recognize the amazing work these women do in a traditionally male-dominate field.

There are many women in O&P who have worked hard and proven anyone who wants to be successful in this field can be. These women have earned to be recognized, which has inspired others to strive for their desired career and demonstrated how intimidation should not discourage you from pursuing your aspirations. Sara Morgan is an L/CPO who has been practicing O&P for 10 years and is recognized on the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists website. She is pursuing her doctoral degree in rehabilitation science and has her scientific manuscript published in a peer-reviewed journal, Quality of Life Research. Ms. Morgan is a perfect example of how women can enrich and propel the field of

O&P, by showcasing innovation, expertise and perseverance. Another example of an amazing woman is Nikki Grace-Strader. Nikki Grace-Strader is the Director of North American Operations for Osseointegration International and has ascended into becoming a dedicated advocate and leader in osseointegration education in the O&P field. As an amputee herself, she helps empower patients by providing them with resources, advocacy, and education they need. Additionally, another great resource that speaks on the area of women in O&P is the ABC Credcast. ABC Credcast is a podcast on the American Board for Certification website and is hosted by Jim Lawson, who breaks down everything O&P related. In episode 47, Mr. Lawson dedicates the podcast to the women who have made and continue to make a huge impact in the O&P industry. Some of these women entered the profession as one of the only women in their clinic and they share the experiences they had to overcome on their path to success. These individuals represent only a fraction of the successful women who have demonstrated the resilience and spirit they bring to the world of O&P.

It is amazing to see the continuous evolution of the O&P industry, but it is crucial we persist in fostering diversity and encouraging the next generation of O&P women. How can we go about this? Be an advocate and speak up for those who are unable to. Spread the word of the successful women

who broke down barriers to be where they are today. Continue to advance your education and seize all opportunities for that next job position or promotion. At the end of the day, we are all on the same team. The more versatile we are, the stronger and more well-rounded the profession becomes, which will only further enhance the care we give to our patients.

SOME SAY ONE-SIZE FITS ALL

WE SAY one-size fits almost no-one!

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fit

We have big ambitions for the word FIT.

It's given that the AFO should fit and follow the shape of the leg and fit and adapt well to the shoe, for a comfortable wear for each individual. But fit should also mean a good dynamic function for the individual, and

that's where the similarity between a one-size version and an Allard AFO STOPS!

We offer different models for different needs of support and stability. Our 25 years experience and development of composite AFO confirms the necessity of variety to meet and fulfill the need from patients in the best possible way, not only one way!

Responding footplate is a key

function for control, safety and comfort. Within each model we offer 4-5 different sizes (XS-XL) to match different foot sizes and heights of users. All sizes have

individual composite lay-up to optimize dynamic response,

especially of the important footplate. (Both build height and footplate length can also be adjusted, 1-1.5 cm).

individual



References:

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2024 COPA SYMPOSIUM

Creating the Future of O&P

Loma Linda University
School of Allied Health Professions
Orthotics & Prosthetics



SAVE THE DATE!



NOVEMBER 7 & 8

Hosted By:



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS
ORTHOTICS & PROSTHETICS DEPARTMENT
1500 Crafton Ave. Bldg. 126, Mentone, CA

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
School of Allied Health Professions
Orthotics & Prosthetics

COPA 2024 EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

Thursday & Friday, November 7 & 8, 2024

at Loma Linda University, School of Allied Health Professions,
Orthotics & Prosthetics Department,
Mentone, CA

COPA's 2024 Symposium's theme is "Creating the Future of O&P." This year's Symposium will be hosted by Loma Linda University at their School of Allied Health Professions, Orthotics & Prosthetics Department in Mentone, CA on November 7 & 8.

This is a 2-day event packed with CE accredited seminars, technical workshops, and exhibits from major O&P manufacturers. O&P experts and seasoned professionals will share valuable knowledge in our live courses. Industry major manufacturers will be there to showcase their newest products and technology and interact with you. So, plan ahead to attend this vital symposium in the west coast.

COPA is currently accepting presentation submissions for our annual 2024 Education Symposium. Interested parties may submit your presentation proposal using the online form on our website, www.californiaoandp.com, or email us your presentation title and outline with your contact information to admin@californiaoandp.com. Our committee will reach out to you for more details.

The full agenda and course content will be announced soon with registration beginning in late summer. Look for additional information in our next COPA newsletter or visit our website at www.californiaoandp.com.



ACCEPTING PRESENTATION PROPOSALS NOW!
www.californiaoandp.com



OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH — AN INTERVIEW WITH SPENCER GREENE

By JJ Quizon, Loma Linda University student

COPA President Spencer Greene found his opportunity in the O&P field in a phonebook. The yellow pages led him to Hanger Clinic where he started volunteering, then became a fitter which brought him back to school to become a CPO. Since then, he's taken more opportunities in his own career, for the O&P industry as a whole, as well as connecting outside the field.

After completing his residency in Colorado, Spencer returned to work for Hanger Clinic. In the past 20 years, he's taken opportunities for professional growth. "Over the course of time, people want to challenge themselves," he commented. Adapting into management positions has been satisfying his desire to help steer the field of O&P and improve how it fits in the bigger healthcare picture. Being the Regional Vice President of the company allows him to consult other clinicians while still staying connected to the clinical side when he gets the chance to work with patients. It reminds him why he entered the field in the first place: helping people.

Spencer considers the staffing crisis as the biggest challenge the industry is currently facing. The retiring clinicians are not being replaced at the same rate by graduating students. As a leader, he's finding ways for clinicians to be more productive, dabbling into virtual patient visits and improving efficiency without compromising quality of care.

"There is an opportunity for clinicians to focus on responsibilities that require their specific education," Spencer suggested. Since there is patient need that is not being fully met in a timely manner, "a clinician can touch more lives by partnering with someone they delegate responsibilities to," he added. Instead of being bombarded with all the work that comes with a patient's O&P care, clinicians can spread the load to fitters and assistants. Spencer predicts that CPOs will be happier once they extend responsibilities such as stripping molds, packing and shipping casts and many others to supporting personnel, because they will have more time with direct patient interactions and using their expertise with evaluations, making clinical decisions, and assessing fit and function of devices. Delegating specific responsibilities is an opportunity to fill the growing need of the industry.

On the Road to Partnership

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to your contacts



Volunteering is another opportunity that Spencer welcomes to branch out and connect with other people he otherwise would not come in contact with. Whether that's through COPA, his church, a local rotary club or the American Heart Association, it's a way for him to get out of his usual circle and serve other people. As he takes the opportunity to give back to the community, he is able to learn something from them too. It's a good way to introduce others to the field of O&P so we can spread awareness and give access to care for more people. "Service is at the core of the O&P profession," he claims, "there's something innate that people are drawn into this field which is easily applied to other areas as well such as volunteering."

The orthotics and prosthetics field has a lot of need and room for growth, and we can fulfill this by taking opportunities. Spencer started by finding Hanger in a phonebook. Now, he's in a position in multiple capacities to influence others to further improve the industry. What opportunities are YOU going to take?



COPA SOCIAL HAPPY HOUR RECAP

Where: Golden Road Brewing, Huntington Beach

When: March 27, 2024

SPONSORED BY



point designs

At Golden Road Brewing in Huntington Beach, COPA gathered for a happy hour overlooking the harbor! The event was sponsored by Scott Taylor of Point Designs - who shared their prosthetic digit. Point Designs produces functional upper limb prosthetic devices featuring a heavy-duty ratcheting mechanism that was developed to improve the independence of patients who have lost one or more fingers or thumbs.

Attendees included Cal State Dominguez students in their 2nd semester master's program who were curious about meeting and learning from clinicians and providers. It was a wonderful turnout, some fantastic beers were served such as the Spicy Mango Cart in Tajin-rimmed glass, and the venue was spectacular with a gorgeous view of the harbor at sunset in the background while O&P professionals got to know one another!



COPA NOLAC HAPPY HOUR RECAP

Where: Alaro Craft Brewery, Sacramento

When: May 1, 2024

SPONSORED BY



On Wednesday, May 1st approximately 20 O&P professionals met at COPA's Happy Hour event sponsored by Össur at Alaro Craft Brewery in downtown Sacramento.

This event came on the heels of a very successful 2-day Össur clinical education campaign at UC Davis. The diverse group of O&P professionals included patient care coordinators, office administrators, practitioners, and manufacturers. They were treated to a variety of small savory Spanish (Tapas) dishes and Alaro's wide assortment of craft beer. Attendees had a great time, sharing common challenges experienced in their business' day-to-day operations as well as discussing some of the education they received in the days preceding the Happy Hour. Another hot topic was COPA's Legislative Day Rally at the state capitol as it took place a short walk away from the Happy Hour event. COPA members are optimistic that their involvement and effort is being recognized at the local and state level. So, cheers and join us as COPA member - to strengthen our voice in our lobbying efforts for the industry!



**American
Orthotic &
Prosthetic
Association**

ASK YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO APPROPRIATE NDAA FUNDS FOR TRICARE CRO COVERAGE

We need your help to support active and retired military families!

TRICARE, the US Department of Defense's health care program, does not currently provide coverage for cranial remolding orthoses (CROs), adjustable helmets or bands that progressively mold the shape of the infant cranium to approximate a normal head shape. This lack of coverage has a significant impact on the quality of life for the infants of military families, who deserve the chance to live their life to the fullest.

For decades, CROs have been a covered benefit for cranial remolding programs covering the families of federal employees, Members of Congress, and VA enrollees. In addition, most commercial health plans and Medicaid programs provide coverage. It's vital that TRICARE align its coverage standards with the rest of our nation's healthcare system.

Please take a few moments to fill this online form, which will allow you to send a message to your Members of Congress requesting that TRICARE CRO coverage be included in the 2025 NDAA appropriations bill: <https://p2a.co/hdnCnL7?>

Help us help you get reimbursement up to 80% of Medi-Cal rates! [CLICK HERE](#) to submit an email to your Legislator to support COPA's Budget Proposal for MCO Tax.

TELL YOUR
CA STATE
LEGISLATORS

ACT
NOW!

TO SUPPORT
THE MEDI-CAL
MCO TAX!

Hurry, ACT NOW
as State Budget
will be signed by
July 1, 2024!

Right now, reimbursement by the Medi-Cal program for O&P care averages **49% of Medicare rates**, one of the lowest rates of any state in the country!

THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE!

The **California Orthotic and Prosthetic Association (COPA)** has submitted a budget proposal to the CA legislator asking that Medi-Cal rates **be increased to no less than 80% of current Medicare rates** so that reasonable reimbursement can be provided for O&P care and providers will be encouraged to accept Medi-Cal.

WE NEED YOUR HELP to ensure that COPA's proposal is incorporated into the state budget. **CLICK THE LINK** below to email your legislators asking for their support for this vital proposal. **Mobility \$aves!**



California Orthotic & Prosthetic Association

www.californiaoandp.com

**CLICK HERE
TO MAKE YOUR
VOICE HEARD BY
YOUR LEGISLATOR!**

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