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Letter from The President

Dear COPA Members,

With summer approaching, many of your offices notice that your referral sources may be taking time off. You probably notice increased response times when trying to communicate with your referrals or their staff. It can be moments like this that highlight the importance of marketing to your referrals and continuing to stay in front of them and their staff.

Often, a positive interaction can lead to increased collaboration and trust between 2 organizations. The net result, increased efficiency and possibly more business. Patient advocacy is no different. This is why COPA, in collaboration with our Lobbyist (Political Solutions) and our strong coalition of patient advocates organized a day of lobbying in Sacramento on a rainy Tuesday, April 21, 2026.

Our objective was clear, meet with Assemblymembers and various lawmakers who are part of Health Committees and a Special Subcommittee assembled to organize ahead of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic games. Five groups of 4-5 individuals each had 5 meetings scheduled. During these meetings, our team shared personal experiences using and acquiring various orthotic and prosthetic devices. We made our audience aware of the lack of access to adequate adaptive equipment necessary to lead a healthy and productive life beyond the minimum requirements of daily living when faced with limb loss or limb difference. We aimed to make them aware of our upcoming So Every BODY Can Move Bill proposal next year when the California legislative cycle resets for a new 2-year period. We left behind a fact sheet with SEBCM details and asked that they support our effort next year. We had several very interested Assemblymembers voice their support.

As a result of these meetings, COPA has received several requests for site visits by various California Assemblymembers. In fact, we already have 2 scheduled. Our first visit will be June 24th in La Mesa, CA by Assembly Member Sharp-Collins. This is an opportunity for the host clinic to showcase their work and the impact they have on their community. The second visit is scheduled shortly after the conclusion of the California Assembly Summer Recess on September 4th by Assembly Member McKinnor. We look forward to organizing more visits in the near future.

With the longer summer days comes an increased opportunity to get outside and move. We often use the phrase "movement is medicine" when justifying our work. The 28x28 Mobility Challenge provides an opportunity for everyone to chart their daily movement during the month of July while raising awareness and funds for So Every BODY Can Move. This year we have a California team. Funds raised by the team will be earmarked for use in our state. So please register and consider joining team California. <https://charity-pledgeit.org/28x28Mobility-Challenge/teams/@se-bcm-california>

With gratitude,

*Luis Mora*Luis Mora, CP
Össur Americas
COPA President

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Thursday • August 27
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2026 COPA SYMPOSIUM



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CHALLENGED ATHLETES FOUNDATION • SAN DIEGO

Sponsorship for the 2026 COPA Symposium is now OPEN

We thank all speakers who have submitted their proposals for presentation at the **Annual 2026 COPA Symposium**. The committee is now reviewing the submissions and they will get in touch with all speakers.

COPA is proud to announce that our two-day **Annual 2026 COPA Symposium** will be returning to **Challenged Athletes Foundation** at 9591 Waples St, San Diego, CA on **Thursday & Friday, November 12 & 13**. Thank you to Challenged Athletes Foundation for hosting our event again this year. This year, the COPA Symposium centers on the theme: **Designing Tomorrow's O&P: Innovation that Transforms Lives**.

Whether you're seeking CEUs, curious about the latest trends and technologies, or eager to network with fellow O&P professionals, this is an event you won't want to miss. Mark your calendar and plan ahead for an exceptional event. Visit our website, californiaoandp.com, to stay tuned for more event information.

Sponsorship registration for this event is now OPEN. Here is a perfect opportunity for your company to elevate your visibility and connect with industry professionals by becoming a sponsor of the COPA Symposium.

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Apply to be a 2026 COPA Symposium sponsor here:

<https://californiaoandp.com/events/#!event/register/2026/11/12/2026-copa-symposium>

SO EVERY BODY CAN MOVE CALIFORNIA

by Annika Berlin, Grassroots Advocacy Manager, So Every BODY Can Move



Keep California Moving: Join Team California for the 28x28 Mobility Challenge in July

The momentum from our April Lobby Day doesn't stop when legislators leave Sacramento for summer recess.

This July, during Disability Pride Month, we're inviting COPA members, patients, families, advocates, and allies to join **Team California** for the **3rd Annual 28x28 Mobility Challenge** and help build support for So Every BODY Can Move in California.

The challenge is simple: move for 28 minutes a day for 28 days during the month of July. Walk, run, bike, swim, hike, wheel, dance, or move however works for you. Then invite friends, family, coworkers, and your community to support your fundraising efforts.



Why Team California?

For the first time, California has its own dedicated state team, meaning funds raised by Team California will stay in California and support grassroots advocacy efforts leading up to the 2028 Paralympics in Los Angeles.

Funds raised help support advocate engagement, educational events, community outreach, Capitol visits, and the materials needed to grow our movement across the state.

This year's team is co-captained by Bay Area paratriathlete **Shane Harvey** and **Susan Stenman, CPO**, owner of Prosthetic Solutions. Last year, Susan's clinic team alone raised more than \$6,000. This year, Team California is aiming even higher with a goal of **raising \$20,000**.

Join the Challenge

As O&P professionals, you see every day why this work matters. You see children who need access to activity-specific devices to keep up with their peers. You see adults navigating life without waterproof devices, activity limbs, or the technology that would allow them to stay healthy, active, and independent. You know that movement is medicine!

As someone with a limb difference, I live that reality every day. And as someone who has the privilege of working alongside California advocates, clinicians, families, and our incredible State Lead, Luis Mora, to advance So Every BODY Can Move, we're asking you directly: **join us!**

It takes about 5 minutes to sign up, join Team California, and share your page with a few friends. That's one small action you can take today that will help fuel our advocacy efforts over the next two years.

Whether you join as an individual, create a clinic team, or invite patients and referral partners to participate, every registration and every dollar raised helps move California closer to meaningful policy change.

We often talk about wanting change. This is one tangible way to help create it. Let's show the rest of the country what California can do!

Join Team California:

<https://charity.pledgeit.org/28x28MobilityChallenge/teams/@sebcm-california>

I Accepted the Challenge.

Movement is a Human Right. Let's make it one.

It's more than a challenge; it's a movement to advocate for access to life-changing prosthetic and orthotic care necessary for physical activity, currently not covered by insurance.

SO EVERY BODY CAN MOVE

28 Days.
28 Minutes.

disability pride month

28x28

#28x28MobilityChallenge @SoEveryBODYCanMove



Update on COPA's Lobbying Efforts

by *Chloe King, Associate Lobbyist
Political Solutions*



COPA continued its advocacy efforts in 2026 through a successful lobby day in Sacramento, bringing together orthotic and prosthetic providers, patient advocates, and individuals with lived experience to engage directly with lawmakers.

Through personal stories and policy discussions, advocates highlighted the importance of comprehensive insurance coverage that supports mobility, independence, and access to physical activity, helping lay the groundwork for the upcoming So Every Body Can Move Initiative.

COPA is also supporting two bills related to California's preparation for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games: AB 2436 (Fong), which would permanently extend resident tuition benefits to qualifying Team USA and Paralympic student-athletes training in California, and AB 2411 (McKinnor), which would strengthen public safety planning by creating a temporary certification process for out-of-state law enforcement officers supporting the Games. Both measures support a successful and accessible Paralympic experience for athletes who rely on orthotic and prosthetic care. The bills are currently moving through Senate policy committees and must reach the Senate Floor by July 3 to remain active this year.

Looking ahead, COPA will continue its legislative education efforts through scheduled clinic tours with Assemblymembers LaShae Sharp-Collins and Tina McKinnor and is working to coordinate additional visits with Assemblymembers Patrick Ahrens and Darshana Patel.



Advocate Spotlight: Bella, SEBCM CA Creative Lead!

When Bella first joined California's So Every BODY Can Move team, she joined as an advocate with lived experience. Over the past year, she has become one of the driving forces behind how we tell our story.

A Bay Area native, student at San Francisco State University, and left above-knee amputee, Isabella "Bella" Mayer serves as a creative lead and social media point person for our California team. She has helped amplify the stories of advocates across the state, supported outreach around the Paralympic movement, highlighted California athletes, and worked behind the scenes to ensure our community's voices are reaching new audiences.

If you attended our Advocacy Day in Sacramento this spring, you probably saw Bella in action. While we all were rushing between legislative meetings, Bella was often the one with a microphone in hand, pulling advocates aside for interviews, capturing photos, recording videos, and documenting the moments that brought our day to life. Many of the stories and images shared from Advocacy Day happened because Bella took the initiative to make sure they were captured.

Bella has also helped demonstrate an important truth about grassroots advocacy: this work isn't just powered by people with lived experience. It's powered by the communities around them. Through her involvement, her mom has become an active member of our California advocacy efforts as well, a reminder that meaningful change is built not only by those directly impacted, but also by parents, friends, family members, clinicians, and allies who choose to show up alongside them.

Outside of advocacy, Bella embodies one of our favorite phrases "movement is medicine". Since becoming an amputee in 2023, she has embraced adaptive sports, strength training, community races, and recently began competing in weightlifting competitions.

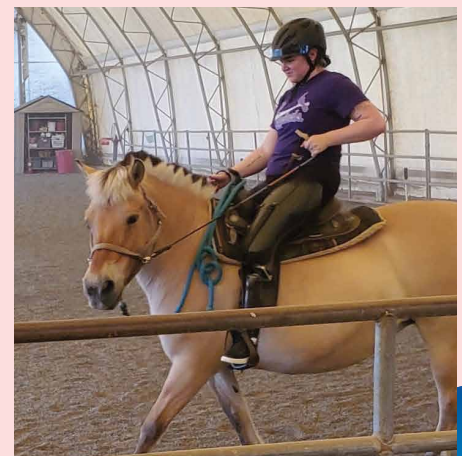
This July, Bella will be bringing that same energy to the 28x28 Mobility Challenge as part of Team California. We're grateful for everything she brings to this movement and excited to see what she accomplishes next!



Bella Mayer (R) with Annika Berlin, Grassroots Advocacy Manager, So Every BODY Can Move



Bella Mayer



From Muscles to Brain: Understanding Movement in Children with Upper Limb Differences

Part 1: Can Children Control a Hand They Never Had?

For children born with a below-elbow limb difference, advances in prosthetic technology are creating exciting new possibilities. Modern prosthetic hands can now perform an increasingly sophisticated range of hand and wrist movements, offering the potential for greater function and independence than ever before. Yet despite these technological advances, controlling these devices in a natural and intuitive way remains a major challenge.

Many modern prostheses rely on measuring electrical signals produced by muscles in the residual limb. In adults, machine-learning algorithms can identify patterns of muscle activity associated with intended hand movements, enabling intuitive control of multiple grasping functions. These systems work because the user once had and controlled a biological hand before it was lost. However, most pediatric prosthesis users were born with their limb difference, presenting very different developmental conditions and raising an important question: Do children born without a hand retain the neuromuscular pathways associated with hand control, and are those pathways capable of generating the distinct, consistent muscle activation patterns needed to operate emerging prosthetic technologies?

Traditionally, it was assumed that the answer might be no. If a hand never formed, it seemed reasonable to expect the associated muscle control pathways would be absent, underdeveloped, or incapable of supporting sophisticated prosthetic control. However, advances in neuroscience and rehabilitation engineering have begun to challenge this assumption.

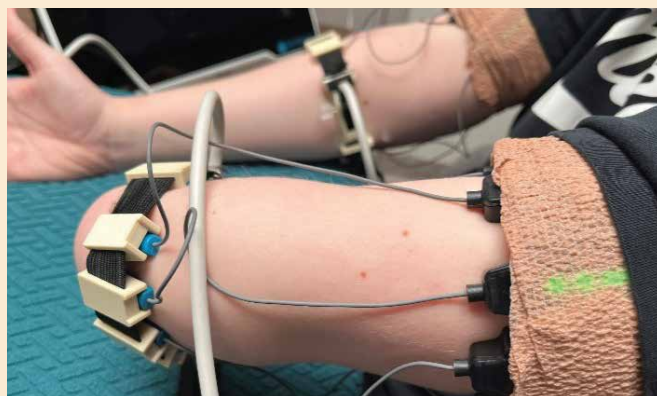
To better understand the capabilities of children and adolescents with congenital below-elbow limb deficiency, our team at UC Davis partnered with Shriners Children's Northern California and four other participating Shriners sites across the United States. We recorded muscle activity from the residual forearm while participants attempted a series of hand and wrist movements and used machine-learning techniques to determine whether the intended movement could be identified from these signals. Remarkably, all 48 participants generated distinct muscle activation patterns that enabled direct prediction of up to 10 different intended movements, despite never having physically possessed the hand they were attempting to control.

Our findings suggest that these individuals possess a capacity for muscle control that has yet to be fully harnessed for prosthetic technologies. Rather than relying on a small number of simple muscle contractions to operate a prosthesis, advanced control systems may be able to interpret richer patterns of muscle activity that reflect a child's intended hand movements more naturally. Yet important challenges remain, as current control approaches have largely been developed and validated in adults with acquired limb loss. Realizing the full potential of these technologies for children will require a deeper understanding of how congenital limb deficiency shapes motor development, muscle coordination, and long-term learning.

Our findings provide valuable insight into human motor development and neuroplasticity. They suggest that the nervous system may establish and preserve movement representations even when the corresponding limb never fully develops. For clinicians, prosthetists, therapists, and families, these discoveries offer an encouraging message. Children with congenital limb differences may possess far greater biological capacity for intuitive prosthetic control than previously recognized. By identifying and strengthening these existing capabilities, future rehabilitation strategies may help children achieve more natural and effective interactions with advanced prosthetic devices.

As is often the case in science, answering one question raises many more. If children can generate muscle activity associated with moving a missing hand, what is happening in

Authors: Jonathon S Schofield, PhD;
Wilsaan M. Joiner, PhD



Participant with muscle activity being recorded.



Experimental equipment used for testing.

the brain when they attempt these movements? In the next article, we explore how brain imaging is helping us understand the neural foundations of these movements and how the brain's representation of a missing hand both mirrors and diverges from an intact limb.

This research is ongoing, and we look forward to sharing additional discoveries in the future. Keep an eye out for our current and upcoming scientific publications exploring the neuroscientific, clinical, and engineering aspects of this work. We are always interested in connecting with patients, families, clinicians, and others who share an interest in advancing prosthetic care. If you know of a patient who may be interested in participating in our research, or if you are interested in contributing to California-based prosthetics research, please scan the QR code to contact our team. We would be happy to discuss opportunities for collaboration and participation.





COPA Membership Benefits

COPA represents providers, distributors, and manufacturers dedicated to delivering high-quality orthotic and prosthetic (O&P) care throughout California. Through advocacy, education, and networking, COPA supports its members while advancing patient access to essential orthotic and prosthetic services.

COPA provides a platform for:

- A unified voice for O&P providers, manufacturers, and distributors across California
- Coordinated legislative, regulatory, and reimbursement advocacy efforts at the state level
- Networking opportunities with O&P business owners, clinicians, manufacturers, and distributors throughout California
- Annual educational symposium that offers CEUs, supports professional development, and promotes business growth and success

There is strength in numbers. Join COPA today and become part of the leading voice for California's O&P community.

1

LEGISLATIVE

- Monitor O&P policy and advocate for issues that impact O&P in CA
- Leading efforts to educate legislators about O&P and to improve access to quality care
- Collaborate with the American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association (AOPA) and other related organizations to support legislative initiatives that benefit O&P providers, suppliers, and patients
- Provide support, tools, and training to help members engage with their state representatives



2

EDUCATION

- Publish quarterly newsletter that features O&P industry challenges, current O&P business trends and what's ahead, clinical technology, best practices, and more.
- Annual Educational Symposium that offers pertinent lectures with continuing education units, research presentations, supplier/manufacturer exhibits, and networking opportunities with industry professionals
- Educational Roundtables or Fireside Chats that explore current issues facing O&P and other pertinent topics.



3

NETWORKING

- Happy Hour Events sponsored by COPA supplier members
- Looking for a resident? Meet college students & future practitioners at COPA networking events
- Opportunity to join a COPA Committee / collaborate with O&P leaders to positively change the CA O&P landscape
- Access the Member Directory to network, troubleshoot, and brainstorm with COPA members.



For more information about COPA or to join us, scan this QR code, call our Office 626.244.2696, or email admin@californiaoandp.com.