



The American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association

Almanac

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE ORTHOTICS & PROSTHETICS INDUSTRY



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In the News

AOPA Names Thomas F. Fise as New Executive Director

Thomas F. Fise, an attorney with extensive non-profit trade and professional management organization experience, has been named executive director of AOPA. Fise officially assumed his duties on February 20.

"I look forward to the great opportunity to serve AOPA and the field of O&P," said Fise.

Most recently, Fise was the owner and principal of an association management company focused on the management of non-profit medical specialty organizations. In that capacity he worked simultaneously as executive director of ten different physician organizations in the fields of cardiovascular surgery, general surgery and plastic surgery, as well as the executive director of the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG). While at ACG, Fise was instrumental in the creation and enactment of various Medicare benefits, including the colorectal screening benefit in 1997.

"Mr. Fise's extensive legislative and regulatory experience will be a tremendous advantage to AOPA members and the O&P community," said Ted Snell, CP, president of AOPA and member of the search committee, noting in particular Fise's direct experience with Congressional processes relating to CMS and the FDA while serving as regulatory counsel for the American Dental Trade Association.

Fise holds a J.D. degree from the University of Maryland and a Master of Laws degree from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He lives in Maryland with his wife, Mary Ellen, and has two sons.

Diabetes Research Breakthrough: Drug Cures Disease in Mice

Scientists studying diabetic mice found the animals were cured of the disease when injected with a drug that affects nerve cells in the pancreas. The results, though preliminary, have led the researchers to conclude that Type 1 diabetes is caused by defective sensory nerve cells and not immune cells, as previously thought. The finding could revolutionize diabetes research and treatment.

The research team was led by Hans Michael Dosch, M.D., and Michael Salter, M.D., at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. "We started to look at nervous system elements that seemed to play a role in Type 1 diabetes and found that specific sensory neurons are critical for islet immune attack in the pancreas," said Dosch. "These nerves secrete insufficient neuropeptides that sustain normal islet function, creating a vicious circle of progressive islet stress."

When injected with neuropeptide substance P, diabetic symptoms cleared in the mice within a day.

"We are now working hard to extend our studies to patients," said Dosch.

For more information, visit www.sickkids.ca/mediaroom/custom/diabetesopen06.asp.

AOPA and Academy Hold Evidence-Based Care Meeting

In February, a steering committee including representatives from both AOPA and the Academy held a meeting in Las Vegas to discuss evidence-based research.

The group agreed that its mission was to encourage and help O&P facilities conduct outcomes-based research. In order to do this, the group—which included professionals from universities, manufacturers, the associations

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THE POLLING PLACE

August Poll

Which O&P Almanac article in this month's issue was the most interesting?

- Reimbursement Page
- Cover Story
- Five Questions For...
- In the News

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and patient care facilities—determined five objectives: survey the status of existing research and establish the framework and research priorities; explore appropriate outcome measures and methodologies; identify appropriate funding sources; educate and support the O&P profession to accomplish this mission; and define and coordinate activities related to outcomes research. The group also agreed on the need for a primary investigator to guide and oversee all research.

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The group hopes to have all preparatory work finished and have funding in place by the end of 2007 before they turn the process over to a primary investigator and begin data collection in 2008. By 2009, the group plans to have the initial research submitted for publication.

Adhesive Inspired by Geckos

A new, reusable, ultra-strong synthetic adhesive, inspired by the microscopic hairs on a gecko's foot, could have myriad uses for the prosthetics industry. A recent article on CNN.com reported that researchers at BAE Systems have created layers comprising thousands of microscopic polyimide stalks with splayed tips, closely resembling the mushroom-headed hairs on a gecko's feet. The material is still in testing and not commercially available yet.

Dr. Sajad Haq, one of the leading researchers at the London-based advanced technology center, says that "a patch of the material one meter squared would hold the weight of a family-sized car. If it was scaled down it could easily hold the weight of a person."

The soles of a gecko's foot are patterned with millions of tiny hairs with split ends called setae. At the tip of each split is a mushroom-shaped cap less than one-thousandth of a millimeter across. As the gecko steps down, the molecular forces of attraction create the grip, while the peeling action of lifting the foot to take the next step breaks the bond.

Like the setae on a gecko's foot, the new "Synthetic Gecko" material only sticks when the angle of its microscopic hairs are at the correct angle to the surface beneath and when pressure is applied. The biggest advantage of this material over existing synthetic adhesives is that it can be re-used. It leaves behind no residue, nor is it sticky to the touch.

Scientists at BAE said that the next step will include research into the influence of surface roughness and water on the adhesive properties of the material.

BAE says the new material could eliminate the need for mechanical methods of bonding materials, like using rivets or screws, or more conventional glues.

For more information, visit www.baesystems.com.

CMS Urges Medicare Providers to Get NPI Now

Starting May 23, Medicare providers will be required to submit all claims to Medicare with a National Provider Identifier (NPI). In preparation for this deadline, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is urging all providers to begin the free application process as soon as possible so as not to disrupt cash flow at the time of the transition.

According to CMS' Web site, "Once you obtain your NPI, it is estimated that it will take 120 days to do the remaining work to use it. This includes working on your internal billing systems, coordinating with billing services, vendors, and clearinghouses, [and] testing with payers."

Implementation of the NPI is mandated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). It is meant to improve the security and efficiency of electronic health care transactions by eliminating the need for multiple provider identification numbers when dealing with more than one health plan.

For more information and to complete the application online, visit www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand.

Hike for the Hospital

A former patient of Shriners Hospital for Children is planning a hike of the full length of the Appalachian Trail to benefit the Shriners organization, which is funded entirely by donations and sponsorships.

Colby Young—born with proximal femoral focal deficiency and a recipient of the free services Shriners offers to children—was fitted with numerous prostheses that enabled him to walk, run and participate in sports as he grew. Young developed his love of hiking while studying abroad and has since spent time hiking on four continents.

Beginning in April, Young, now 23, will hike the over 2,100 miles across 14 eastern states that make up the Appalachian Trail "to illustrate the tremendous opportunity the Shriners Organization provides patients, and to demonstrate the positive impact of the Shriners' incredible philanthropy on disabled children," said Young.

For more information, visit www.shriners.com.

Three O&P-Specific Seminars on Medicare Claims

AOPA will host the second Coding & Billing seminar of the year April 10–11 at Bally's Las Vegas. Immediately following, on April 12, will be a Documentation seminar. Attendees can earn 21 continuing education (CE) credits for attending both seminars.

Also, on April 19, AOPA will be discussing "Hints on Minimizing Claims Denials" in a Medicare telephone seminar. An unlimited number of participants per telephone line can each earn 1.5 CE credits during the seminar.

For dates and topics of future Medicare telephone seminars, more information on coding and billing seminars, or to register, visit www.AOPAnet.org.

Amputee Cyclist Gears Up for World Trek

In an effort to raise funds for two O&P-related charities, cyclist Daniel Sheret, a trans-tibial amputee, will begin a 16,000-mile ride across four continents beginning June 1. The charities Sheret will be raising funds and awareness for are Clear Path International, a landmine-victim assistance group and the Rotary International Basra Prosthetic Project, a group working to endow a prosthetics program in Basra, Iraq.

Along the way, he will visit amputee clinics and support groups, including the Orthotic & Prosthetic Assistance Fund's (OPAF) First Ride Clinic, an adaptive cycling clinic for the disabled, on June 21.

Sheret's "Ability Trek" will begin in San Francisco. Fellow riders, disabled or not, are invited to join Sheret on the American portion of the ride, which will be broken down into five segments lasting from one to two weeks. Each participant is required to raise a minimum of \$750 for each leg of the trek that they ride, with the funds going to benefit Clear Path and Rotary International.

"My goal is to create a global awareness of the situations thousands of fellow amputees find themselves in each day and of the great work, never reported, that dedicated professionals and volunteers do to create a better life for so many forgotten by their own cultures," said Sheret on the Ability Trek Web site.

For more information about the event, visit www.abilitytrek.org.

OSU-Okmulgee Launches O&P Academy, Revamps Existing Program

Oklahoma State University-Okmulgee recently announced through its Web site that it will hold an inaugural Summer O&P Academy this June, and will also unveil changes to its existing O&P program designed to "provide students with multiple skill sets, a technical base and the added benefit of fitting and pedorthic skills," says Program Director Keith Crownover, CPO.

The June 5-7, 2007 O&P program was conceived as a way to attract potential O&P students from other states and fields to OSU-Okmulgee's O&P program. The program will be geared toward high school students and has an application deadline of April 1. Participants will get the chance to meet with O&P professionals as well as experience first-hand the types of duties they would perform in the field.

"We are proud of our facilities, equipment, faculty, and the support staff who have been allocated to support this program. We will produce high-performance technicians and they will get jobs," said Jerry Wilson Health and Environmental Technologies Division chair.

OSU-Okmulgee's current O&P program will be updated, according to Crownover, to accommodate a more multi-disciplinary approach. "The need for educated, competent, qualified prosthetic and orthotic professionals is great. Our revised program prepares our graduates to function as technicians, orthotic fitters and pedorthists, thus meeting the needs of O&P practices nationwide."

For more information on the summer academy and OSU-Okmulgee's program, visit www.osu-okmulgee.edu/academics/health_and_environmental/orthotics_and_prosthetics.

Some Prosthetic Feet Stress Sound Limb

Researchers at Northwestern University recently completed a study on the effect of roll-over shape arc length on the gait of unilateral, trans-tibial prosthetic users.

They found that a shortened anterior lever arm (represented by a shorter arc length of the foot's roll-over shape) leads to a drop-off effect, causing both increased loads and a shorter step length on the sound limb during normal and fast walking. The results of this study explain why increased sound-side loads have been documented for certain feet compared with others.

The study, led by Dr. Andrew H. Hansen, research assistant professor at Northwestern University's department of physical medicine and rehabilitation, made use of the Shape & Roll foot. Researchers chose the foot because of its ability to shorten its foot length ratio with minor alterations while other variables, such as heel stiffness, mid-foot stiffness and foot weight, remained fixed.

The Shape & Roll foot was developed to be a cheap, highly functional prosthetic foot intended for use in low-income countries. Development was funded through the Center for International Rehabilitation.

The study was published in the Prosthetics and Orthotics International Journal, an online publication from the International Society of Prosthetists and Orthotists, online at www.ispo.ws.

Vintage O&P Periodical Now Available Online

A periodical magazine published 33 times between 1954 and 1972, Artificial Limbs: A Review of Current Developments

is currently available online, thanks to the efforts

of Charles King, CP, and Jon Shinn of the Digital Resource Foundation for the Orthotic and Prosthetic Community.

Visitors to the site can view the magazine in text only or full color PDF formats, and more publications are currently being scanned to be available online.

"Knowledge is the foundation of any profession; in health care disciplines, immediate access to useful information is a powerful engine that can drive the quality of patient care to ever higher levels," said John W. Michael, CPO, FAAOP, who assisted with this publication's digitization.

Organizers of the project are seeking donations to help make more materials available online.

For more information or to donate, visit www.oandplibrary.org/al.

Transitions

People in the News

John Register is the recipient of the 2007 Paul G. Hearne Award, a leadership award given by the **American Association of People with Disabilities** (AAPD).

Register is a veteran of the Gulf War who lost a leg while training for the 1996 Olympics as a gymnast. He is a silver-medal winner of the Paralympic Games and founder of the U.S. Olympic Committee's Paralympic Military Program. He also serves as a member of the State Department's Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities.

Register will receive \$10,000 to further his work in the Disability community.

Louis Wolf and Jessica Ciacco, volunteers with the **Amputee Coalition of America** (ACA), recently received awards at the ACA holiday party in Washington, D.C. for their efforts.

Lance Hoag, CO, has joined the staff at **Asheville Orthotic Prosthetic Center**, based in Asheville, N.C. Previously, Hoag served as director of orthotics at the Duke University Medical Center.

William R. Floyd has been appointed chairman and CEO of **Benchmark Medical**, an outpatient physical rehabilitation center with an orthotics and prosthetics division. Floyd previously served as CEO of Beverly Enterprises.

Steve Sherman has been promoted from key account manager to national sales manager at **Freedom Innovations**, based in Irvine, Calif. Sherman previously worked for Wright & Filippis Inc., Ossur North America and Seattle Systems.

Rowan English is the new senior lecturer and head of the **National Centre for Prosthetics and Orthotics** at La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia.

Yuan-Cheng "Bert" Fung, professor emeritus at the University of California San Diego, is the recipient of the 2007 Fritz J. and Dolores H. Russ Prize, given by **Ohio University** and the National Academy of Engineering. The \$500,000 award recognizes engineering achievements that significantly improve the human condition.

Fung, known as the "father of modern biomechanics," is responsible for research that led to the development of artificial skin as well as advances in the effectiveness and longevity of prosthetic and orthopedic devices.

Ronelle Peterson is the new director of marketing at **PEL Supply** of Cleveland. She is in charge of marketing the company's catalogs, newsletters, product flyers and Web site.

Jackie L. Carver, CPO, has joined **The Prosthetic Center** of Houston as the senior prosthetist/orthotist.

Dr. Jan Ertl has joined the orthopedic surgery department at **Sutter Medical Center** in Sacramento, Calif.

Business in the News

The **Amputee Coalition of America (ACA)** has launched an online library of information pertaining to limb loss. Full-text articles, research abstracts, training videos and other online resources are available at www.amputee-coalition.org/catalog.

The **Board for Orthotist/Prosthetist Certification** recently announced a new cross-certification program offered to certified pedorthists to gain a new "BOCPed" credential. The BOCPed designation replaces the formerly announced "BOC A.Ped" designation.

Desert Prosthetics and Orthotics Groups has opened its third California location in Indio. The company also has offices in Cathedral City and Yucca Valley.

Ford Motor Company has signed on as transportation sponsor of the second annual **O&P Extremity Games**, to be held July 19–21 in Orlando. The Ford Mobility Motoring program will provide shuttle vans for athletes, staff, spectators and volunteers during the extreme amateur sporting competition for those living with limb loss or limb

difference.

Ohio Willow Wood has settled its patent infringement complaint filed on Feb. 10, 2006 against **Fillauer Companies Inc.**

regarding the intellectual property rights to prosthetic liner, sleeve, suspension and lock products. In a statement released by Ohio Willow Wood, both parties crafted a licensing agreement that will allow Fillauer to continue the sale of its products. Ohio Willow Wood still has pending litigation against **Alps South Corporation** and **DAW Industries Inc.**

The **Orthotic and Prosthetic Assistance Fund (OPAF)** has reached an agreement with www.goodsearch.com that allows those who use the search engine to raise money for OPAF. Visitors to the site can enter "OPAF" as their designated charity and then, with every search, 50 percent of the money generated by advertisers will be donated to the organization.

Ossur has acquired the **Gibaud Group**, based in France, for roughly \$132 million. Gibaud's main product lines are braces and compression therapy products.

OTS Corporation, based in Weaverville, N.C., recently donated \$5,000 in orthotic components to Mercy Ships, a medical charity that provides services to underprivileged patients.

The Regaladores Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club of Corpus Christi, Texas recently held its fourth annual "Bikers for Boobs" event to benefit the American Cancer Society and the Christus Spohn Cancer Center. Both groups received checks for \$11,500 to be used for breast prosthesis and breast care programs.

In Memoriam

Anthony Filippis Sr., founder of Wright & Filippis Inc. and advocate for the disabled, died in Jan. at the age of 91.

Born in Detroit, Filippis was 13 when a train accident caused him to lose both legs below the knee. After serving as an apprentice for Carl Wright—the man who made Filippis' first prostheses—the two formed their own company, Wright & Filippis, which went on to become Michigan's largest provider of home health care products and services. The company now has more than 30 facilities throughout Michigan and the Midwest.

Filippis received numerous accolades during his 75-year career devoted to O&P, including Lifetime Achievement awards from AOPA (1995), the Arthritis Foundation and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. He was an active sports enthusiast and founded the Athletes with Disabilities Hall of Fame in 1999.

Survivors include his wife Frances; daughter Nancy Hakala; son Anthony J. Filippis, the current president and chief executive of Wright & Filippis; 14 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

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