Study Shows PEL Delivers Best Overall Value, Service and Website . . . page 4

The Importance of Physician Documentation . . page 6

Össur® announces launch of Women’s Leadership Initiative . . . page 8
Laying it on the line

In less than two weeks, we return to another Policy Forum (March 23-25). This year we go not just to explain the value of the work we do as prosthetists and orthotists and pedorthists, we take with us data collected via the Freedom of Information Act that paints a picture of preferential treatment to the largest of the publicly traded O&P providers, unequal treatment that goes beyond the percentage of RAC audits, and an unequal percentage of cases waiting at the ALJ level.

A review of the data shows an extraordinary difference in the dollars recouped from one company versus all other companies. It’s hard to understand that all inquiries about this issue have come back with the same answer, we can find no errors in your data but we have no answer as to why the problem exists.

So we have made appointments with all the right people hoping to find people who will work toward our goal:

An even playing field for all providers and an Elmer’s Bill that will not create a two-class system of providers based on very flawed data coming out of an audit system that is flawed at best.

We will share our visits with you and our follow-up communications and we will ask each of you to take action.

Our next publication will share the names and the faces of the OPGA members and staff carrying the message.

For those who are attending the policy forum I know you will have given your best, if we can help please let us know, we will share the message and how it was received.

WE carry your message to "The Hill."

Thank you Sara Beck, our nation’s capital will shine in your light.

Dennis E. Clark, CPO, President, OPGA
Your Independent Partner in the Fight of Our Professional Lives
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2014 Study Reveals PEL Delivers Best Overall Value, Service & Website

A recently conducted independent study of O&P practitioners documents the importance of overall value delivered by O&P distributors, and the strength of PEL in delivering greater value.

O&P practitioners validated the saying “time is money” and the point-of-view made by Michael Porter in his article What Is Value In Health Care, with their responses.

According to Porter “Value depends on results, not inputs, value in healthcare is measured by outcomes achieved. . . . Since value is defined as outcomes relative to costs, it encompasses efficiency. Cost reduction without regard to the outcome achieved is dangerous and self-defeating, leading to false ‘savings’ and potentially limiting effective care.”

The study’s statistically significant results, reveals not only the importance of value received for service and price, but also the importance of efficiency in saving precious time for practitioner and patient. As the chart below shows, PEL performance ratings were significantly better than other distributors on these important dimensions.

**Distributor Performance Rating**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Distributor A</th>
<th>Distributor B</th>
<th>PEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orders are fulfilled accurately</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives always return my call</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the greatest overall value of service and price</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive service when trying to contact my O&amp;P distributor</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to find exactly what I need on distributor’s website</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributor website is easy to navigate</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to order what I need from distributor’s website</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributor’s website interfaces with my computer system</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Importance Of Distributor Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Distributor A</th>
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<td>114</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Distributor’s website interfaces with my computer system</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the study, service included order accuracy, responsiveness, friendly service supplier representatives, etc. The website dimension rated easy to navigate website, easy to find exactly what I need on distributor’s website, and ease of ordering from the site. The charts below show the relative importance of services as well as how the major O&P distributors compare.

“The results of this independent study confirms the continuation of PEL’s historic strength in providing the best value and service to O&P practitioners. We are especially pleased by the high scores PEL received on its redesigned website,” said PEL CEO Mike Sotak. “We are continuing to look for new and innovative ways to make our personal and online support for O&P practitioners easier and more efficient.”

PEL is a leading distributor of orthotic and prosthetic components to the O&P industry. PEL, LLC is headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio.

We'll help you find the answer.

You have a life to put back together. We have the products and the knowledge to help you do it. Learn more at pelsupply.com.
The Importance of Physician Documentation to the O&P Practitioner

I recently had the pleasure of attending the O & P Academy Show in New Orleans and may I say, what a great event! As an exhibitor – on behalf of vHG and partnering with OPGA – I always enjoy walking the exhibit hall floor to get a glimpse in the newest technologies. Even better, I enjoy that I had the privilege to interact with so many in the industry, from students to long standing practitioners. And while I took away many things from this meeting, there is one thing that I found to be a common thought. One that, quite honestly, scared me. What is it? The idea that the current situation in regards to audits has been very quiet and, as a result, has left many to nearly forget that audits exist in this industry. That fact, however, could not be farther from the truth.

Consider that the national RAC contract was awarded in December and then protested in January. A decision will be reached in April 2015 as to whether the contested contract goes to Connelly, and if so, the audits on lower limb prosthetics, knee orthoses and AFO/KAFOs will easily be implemented. Why? CMS approved this equipment for audit during the previous RAC contracts. Prior approval for audit by CMS means the new, national RAC can transition these items into their audit workload right away.

So what does this mean to you? O & P practitioners are effectively experiencing the ‘eye of the storm’ in terms of the RAC audits. Preparing your files to be audited is your best defense. And while the practitioner has control over their own records, the documentation that is provided by the physician is heavily scrutinized by auditors to ensure medical necessity and coverage by Medicare is justified. Below I have provided answers to the common physician questions as well as references for you to use when educating your physicians on the importance of their role in the documentation process.

Why do you need me to document?

For any DMEPOS item to be covered by Medicare, the patient’s medical record must contain sufficient documentation of the patient’s medical condition to substantiate the necessity for the type and quantity of items ordered and for the frequency of use or replacement (if applicable)...neither a physician’s order nor a CMN . . . nor a supplier prepared statement nor a physician attestation by itself provides sufficient documentation of medical necessity, even though it is signed by the treating physician or supplier. There must be information in the patient’s medical record that supports the medical necessity for the item and substantiates the answers on the CMN...or information on a supplier prepared statement or physician attestation (if applicable). [PIM Chapter 5, Section 5.7]

Says who?

Title XVIII Section 1842(p)(4): In the case of an item or service defined in paragraph (3), (6), (8), or (9) of subsection 1861(s) ordered by a physician or a practitioner specified in subsection (b)(18)(C), but furnished by another entity, if the Secretary (or fiscal agent of the Secretary) requires the entity furnishing the item or service to provide diagnostic or other medical information in order for payment to be made to the entity, the physician or practitioner shall provide that information to the entity at the time that the item or service is ordered by the physician or practitioner.

What are the consequences to me if I don’t?

42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 424.535:

A referring/ordering physician’s failure to provide the above required documentation may result in the revocation of enrollment and billing privileges in the Medicare program:

a) Reasons for revocation. CMS may revoke a currently enrolled provider or supplier’s Medicare billing privileges and any corresponding provider agreement or supplier agreement for the following reasons:

10) Failure to document or provide CMS access to documentation. (i) The provider or supplier (as described in section 1866(j) of the Act) did not comply with the documentation or CMS access requirements specified in §424.516(f) of this subpart.

The other guys don’t make me do this, why are you?

It is ours, and your, legal obligation to comply with Medicare rules and regulations. In an environment of strict regulatory oversight we work hard to be compliant in our business practices. The other suppliers that are not collecting documentation from you may not be in compliance.
On March 15, 2013, Section 3.3.2.1.1(C) of the Program Integrity Manual was amended to state that “physicians/LCMPs [licensed/certified medical professionals] who fail to submit documentation upon a supplier’s request may trigger increased MAC or RAC review of the physician/LCMP’s evaluation and management services.”

Can you make it easier on me?

CMS also amended Section 3.3.2.1.1(B), probably in an effort to prepare for the use of eMR. The amended section states “CMS does not prohibit the use of templates to facilitate record-keeping.” The PIM goes on to define a template as a “tool/instrument that assists in documenting a progress note.”

Based on the above, a physician may use a template or form when documenting the need for the durable medical equipment. To be clear, templates cannot merely contain check boxes, predefined answers, or have limited space to enter information. These types of templates often fail to capture sufficient detailed clinical information to demonstrate that all coverage and coding requirements are met. There must be sufficient space for free form information specific to the patient. A supplier generated form is not considered to be part of the medical record and is only used to gather information. However, a physician may create a form that is used when ordering prosthetics/orthotics. Physicians who use templates must make them the default method of documentation for prosthetics/orthotics. This means that the form must be completed for use on all patients in which the physician prescribes prosthetics/orthotics, not just when prescribing for one supplier.

What does my documentation need me to say?

Many of the prosthetics/orthotics that you prescribe have local coverage determinations (LCDs) that contain the criteria for coverage. The criteria listed in the Coverage Indications, Limitations, and/or Medical Necessity section of the LCD is what must be supported in your notes. You can access the LCDs from the respective DME MAC Jurisdiction’s website. In relation to lower limb prostheses, the patient’s medical records should define their physical and cognitive capabilities. The physician should also include a description of the patient’s current functional abilities as well as their expected functional potential.

Is there an easier way?

Working with a physical therapist or physiatrist is a win-win for everyone. Here’s how it works. The ordering physician can write an order for a functional assessment to be conducted, and once completed, can review the evaluation and sign/date that he/she concurs with evaluation. The result is that the patient gets a better functional assessment than that of what the ordering physician would perform which means the documentation substantiates the need for the prosthesis. In addition, the PT or MD gets to bill for functional assessment, so that is money in their pocket AND the ordering physician is ‘off-the-hook’ when it comes to appropriately documenting for the equipment.

The bottom line is that if you are waiting for the RAC to audit you, you are already too late and may not avoid paying money back to Medicare. Obtaining the appropriate documentation prior to billing, or as quickly as possible, is your only defense. Neither the DME MAC, nor the Part B MAC, is contracted to educate physicians on DMEPOS documentation requirements. This means that the burden to educate physicians on the documentation you need for your patients to meet Medicare guidelines is on you the practitioner. Work with your referral sources to understand the significance of their documentation in relation to the equipment they refer for you to provide and convey to them their role in the audit process.
ÖSSUR announces launch of Women's Leadership Initiative

The O&P profession has been changing and evolving at a dramatic pace in recent years. While focus has primarily been on reimbursement changes, audits, and acquisitions, another change has been quietly occurring. In 1994, 137 female practitioners were registered with ABC (10 percent of registrants).

By 2014, that number had risen 748 percent to 1163 (20 percent of registrants). In addition, of all the students currently enrolled in O&P graduate programs, 52 percent are female. This is an exciting influx of new talent into the field, however, a recent survey has shown that the industry is not currently addressing the needs of this new segment of practitioners and could do much more to support and retain what will soon be over half of our work force.

In August 2014, Össur hosted an anonymous survey of female orthotists and prosthetists to uncover their view of the state of the industry and where, and if, they needed support. Findings showed:

- 93 percent agree the O&P industry needs more women in leadership roles
- 56 percent feel the O&P industry does not encourage gender fairness in the workplace
- 80 percent are interested in being a member of an organization for female O&P practitioners
- 83 percent are interested in one or more forms of leadership development (speakers, book clubs, blog emails, webinars, etc.)
- 50 percent say their organization does not reward leadership
- 50 percent say their organization does not offer adequate benefits such as paid maternity leave
- Only 35 percent say they have leadership development opportunities readily available to them

Recently, at two separate round table meetings of female practitioners, women agreed the issues they say are in most need of attention are:

1. Equal recognition. Female practitioners say their male counterparts are being recognized more for the same-level accomplishments, being promoted sooner, and being given more high-profile tasks. In turn, female practitioners are more frequently given lower-level opportunities and “housekeeping” tasks (organizing the office Christmas party, etc.), and their accomplishments often go unrecognized. Women said they would appreciate more education on conscious and unconscious gender biases to help leaders view and recognize all employees equally and to encourage more women to enter into leadership roles.

2. Lack of patient respect. The majority of female practitioners currently in the field are under the age of 40, with many under 30. They find that even though they have education as high as a master’s degree, patients often think they are the assistant and expect a male to be the actual practitioner. Some have even gone as far as to buy a pair of glasses which give the impression of higher intelligence. Women would like education on how to communicate with authority and have a more commanding presence.

3. Safety in the workplace. Little to no studies have been done on the safety of chemicals in use in the O&P environment. Are these fumes safe for anyone in small doses over long periods of time, in large doses in short periods of time? Are they harmful to a pregnant practitioner? These unknowns are concerning to women in the field and they would like more research.

4. Strength differences. In general, men tend to have greater muscle mass which gives them a strength advantage with such tasks as loosening screws and bolts. Men also tend to have larger hands which help in casting large patients. Though nearly all the women who attended the discussions said they had no problem asking for help when they needed it (and many even said they wouldn’t work at a clinic where coworkers thought this was a problem), they said they would definitely appreciate education on tips and tricks to make tasks easier. As one practitioner said, “It’s not how strong you are, it’s the tricks you use.”

5. Paid Maternity Leave. Though some states have mandated paid maternity leave and most large O&P groups already have a policy in place, paid maternity leave is still non-existent in many small practices. Female practitioners also say they have been discriminated against when applying for jobs simply because “one day they might get pregnant and need maternity leave.” Participants said they would appreciate education for the entire industry on how to set appropriate maternity leave policies and why it makes economic sense to do so.

So, how does the O&P profession as a whole address these issues and prepare to attract and retain the strongest talent in the future?
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For all

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We’ve developed the Pre-Screen Review Program for OPGA Members. Our team of clinical regulatory experts will:

- Perform pre-screen review of files
- Identify corrective actions (if needed)
- Educate and train staff
- Advise when documentation is sufficient
- We will review your first five files for $199 (a $500 value)

We cannot guarantee payment, but we will appeal any medical necessity denials at no cost to you.

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Rest assured that we have the answer for you. Let’s team together to prevent invasive audits.
Introducing the Fusion™ OA Plus family of knee braces

In order to meet the varied needs of your osteoarthritis (OA) patients, Fusion OA Plus braces are designed for mild, moderate and severe OA. All Fusion OA Plus braces include AirTech® padding for enhanced breathability and suspension. Redesigned strap tabs provide a customized fit for every leg shape.

The low profile design helps your patient go from one activity to another with comfort and confidence. The slim thumbwheel hinge makes offloading adjustments easy, without the need for a tool.

Learn about all Fusion OA Plus knee braces. Go to Breg.com/FusionOAPlus or call 800-321-0607
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The new FreeRunner from Breg. Ultimate support when patients need it. Freedom when they don't. True dynamic patellofemoral stabilization is realized by relaxing at full flexion, and then progressively compressing to form a soft tissue lateral wall at terminal extension. This proprietary difference assists patella tracking through the normal range of motion. So they can experience a dynamic return to activity without anything getting in their way. And that's the name of the game.

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IT’S DIFFERENT. IT’S DYNAMIC. IT’S FREEDOM.
The International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics created a tour as an educational and cultural growth mission with orthotic and prosthetic professionals of Cuba. The purpose of the tour was to explore Cuban health care methods and policies. The tour included visits to the largest fabrication facility in Cuba, the Centro Nacional de Ortopedia Tecnica, as well as two of the larger hospitals in Havana.

Rehab Systems and Coyote Design & Manufacturing, both Boise-based orthotic and prosthetic companies owned by father and son amputees Matt and Dale Perkins, attended the tour of the Cuban orthotic and prosthetic industry in Havana, Cuba. They also brought Dale’s oldest son Mike, a recent U.S. Army retiree, as a Spanish interpreter.

Low-tech, high-function design is something Coyote Design and Rehab Systems have used in their products for many years. Their goal now is to consider ways to provide such products at a lower cost to patients here and across the world.

“Visiting Cuba was a great opportunity to see how an area with much fewer funds than the U.S. functions. There is a lot of technology coming to our profession; however, there does not seem to be additional funding for the amputees themselves,” Dale said. “If anything, payers are working hard to pay less. In many cases amputees are ending up with coverage plans that include little to no prosthetic coverage. Finding ways to help those without funds obtain the highest tech and newest devices has long been an interest of ours, both as a patient care provider and a manufacturer.”

Matt said, “Ideally all amputees everywhere should have access to the best possible options, however that is not realistic. Creating extremely high functioning prosthetics using less expensive and lower tech methods has been an interest to us, and we plan to work on more development in this area. Even in our country there are a lot of people lacking the funds for the newest and or best. We would like to develop methods that apply to folks with limited funds in this country and throughout the world.”

The trip to Cuba was of particular interest to Matt and Dale, considering the lack of access the country has had to even some of the most basic products because of the embargo. “It will be interesting to see how access will change and how they will function since, regardless of changes to access, funding is not likely to increase dramatically,” Dale said.

Health care in Cuba is provided to all citizens at no cost, however, a prosthetic device does have a fee attached. An artificial leg for a below the knee amputee costs an amputee four Cuban dollars. This is very low when compared to U.S. costs, as the government subsidizes much of the expense. The Perkins’ presume the nominal expense is to ensure the amputee is a vested consumer of the product. Dale said, “Since they are required to shell out some money, maybe the assumption is that patients will take better care of the device.” Four dollars may not sound like too much, but it is more than 25% of the typical monthly salary of the average Cuban.

“It was enjoyable to share information with others on the tour and in the Cuban facility,” Matt explained. As amputees themselves, Dale and Matt
were able to show Cuban practitioners some of the unique ideas
they have worked on to improve their own prosthetics. “We had
a lengthy conversation with one particular Cuban professional,
Dennis, who was working on a set of bilateral prosthetics for a
congenital amputee born with Fibular Hemimelia (born without
fibulas).” This, Matt explained, is the same birth defect Dale was
born with. The case was of special interest to Dale and Matt
since both of them are congenital amputees. The two, however,
were born with entirely different birth defects, an incident that
is very rare. At the time of Matt’s birth, it was believed that he
was the only amputee with Proximal Femoral Focal Deficiency
(short femur) who was born to a father with Fibular Hemimelia.

Both types of congenital defects still cause professionals
considerable struggle in the U.S., and in less developed areas,
such as Cuba, the challenge is much greater. The Perkins’ hope
to limit that struggle in the future.

Coyote Design is a manufacturing company that designs
products for the orthotic/prosthetic industry throughout the U.S.
and in 13 countries. It was formed nearly 16 years ago under
its now-sister company, Rehab Systems, a patient care facility
with locations in Boise and Twin Falls. At the time, there were
some limitations to products that were being used in the patient
care, and work began on developing specific products for

Rehab Systems founder and amputee Dale Perkins. Eventually
Coyote Design was created as a separate company.

Dale Perkins visits with clinicians in a
Cuban health care facility (above).

OPGA WILL BE EXHIBITING AT THESE UPCOMING MEETINGS

We invite you to stop by our table and say hello!

March 27-28  Ohio American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists
April 9-11   Texas Association of Orthotists & Prosthetists
April 18     Iowa Prosthetic, Orthotic, and Pedorthic Association
May 14-16    Western and Midwestern Orthotic & Prosthetic Association
May 28-30    Louisiana Association of Orthotists and Prosthetists (Dennis Clark speaking)
May 27-29    Midwest Chapter AAOP Annual Meeting
July 16-18   Alabama Prosthetic & Orthotic Association
OPGA announces new partnership with Comfort Products, Inc.

Comfort Products is the leading innovator for knitted orthotic and prosthetic products in the U.S., and is the oldest manufacturer of prosthetic socks and prosthetic shrinkers in the country. Comfort was the first company to use X-Static® yarn in the U.S. and has been issued several patents for innovations in O&P products, along with its line of diabetic socks. Comfort Products, Inc. is committed to providing the best knitted products with the latest innovations and highest quality for wearers of orthotic and prosthetic devices.

Comfort Products is also the U.S. distributor for Bauerfeind modular components. Bauerfeind has become known as the future-oriented supplier of prosthetic devices and a highly specialized partner for the prosthetic and orthotic profession. Bauerfeind specializes in lower extremity prosthetics and works closely with patient care facilities, surgeons, and research specialists to develop the highest quality products available on the market today. These same products enable amputees to increase their mobility and enhance the quality of their lives.

Representing over 1,200 independent O&P facilities nationwide, OPGA provides a comprehensive array of innovative business services that improve productivity, proficiency and profits for both members and suppliers in the network. These services include managed care access, cutting-edge education, regulatory and compliance programs, competitive rates on liability and property insurance, graphic design and print marketing, website development and hosting, and other marketing needs.

For more information, visit OPGA.com or comfortoandp.com.

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Love means never having to say your information has been compromised

Keeping Patient Information Secure on the Web

Being vigilant about security is no longer an option. Ask Anthem, the second largest health insurance provider in the U.S., who recently revealed that possibly 80 million of their present and former customers’ records have been compromised. As a Web provider working with health care businesses every day, we have seen the increase in cyber-attacks along with the increased digitization of medical records and cloud-based record holding.

In orthotic and prosthetic websites such as yours, the Web-based billing systems and online payments and patient satisfaction surveys are most at risk. If your business is using any of these patient management options online, do not fear. It simply means your security systems need to evolve. Fortunately, VGM Forbin has developed a system to enhance your website’s security: the VGuard™ Intrusion Penetration System.

VGuard: The Basics

VGuard is an intrusion prevention system, or IPS. Put simply, it protects network vulnerabilities and unpatched security systems from attacks, both known and unknown. It has a database of thousands of cyber-attacks based on signatures that it uses to recognize threats to your online security. VGuard also uses what is called “anomaly-based detection.” This means that even if the threat signature isn’t in its database, VGuard can still recognize and block threats based on anomalies and differences in code.

Annual Security Audits

VGuard protection also comes with annual security audits conducted in house by a Forbin security administrator. These audits include:

- Penetration testing
- Vulnerability scanning
- IP lockdown verification

These annual security audits ensure VGuard and other security measures are in place and operating as they should.

Third Party Validation

CDW, a leading nationwide technology company, audits Forbin’s security policies and controls annually. Thorough testing ensures the technology and personnel involved with VGuard are operating with the highest integrity.

Security is not a commodity, but a business asset and a must for businesses operating today. Just because you haven’t been attacked, doesn’t mean it can’t and won’t happen. Why take the risk?

VGuard ensures your data and the data of your patients stays protected and out of reach of cyber criminals, giving you greater peace of mind. Get in touch with us today to learn more about VGuard and how it can help your business stay secure.

Forbin.com/services/orthotics-prosthetics

DIA-FOOT and DavMar Shoes now fully integrated

With its acquisition of DavMar, Dia-Foot now offers more PDAC-approved diabetic shoes than any other company. The main catalog offers over 375 styles and colors from 12 manufacturers. The price point catalog offers over 185 styles and colors from seven different manufacturers. We offer athletic shoes from New Balance and Brooks. We offer casual shoes from Hush Puppies, Nature Stride, Rockport, Sebago, Dunham, Aravon and Orthofeet.

Dia-Foot manufactures the A5512 pre-fab diabetic inserts and the A5513 custom diabetic inserts. Our standard custom insert is a tri-lam design. We accept foam box impressions or plaster casts to produce the custom inserts.

Dia-Foot also manufactures the Pure Stride line of foot care products. All our products are sold only by medical professionals. Pre-fab orthotics, gel foot pads, comfort insoles and diabetic socks are just some of the products we manufacture.

As an OPGA member, your facility will enjoy significant savings when you order from Dia-Foot. You can place orders by phone, fax or right on our website www.dia-foot.com. If you are interested in opening an account or receiving our catalog please, call 877-405-3668 or visit us on our website.
The Next Best Thing in Online Security

As an orthotic and prosthetic provider, is there anything better than knowing your patient’s information is secure? With VGuard from VGM Forbin, your web-based systems are secure from threats both known and unknown.

- Stop Network Intruders
- Enterprise-Wide Security
- Threat Detection and Prevention
- Security Auditing
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VGM Insurance Quarter Century of Caring

campaign partners with OPGA Members to give back

VGM Insurance will celebrate 25 years of serving the Orthotic and Prosthetic industry by giving back to OPGA Members and the communities they serve.

The Quarter Century of Caring Campaign is a way of thanking members for the good they do for their communities.

During each month from March to December, VGM Insurance will award $1,000 to two or three insurance customers or OPGA Members who provide the most compelling nominations of a local charity.

Twenty-five prizes of $1,000 will be awarded throughout the year and donated by the winning providers.

“We’ve made it easy for OPGA Members to participate and make their case for donating to their local charities,” said Mike Kloos, president of VGM Insurance. “This is an exciting opportunity to partner together for a good cause and a great way to celebrate 25 years of protecting and supporting our customers.”

OPGA Members can nominate their local charities by filling out the entry form on the VGM Insurance Web page, www.vgminsurance.com/25years. They may support their nomination with photos or a video.

Each business may nominate one charity each month throughout the year.

“We’re really excited to celebrate 25 years of VGM Insurance,” commented Dennis Clark, “VGM Insurance is an OPGA-affiliated company and is the endorsed insurance partner for OPGA members. The VGM Insurance O&P Program was developed 25 years ago with the specialized needs of O&P providers in mind to help them protect what matters most - their businesses and their livelihoods.”

Visit vgminsurance.com/25years to learn more and submit an entry.

Össur continued from page 8

Össur believes the answer is in education and increasing the number of women leaders; hence, Össur has created the Össur Women’s Leadership Initiative. This initiative provides a forum for discussion and education and includes a dedicated blog, quarterly educational webinars, and nationally recognized speakers at industry meetings. As a result, Össur hopes to increase the volume of female leadership within the O&P industry, encourage fairness and equality in the workplace of O&P, eliminate conscious or unconscious gender biases in the workplace, and create a positive, balanced perception of both male and female industry leaders.

“We at Össur recognized the importance of providing dedicated resources to help encourage more women to join the profession, and to marshal their growing influence in the field,” said Kim De Roy, CPO/PT, Össur’s vice president of sales and marketing and education, prosthetics.

“As a company, Össur truly advocates for the concept of ‘Life Without Limitations’, working with individuals, clinicians and diverse communities to support a better quality of life for millions of people around the world. We champion the principle of inclusiveness, whether that’s in the context of physical ability, gender or ethnicity, and we’re taking that commitment to the next level with this new effort,” De Roy said.

All members of the O&P community (male, female, pedorthists, mastectomy fitters, students, etc.) are encouraged to participate by registering at www.Ossur.com/OWLI. Additionally, speakers at national events will present on leadership and industry topics applicable to both genders. There is no cost to register or participate.

As with audits, it only makes economic sense to be prepared for changes in the industry. With targeted education, and as women assume an equitable percentage of leadership roles in the industry, the O&P profession will be stronger and able to attract and retain the highest level of talent.

“Enjoying success requires the ability to adapt. Only by being open to change will you have a true opportunity to get the most from your talent.”

Nolan Ryan, MLB player
Are you passionate about helping those in need?

Partner with us to donate $1,000 to a charity of your choice!

As part of the VGM Insurance Services’ 25th Anniversary celebration, we’re giving away $25,000 in 2015 and giving OPGA Members the chance to make a difference in their communities!

Visit www.vgminsurance.com/25years to learn more and nominate your charity today!

25 YEARS... 25 WINNERS... $25,000!
AFO replacement to optimize gait rehabilitation

All too often physical therapists will be asked to provide rehabilitation services for a patient with foot drop. The purpose of the therapy is to improve gait. Unfortunately, the patient may have been initially fitted with a solid ankle AFO, leaf spring AFO, or articulating AFO, none of which is the optimal orthotic choice to maximize gait training because the patient is unable to volitionally utilize the affected side ankle/foot in the previously dispensed device. What is a practitioner to do?

So many times patients we see with an initial referral for an AFO post-stroke have ankle instability due to the initial phase of stroke recovery, partial paralysis. We know that patient’s condition may improve, but for the moment, ankle stability must prevail over the possibility of improved stability over time and a more rehabilitation-friendly AFO choice. The problem is that several months to a year or more later, many patients have significantly improved ankle stability, and a more dynamic AFO may be the best choice to optimize gait improvement. Can we get a new order for a replacement AFO and get paid for it? How is this done?

Medicare and most insurance carriers have a useful lifetime of five years for a prefabricated or custom fabricated AFO. ANY replacement orthotic must be covered under Medicare’s replacement orthotic policies. Medicare Part B will cover a REPLACEMENT AFO (device replaced within the useful lifetime period) if ANY of the following is documented:

1. If there is a significant change in medical condition (better or worse)
2. If the orthotic device is lost
3. If the AFO is damaged beyond repair (Medicare will not cover a device that is worn out).

Patients wearing a solid ankle AFO or other AFO type that is NOT the ideal AFO at the time of the secondary therapy services for gait rehabilitation will most likely qualify for a replacement AFO. The orthotist will require documentation from the referring therapist that the patient’s condition has changed significantly from the date the initial AFO was provided, and that the existing AFO is preventing the patient from potential gait rehabilitation by restricting ankle movement. The therapist notes should further state that a dynamic gait assisting AFO would be more appropriate given the current patient condition and rehab potential. This would be considered a change in medical condition and an order for a REPLACEMENT AFO should be covered. Be sure to bill the device as a replacement AFO.

New Rehabilitating Foot Drop AFO

The Elite™ Rehabilitator™ AFO is a ground reaction force carbon fiber AFO uniquely designed to provide perturbation therapy during gait. The AFO initiates an intended upward “pop” at toe off to facilitate reflexive firing of the patient’s ankle/foot muscles. Perturbation therapy has proven to be effective in muscle relearning in stroke patients. Many patients demonstrate volitional improvement UNBRACED after several months of Elite™ Rehabilitator™ AFO wear with routine use.

CALL OCSI CUSTOMER SERVICE TODAY FOR EXCLUSIVE OPGA MEMBER ONLY SPECIAL PRICING AT 800 375-0207.

ELITE REHABILITATOR™
An innovative gait rehabilitating foot drop solution

There are many carbon fiber ground reaction force dynamic AFOs available to correct foot drop. However, when the device is removed, there is little to no “carry over” un-braced. The device creates the necessary dorsiflexion of the ankle for the patient, but does not provide a stimulus for self activation of the patient’s ankle muscles. The Elite™ AFO REHABILITATOR™ provides dorsiflexion and lower leg extension dynamic assist while facilitating muscle activation in the affected leg to promote muscle re-learning when the brace is worn. Over several months, many patients exhibit “carry over” with unassisted improved dorsiflexion un-braced! The patented Elite™ AFO REHABILITATOR™ is the only known rehabilitating dynamic AFO available in the world.

Features:
• Provides perturbation therapy with each step to facilitate patient muscle activation during gait. The more flexible footplate design with a stiffer strut than conventional carbon fiber AFOs creates an upwards “pop” at toe off that facilitates a reflective muscle activation stimulus similar to perturbation “tilt” therapy. This sensori-motor facilitation technique allows the patient to re-learn active ankle dorsiflexion over time.
• Perturbation therapy has been clinically proven to facilitate motor re-learning in stroke patients over time with repeated training¹. Without a sensori-motor stimulus, many patients with significant proprioceptive motor deficits are unable to volitionally control correctly sequenced ankle movement.
• Provides excellent dorsiflexion assist and lower leg extension assist. The more flexible foot plate accommodates mild to moderate equinovarus spasticity patterns, diminishing spasticity over time with routine use.
• Daily use corrects learned hemiplegic gait biomechanics incrementally improving gait over time. Some patients require use of a gait rehabilitating knee brace providing sensori-motor stimulus (SPORT REHABILITATOR™) for optimal Hemiplegic Gait rehabilitation.
• Effective for patients with TBI, cerebral palsy, and neurological diagnosis.

¹ Sensory Stimulation Promotes Normalization of Postural Control After Stroke, Magnessen, et., al., Stroke, 1994

GUARDIAN BRACE
Call 800-375-0207 to order or for more information.

CALL TODAY FOR EXCLUSIVE OPGA MEMBER ONLY PRICING!
Kinegen Stream

3A2000

The Kinegen Stream was developed for the amputee with the highest expectations of how a high-activity knee should work. Having said this, the engineering department developed a knee that is “controlled by the user, and not the knee controlling the user.”

"The Kinegen Stream has allowed me to cross new boundaries, where my previous knees fell short. I am doing things I would have never imagined possible with a prosthetic knee. This knee is perfect for me."

Features such as the A-P Slide option and the dampening extension adjustment allow for the practitioner to have more options in addition to the basic extension and flexion modifications for fitting the user. Freewheel mode allows the user to easily convert from standard to reduced resistance.

- Approved up to 150kg (330 lbs.)
- A-P Slide option: +/− 5mm
- Lightweight (996g)
- Large hydraulic = No Overheat
- Wide range of resistances
- Flexion angle of 145 degrees
- Smooth gait pattern
- Easy switch to freewheel mode
- For K3-K4 activity levels

3A2100 4-Arm Adapter
3A2200 3-Arm Adapter

Please call our offices or visit our website for more information

Kinegen stream

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Drew shoe is committed to offering the most innovative styles, the latest technology and the widest range of sizes and widths with added depth and removable inserts to accommodate prescribed orthotics.
KNEE SUPPORT?

OA KNEE BRACE WITH RANGE OF MOTION

KNEE #46

In your quest to live an active lifestyle, the #46 knee brace brings your comfort to a new level with its elegant and light design. Available for the right or left knee, this brace alleviates knee pain by reducing the weight on your medial or lateral compartment by using the three point pressure system. It is composed of two aluminum reinforced semi-rigid straps that surround the distal region (above the knee) and the proximal region (below the knee). These straps are to be custom moulded to allow for an optimal torsion support. Additionally, these straps are bound together by a patented articulated aluminum support that is easily adjustable for flexion and extension and accessible within a zipped pocket.

Use this knee brace for the following indications:

- Mild to moderate medial compartment OA without instability.
- Meniscus procedures.
- Chondral defect procedures.
- Moderate lateral compartment OA without instability; it is possible to reduce the load on the lateral compartment by using a "right" brace on a left leg or a "left" brace on a right leg.
- Available in left or right.
M-Brace and MIH International: Supporting your knees

MIH International is proud to be a supplier to the OPGA Group. We are the U.S. distributors of M-Brace products, a line of orthopedic soft-good braces. Included are wrist splints, knee braces, back braces and more. These braces, renowned for their superior comfort and innovative design, are the result of over 40 years of research and development. The business began in 1970 near Milan as a family-based company. To this day, all M-Brace products are manufactured in Italy and distributed in North America by MIH International. M-Brace braces have been on the North American market for more than 15 years, marked by their outstanding support and inventive patented technology. They are designed with the consumer in mind, built to prioritize the comfort and support of the patient above all else. The next generation of M-Brace was just developed, the result of which is the new AIR line.

The new, sleek, all-black AIR line from M-Brace raises the bar for the entire industry because of its unparalleled comfort and lightweight design. It is the most breathable and ultra-slim product line sold on the market today. Mirroring the changes in sportswear over the last 30 years, the AIR line is made with antibacterial and hypoallergenic materials of the highest quality. It is Neoprene and latex-free. The AIR line’s new patented technology and use of interlocking systems provide the utmost support for the patient while being competitively priced. User-friendly and easy to fit, the AIR line promises 24-hour comfort and durability.

Our New OA Knee Brace is a perfect example of how a comfortable high-quality “soft good” brace can be made to provide 100 percent fully customizable support with unbeatable strength in its class.

The strapping system is our secret to achieve a custom fit. Each strap is made with aluminum interior so it can be hand-molded to the shape of the patient's leg. The one-time custom fit can be re-customized at any time if needed after swelling reduces, weight loss and/or weight gain.

OA BENEFITS

- Wrap-around design for easy on and off
- Multi-centric hinge
- Easy zip pocket for hinge removal
- No tools are necessary to adjust the brace
- Washable
- Breathable
- 24-hour comfort
- Non-allergenic
- Migration control

The OA uses a three-point pressure system to reduce the weight on your medial or lateral compartment. The brace comes with 4 condylar pads that offer different levels of thicknesses, in turn different degrees of pressure, which is normally determined by someone with expertise. L-1843 Approved.

Though our braces have evolved over time, our mission remains the same: to provide patients with a dependable and comfortable option, i.e. with ergonomic and user-friendly braces that they will enjoy wearing, with full ease, 24 hours a day, every day if necessary.

All our products are patented and have PDAC approved coding for insurance and billing purposes. Call MIH International to get more information on the product line and for promotional materials on our toll free line: 1-866-374-4050. As a member of the OPGA Group you can order directly. Take advantage of your New OPGA Account Special of 20 percent off your first order with an additional 15 percent off all orders for one month following.

Check us out at www.m-brace.com or visit our Facebook page (MIH International) to see latest news, events and contests.

MIH International LLC
USA SALES Headquarters
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Newark, Del. 19711

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Are you still making buckets?

Traditional “bucket” sockets simply focus on fitting the surface of your patient’s limb, which results in numerous socket and sound side problems. The patented and patents-pending HiFi™ Interface and Imager System with Osseosynchronization™ is the world’s first biomechanically based, skeletaly focused, volume adjustable interface that gives your patients the closest thing to a direct skeletal connection, but in a non-surgical removable design.

Maybe it’s time to put your patients’ old sockets to better use. Join Carol who recycled her “bucket” in 2012.

When Carol came to us she was in a wheelchair. Now she is on her second HiFi due to the 30+ pounds of weight loss in less than six months. Keep walking Carol, you are an inspiration to us all!

Maybe it’s time to get rid of the bucket. Become licensed and trained in the HiFi Transfemoral Interface System so you can give your patients and your business an amazing advantage.

CALL US TODAY TO LEARN MORE

The HiFi Interface and Imager technology is patented and patents-pending. Unauthorized use, in whole or part, is not permitted.

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NEW! 4-WAY SHRINKER

The new 4-Way Stretch Shrinker features stretchy core-spun yarns providing multidirectional stretch for a shrinker that is softer, more comfortable to wear, and easier to don.

Available in Medium (20-30 mmHg) and Heavy (30-40 mmHg) compression, Transtibial and Transfemoral sizes:

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- NO additional charge per SKU or fee after initial one time setup.
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- Max. graphic width 3.5” / height 1.5”. Knit-Rite will scale artwork for approval.
- Consider imprint color(s) that will contrast the fabric. Grey works well if ordering more than one fabric color.
- Order Minimum: 20 total units. No minimum per SKU.
- Completed form via e-mail or fax required. Transfers will be ordered after receiving an order or the setup fee(s) are invoiced.

Available in all BK and AK versions of Compressogrip and 4-Way Shrinker!

ORDER FORM

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* Consider imprint color(s) that will contrast the fabric. Grey works well if ordering more than one fabric color. Please reference your Knit-Rite catalog for product codes and descriptions as some products may not be available in all materials or fabric colors.

For more information please contact Knit-Rite at 800-821-3094, FAX: 800-462-4707, E-mail customerservice@knitrile.com or contact your Knit-Rite distributor.
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- patient can re-calibrate at any time
- control up to 3 devices sequentially
- for both above- and below-elbow amputees
- compatible with LTI Boston Arm

The pattern of muscle activity for hand open is different than hand close, wrist supinate, wrist pronate and so on. An electrode array placed on the surface of the residual limb near these muscle areas can detect the patterns of activity collectively – the patterns are recognized by the controller and used to command the prosthesis.
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Premier Plus LIVE is an educational event like nothing you have experienced before. Unlike most events dedicated to selling products and services, Premier Plus LIVE is focused solely on providing a platform to hear and discuss solutions to today’s many challenges with current O&P thought leaders.

Featured topics include:

- The future of the profession and what it takes to succeed
- Novel research on daily activity patterns of amputees and new objective measures of gait quality
- Audits and how to protect your practice
- Trends in O&P reimbursement
- Utilizing data to grow your referral base and practice
- SEO, SEM, SMM and the impact on your practice
- Megatrends in O&P
- Understanding financials and how to use them to create growth, cut costs and identify opportunity
- Update on O&P practice management software – what is new on the horizon?

"One of the greatest values in being a member of OPGA is the opportunity to build relationships with colleagues in our industry. With OPGA, the independent practitioner does not have to work in a vacuum! OPGA provides us the information, current research, and resources and connections to serve our patients and clients well and to increase our efficiency and profitability."

Shawn and Suzanne Bright
Mid-Mo O&P
WHY ATTEND?

• Networking with other business owners, practitioners, industry experts and OPGA Supplier Partners
• Learn best practices from other independent business owners who continue to grow their businesses in a difficult environment
• Premier speakers are national thought leaders
• Learn more about OPGA and how we can support you and your facility
• Prepare your facility for success in the future

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$159 per person - Multiple attendees from same company

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Registration Includes:
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• Full access to conference speakers and presenters
• Breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack for two days
• Evening networking event for all attendees
• Conference handouts
## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### DAY 1

7:30 – 8:00 a.m. .. BREAKFAST BUFFET

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. .. ANYONE CAN GIVE UP, WE WON'T
  Dennis Clark, CPO, president, OPGA

9:00 – 10:30 a.m. .. DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN PEOPLE WITH TRANSFEMORAL AMPUTATIONS
  Kenton Kaufman, PhD, PE, director, Biomechanics-Motion Analysis Laboratory, Mayo Clinic, Rochester

10:30 – 10:50 a.m. .. BREAK

10:50 – NOON .. LOW ACTIVE SOLUTIONS
  David Mitchell, Össur Americas

NOON – 12:45 p.m. .. LUNCH

12:45 – 1:00 p.m. .. SPONSOR PRESENTATION
  Mike Sotak, PEL

1:00 – 2:45 p.m. .. PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO SAFEGUARD YOUR O&P PRACTICE
  Wayne van Halem, AHFI, CFE, president, The van Halem Group

2:45 – 3:00 p.m. .. BREAK

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. .. THE NEW O&P BUSINESS PARADIGM
  Jim Noland, president/CEO, Conduit Technologies

4:00 – 4:30 p.m. .. COMPETITIVE DIFFERENTIATOR: UTILIZING DATA TO GROW YOUR PRACTICE
  Ryan Ball, director, VGM Market Data

4:30 – 5:00 p.m. .. CYBER CRIME – ARE YOU PROTECTED?
  Bill Wilson, VP, VGM Insurance

5:00 – 6:00 p.m. .. RECEPTION

### DAY 2

7:30 – 8:00 a.m. .. Breakfast Buffet

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. .. UPDATE ON CURRENT O&P RESEARCH
  Kenton Kaufman, PhD, PE, director, Biomechanics-Motion Analysis Laboratory, Mayo Clinic, Rochester

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. .. BUILD A STRONGER BUSINESS: MEGATRENDS IMPACTING YOUR O&P PRACTICE AND WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NOW TO OPTIMIZE YOUR BUSINESS
  Mike Mallaro, CFO, VGM Group, 2014 Hamontree Lecture Award

10:00 – 10:15 a.m. .. Break

10:15 – 11:15 a.m. .. If You Don't Know Your Numbers, You Don't Know Your Company
  Rob Benedetti, controller, De La Torre Orthotics & Prosthetics, Inc, Promis Consulting, Inc, Tower Orthopedics, Inc.

11:15 a.m. – NOON .... Local OPGA Member Best Practice Presentation

NOON – 12:45 p.m. .... Lunch

12:45 – 1:00 p.m. .. Sponsor Presentation
  Nick Cannon, Breg

1:00 – 2:00 p.m. .. How to Own the Local Search Listings Online Through SEO, SEM and SMM!
  Jeremy Kauten, president, VGM Forbin

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. .. Legislative Update
  Tom Powers, VGM Government Affairs

  Roundtable/Closing/Evaluations
Ryan Ball  
VGM Market Data, VGM  
800-214-6742 | ryan.ball@vgm.com

Ryan Ball, VGM Market Data, has worked in the orthotic and prosthetic industry for Orthotic & Prosthetic Group of America and The VGM Group for nine years as director of government relations and regulatory affairs, DME state policy and various other analyst roles within VGM Government and Regulatory departments. Prior to working as a regulatory analyst, Ryan worked as a political campaign/marketing consultant, focusing primarily on developing and analyzing data to identify statistically significant market trends and make recommendations on efficient resource allocation. Ryan is the director of VGM Market Data and is a graduate of the University of Iowa.

Rob Benedetti  
Controller, De La Torre Orthotics & Prosthetics, Inc, Promise Consulting, Inc, Tower Orthopedics, Inc  
412-599-1113 | rob@delatorreop.com

Rob Benedetti is currently the controller of De La Torre Orthotics and Prosthetics, Inc., in Pittsburgh, Pa, a position he has held for 20 years. He is also a consultant for Promise Consulting, a firm that specializes in business consulting for companies in the O&P industry. Over the past 15 years, he has worked with nearly 50 O&P companies nationwide.

Rob is also a presenter for AAOP and has spoken at national and regional conferences for the past 17 years. Rob holds a degree in business administration and an MBA.

Dennis Clark  
President, Orthotic and Prosthetic Group of America  
877-274-4412 | dennis.clark@vgm.com

Dennis Clark, CPO, is the president of Orthotic & Prosthetic Group of America, a division of The VGM Group. Additionally, he owns the Waterloo-based company, Clark & Associates Prosthetics and Orthotics, that was contracted by the U.S. Department of Defense to provide prosthetic care to wounded soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Clark has been in the O&P field for over 30 years, serving as a certified orthotist and prosthetist, an instructor at Northwestern University and past president of the American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics, former board member of American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists, former president of AOPA Region 7, and is a recipient of the Distinguished Practitioner Award from the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists. In 2003, Clark and his partners were contracted by the U.S. Department of Defense to provide prosthetic care to wounded soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.
Kenton R. Kaufman, Ph.D., P.E.
Mayo Clinic
W. Hall Wendel, Jr., Musculoskeletal Research Professor
Professor of Biomedical Engineering
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Dr. Kenton R. Kaufman is the W. Hall Wendel, Jr., Musculoskeletal Research Professor, professor of Biomedical Engineering, director of the Biomechanics-Motion Analysis Laboratory, and consultant in the Departments of Orthopedic Surgery, Physiology and Biomedical Engineering at Mayo Clinic. He is a registered professional engineer. He has worked over the past two decades to advance both prosthetic and orthotic care. He is the co-inventor of the SensorWalk, a stance-control orthosis on the commercial market. He has also conducted research on microprocessor-controlled knees and provided testimony to the insurance industry that resulted in reimbursement for microprocessor-controlled knees. Currently, he is the co-principal investigator of a national consortium aimed at orthopedic rehabilitation of Wounded Warriors. He has had research funding totaling over $40 million, has published over 200 scientific peer-reviewed papers, and holds 4 U.S. patents and one international patent.

Dr. Kaufman has received numerous awards, including the American Society of Biomechanics Young Investigator Award, Giovanni Borelli Award, Research Award from the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists, Excellence in Research Award, the O’Donoghue Sports Injury Research Award from the American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine, Clinical Research Award from the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, Best Scientific Paper Awards from the Gait and Clinical Movement Analysis Society, Frank Stinchfield Award from The Hip Society and the John Insall Award from The Knee Society. The results of his research have also led to many articles for the general population. His work has been cited in the Washington Post, Preventive Medicine, Men's Health, and WebMD. He has also appeared on the nationally syndicated shows Medical Edge and Bottom Line on Your Health.

He has served as a reviewer for NIH, CDC, NIDRR and the VA. Currently, he is serving on the National Advisory Council for Nursing Research at NIH. Dr. Kaufman is a past president of the American Society of Biomechanics. He is also a founding member and past president of the Gait and Clinical Movement Analysis Society. He is a Fellow in the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering and the American Society of Biomechanics.

Jeremy Kauten
President, VGM Forbin
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Jeremy is the president of VGM Forbin. Jeremy joined VGM Forbin in 1997. He manages the day-to-day business functions and identifies, develops and directs the implementation of the company’s business strategy. Jeremy has developed a reputation for delivering effective and timely solutions to O&P businesses looking to enhance their online presence. With over 15 years of Web marketing experience, he is a frequent speaker in the medical industry on topics relating to consumer uses of the Internet, social media marketing and search engine optimization.

Mike Mallaro
CFO, VGM
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Mike Mallaro is the chief financial officer of the VGM Group, Inc., a company that provides business services for providers of O&P, DME, PT practices, golf clubs and restaurants across the US. His responsibilities include the leadership of all financial, tax, M&A, information technology and employee benefit matters for VGM Group as well as responsibility for the operations of VGM’s insurance and Web businesses.

Mallaro is a frequent speaker at national and regional conferences on topics including health care trends for the future, financial benchmarking, business plan optimization, growing a business, the impact of the Internet on health care and health care retailing. He was the recipient of the 2014 Sam E. Hamontree Award in conjunction with his presentation at the AOPA National Assembly in Las Vegas. Mallaro has been with VGM since 2001. Prior to that he was a CPA with a national accounting firm and he had successful turnaround experience as the CFO for a retail chain. Mallaro is a graduate of the University of Iowa. He holds the CPA (inactive) and CMA designations.

David Mitchell, CPO
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David practiced for fifteen years before joining Össur, Inc. He received his undergraduate degree in biological sciences from the University of Delaware, and his post-graduate certificate in orthotics from Northwestern University in 1997. He received his prosthetics certification in 2005, and he is certified by the American Board of Certification in Prosthetics and Orthotics, and is also licensed in the state of Georgia. He enjoys hiking, reading and spending time with his family.
Jim Noland
Conduit Technologies
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Jim Noland is the founder of Presque Isle Medical Technologies and Conduit Technology. He is a former SMS and owner/operator of an HME, CRT and O&P practice in Erie, PA. Jim was a DME and complex rehab surveyor for ACHC and also as an executive board member for NRRTS. He has offered coursework at ISS and Medtrade in comprehensive pediatric seating practice issues and on early intervention and multi-handicap integration topics. Jim was a PTA specializing in orthopedics, brain injury, SCI and wound care.

Conduit Technology is the parent company of the Web-based documentation tool LMN Builder and the cloud-based business productivity tool, Conduit Office. Through that work he has been awarded patents for technology invented for the HME industry.

Jim lives in Girard, Pa, with his wife Janet, MPT, and his 17-year-old son, Jordan. Jim and Janet travel on missionary and private trips to help disabled and disadvantaged people living in and around Santa Barbara, Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

Tom Powers
VGM Government Relations, VGM
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Tom Powers is involved with a variety of state and federal government issues for VGM Group, Inc.’s Government Relations department. He is working on wound care, complex rehab, orthotics and prosthetics, and state licensure issues for HME and O&P, as well as sleep testing and other home medical issues with Congress, unions and federal agencies. He works closely with People for Quality Care, VGM’s advocacy group. A retired Waterloo, Iowa, firefighter, his political experience began as an active member and president of Local 66 International Association of Fire Fighters. He has worked on countless elections, ranging from municipal to presidential. His second career began at VGM as director of Strategic Media, Ltd., a political communications firm.

Wayne H. van Halem, CFE, AHFI
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Wayne van Halem is an author, consultant, and president of The van Halem Group, LLC in Atlanta, Ga. Since 2006, his company has helped countless providers navigate complex issues related to Medicare and Medicaid audits, appeals, enrollment, and compliance. The van Halem Group is unique in that consultants and clinicians are former HHS or Medicare contractor employees. Therefore, clients benefit from a unique perspective and first-hand knowledge of the audit and appeal process and how to navigate through it more successfully. A former auditor and national appeals director with Medicare, Wayne’s proven experience and sound counsel, captured in books, lectures and publications, has uniquely positioned him as a resource to all types of health care providers. In 2011, The van Halem Group acquired HCComply and expanded its breadth of services to include compliance assessments and tailored program design.

Bill Wilson
VP of Sales and Marketing, VGM Insurance Services
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Bill Wilson is vice president of sales and marketing for VGM Insurance Services, headquartered in Waterloo, Iowa. VGM Insurance specializes in developing specialty risk programs for a variety of industries including orthotic and prosthetic, physical therapy, and home care providers. Prior to joining VGM, Bill was vice-president of the commercial division at one of the largest property-casualty brokerage firms in Iowa serving the Midwest. A Waverly, Iowa, native and University of Northern Iowa graduate, Bill is very involved in his community. In 2013, he was recognized as one of the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier’s “20 under 40” community leaders in the Cedar Valley. Outside of work, Bill and his wife, Amy, have two sons, Jack, who is 10, and Sam, who is 7.

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