



Prosthetic and Orthotic Care, Inc.

In the News.....

O&P Almanac Magazine

April 2005

Missouri [care](#) Center

1074 Old Des Peres Road
Des Peres, MO 63131
314-775-2041

Illinois [care](#) Center

13 Executive Drive, Suite 12
Fairview Heights, IL 62208
1-800-871-5237

www.PandOCare.com

Grassroots Action Sees Results in Missouri

By *Walter Gorski*
AOPA Government Affairs Department

Getting involved in politics at the state or federal level sounds daunting and can appear to be an effort in futility.

Legislative and regulatory results tend to take a long time.

And in this era of instant gratification, combined with ever-increasing demands on personal time, taking an active role in the shaping of policy affecting your professional future is difficult.

If it's so hard, why do it?

Because those who have decided to take a stand, who have rolled up their sleeves and taken charge of their futures, have caused meaningful change.

Here is one recent example of what happened when several O&P professionals decided to get involved.

Missouri threat

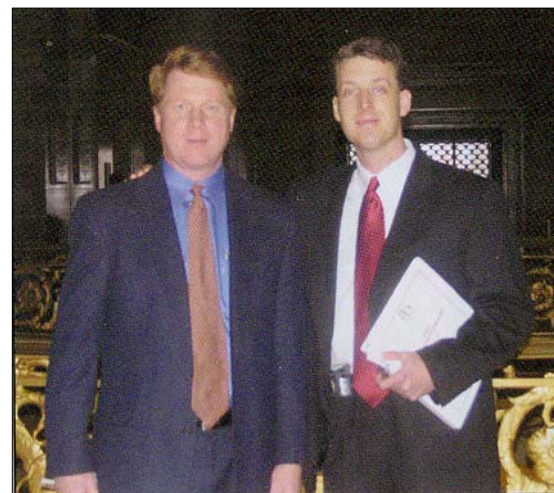
AOPA was alerted to a threat in Missouri when the newly elected governor proposed draconian cuts in Medicaid coverage for individuals who rely on this program. The governor's initial proposal would have eliminated coverage for a vast majority of rehabilitation services. These cuts would have meant the end to O&P Medical coverage in the state.

Several Missouri practitioners alerted AOPA to the problem. When we contacted state officials, we heard that no one had raised concerns about the possible loss of O&P coverage and its likely ramifications.

AOPA immediately offered assistance to the practitioners in the state who sacrificed their personal time and energy to highlight the problem to state lawmakers.

These practitioners traveled more than two hours to the state capital and delivered compelling testimony to a congressional committee. They brought with them a patient who would not have been able to return to work if it were not for Medicaid coverage for her prosthesis. They also notified all their patients, at personal expense, that they needed to contact their state lawmakers to lobby for funding for O&P to remain intact.

As of this writing, Republicans in the Missouri statehouse were expected to maintain Medicaid funding for rehabilitation services, including O&P coverage.



Jim Weber (left) and Jon Wilson took their case to the Missouri statehouse on behalf of all of O&P.

Continued.

Continued from front.

AOPA would like to recognize the efforts of Jon Wilson, CPO, and Jim Weber of Prosthetic and Orthotic Care in St. Louis, Mo., for taking an activist role on behalf of their patients and the O&P field.

AOPA can help

This example highlights the positive impact individuals can have on events that will directly affect O&P. While AOPA focuses primarily on federal affairs, we are more than willing to help O&P professionals at the state level accomplish what at first may appear to be unsolvable.

While we cannot be on the ground in all 50 states, we can provide assistance, direction and advice to providers who recognize that the policies set by states and the federal government can have real and long-lasting impact.

If you are confronting problems at the state level, I urge you to contact me so that we can lend assistance and get the word out to your fellow practitioners in the state.

Walter Gorski is the director of legislative and regulatory affairs for AOPA.