



Orthotic, Prosthetic
and Pedorthic

SCOPE OF
PRACTICE

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Foreword

The Board of Directors of the American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics Inc., (ABC) developed this *Orthotic, Prosthetic and Pedorthic Scope of Practice* document for use by orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic professionals, consumers, members of the rehabilitation team, health care decision makers and legislative and regulatory officials. To write this consensus document, ABC used a variety of resources including:

- The previous ABC *Orthotics and Prosthetics Scope of Practice*
- The ABC *Practice Analysis Studies* for orthotists, prosthetists, pedorthists, orthotic fitters and technicians
- Curriculum from a sampling of orthotic, prosthetic, pedorthic and fitter educational programs

This *Orthotic, Prosthetic and Pedorthic Scope of Practice* document defines several aspects of the orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic professions including the delineation of the scopes of practice and the specific responsibilities of ABC credentialed individuals.

The practice of orthotics, prosthetics and pedorthics occurs in various settings, including independent private orthotic, prosthetic or pedorthic practices, hospitals, inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation facilities, rural outreach clinics, home health settings, short term nursing facilities and long term care settings. ABC credentialed professionals play a critical role in the rehabilitation of individuals in need of orthotic, prosthetic or pedorthic care.

Any scope of practice document should be revised periodically, and it is the intent of ABC to revise this document as the practice of orthotics, prosthetics and pedorthics evolves.

This publication represents the shared efforts of many dedicated individuals. ABC is grateful for the commitment of the committee members and staff that devoted their time and effort to this project.

ABC Credentials

The American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics, Inc. (ABC) establishes and promotes the highest standards of organizational and clinical performance in the delivery of orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic care. ABC advances the competency of practitioners, promotes the quality and effectiveness of orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic care and maintains the integrity of the profession.

ABC orthotist, prosthetist, pedorthist, fitter, assistant and technician certification are the designations given to those individuals who have met ABC's extensive education and clinical training requirements and who have passed specific examinations that are based on a comprehensive practice analysis of the orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic professions. The examinations measure the candidate's knowledge of orthotics, prosthetics and pedorthics, their analytical and problem solving skills as well as clinical, patient management and communication skills. ABC orthotist, prosthetist, pedorthist, assistant, fitter and technician credentials are the profession's highest standards for individuals providing patient care and technical services. ABC credentialed individuals must adhere to the ABC Scope of Practice for their credential and/or the scope of practice for any relevant related licensure they hold.

ABC awards the following credentials:

- ABC Certified Orthotist (CO)
- ABC Certified Prosthetist (CP)
- ABC Certified Prosthetist/Orthotist (CPO)
- ABC Certified Pedorthist (C.Ped.)
- ABC Certified Fitter-Orthotics (CFo)
- ABC Certified Fitter-Mastectomy (CFm)*
- ABC Certified Fitter-Therapeutic Shoes (CFts)
- ABC Certified Orthotic Assistant (COA)
- ABC Certified Prosthetic Assistant (CPA)
- ABC Certified Prosthetic-Orthotic Assistant (CPOA)
- ABC Certified Orthotic Technician (CTO)
- ABC Certified Prosthetic Technician (CTP)
- ABC Certified Prosthetic-Orthotic Technician (CTPO)

*The provision of post-mastectomy breast prostheses and associated items is solely within the scope of practice of a Certified Fitter-Mastectomy (CFm). The [CFm Scope of Practice](#) is published separately and is not included in this document.

Delineation of Scopes of Practice

ABC Certified Orthotist, Prosthetist, or Prosthetist/Orthotist

An ABC certified orthotist and/or prosthetist is a health care professional who is specifically educated and trained to manage comprehensive orthotic and/or prosthetic patient care. This includes patient evaluation, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, continuation of the treatment plan and practice management. Documentation by the orthotist and/or prosthetist is part of the patient's medical record and assists with establishing medical necessity for orthotic and/or prosthetic care.

Orthotic care includes patient evaluation and the design, fabrication, fitting, modification, maintenance and repair of orthoses to treat a neuromusculoskeletal disorder or acquired condition. This also includes the provision of partial foot prostheses for transmetatarsal and distal amputations.

Prosthetic care includes patient evaluation and the design, fabrication, fitting, modification, maintenance and repair of prostheses to restore physiological function and/or cosmesis. This includes the post-surgical provision of a bone-anchored prosthesis (also known as [osseointegration](#) (OI)).

Orthotic and/or prosthetic care does not include independent provision of invasive procedures, including, but not limited to, injections and initial application or replacement of skull pins. The orthotist and/or prosthetist certified by ABC is bound by the ABC Code of Professional Responsibility which is enforced by a Professional Discipline program. The certified orthotist/prosthetist is obligated to support and conform to professional responsibilities that promote and assure the overall welfare of the patient and the integrity of the profession. The time limited certification expires without compliance with requirements of the Recertification program. The practice of an ABC certified orthotist and/or prosthetist includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) Evaluation of patients with impairment of human movement or musculoskeletal abnormalities that would impede their ability to participate in their social/work environment or other activities in order to determine a functional intervention. Patient evaluation may include, but is not limited to, the evaluation and documentation of:
 - anthropometric data
 - cognition
 - circulation
 - skin integrity
 - protective sensation
 - pain
 - central and peripheral nerve integrity
 - endurance
 - biomechanics
 - gait analysis including temporal and spatial assessment

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- range of motion
 - muscle strength
 - posture, balance and safety
 - proprioception
 - orthotic and/or prosthetic requirements
 - myoelectric activity and potential for use of Functional Electrical Stimulation and/or Neuroprosthetics
 - activities of daily living
 - environmental barriers including social, home, and work reintegration
 - the need for physical and occupational therapy modalities

2) Formulation of a treatment plan is based upon a comprehensive assessment to design an intervention to alleviate limitations, improve function and enhance quality of life.

Orthotic and prosthetic treatment includes, but is not limited to:

- verification of prescription/documentation
- evaluation of the prescription rationale
- a recommendation incorporating patient and/or caregiver input
- development of functional goals
- use of evidence based practice
- analysis of structural and design requirements
- assessment of potential physical and occupational therapy requirements
- consultation with and/or referral to other health care professionals

3) Implementation of the orthotic and/or prosthetic treatment plan includes, but is not limited to:

- acquisition of anthropometric data
- modification and/or rectification of anthropometric data
- preparatory care
- material selection
- fabrication and/or assembly of orthoses and/or prostheses
- prototype development including evaluative wear
- structural evaluation of the orthosis and/or prosthesis
- diagnostic fitting
- assessment of intervention
- functional exercise
- gait training
- functional training (both self care and work related)
- documentation of patient education and instruction
- supervision of the provision of care
- documentation of patient encounters

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- 4) Utilization of a follow-up treatment plan that ensures successful orthotic and/or prosthetic outcomes, patient health and quality of life which includes, but is not limited to:
 - documentation of patient encounters, including functional changes and progress in meeting goals and expected outcomes
 - formulation of modifications to ensure successful outcomes
 - reassessment of patient goals
 - reassessment of treatment objectives
 - development of long term treatment plan
 - documentation of on-going patient education and instruction

 - 5) Compliance with practice management plans to develop and document policies and procedures to ensure patient protection which includes, but is not limited to:
 - adherence to applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations
 - following patient care guidelines and procedures
 - maintaining a safe and professional environment for patient care
 - comprehension of claims development and submission

 - 6) Promotion of competency and enhancement of orthotic and/or prosthetic professional practice to contribute to the profession's body of knowledge includes, but is not limited to participation in:
 - continuing education
 - training of residents/students
 - clinical research
 - evidence based studies
 - promotion of public awareness of the orthotic and/or prosthetic profession
 - consumer organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations

ABC Certified Pedorthist

An ABC certified pedorthist is a health care professional who is specifically educated and trained to manage comprehensive pedorthic patient care. This includes patient evaluation, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, continuation of the treatment plan and practice management. Pedorthic care includes patient evaluation, and the design, fabrication, fitting, modification, maintenance and repair of pedorthic devices for the prevention or amelioration of painful and/or disabling conditions that originate at the ankle or below.

“Pedorthic devices” means therapeutic shoes, shoe modifications made for therapeutic purposes, prefabricated below the knee orthoses, partial foot prostheses for transmetatarsal and distal amputations, and foot orthoses. It also includes subtalar-control foot orthoses, also referred to as a SCFO, designed to manage the function of the anatomy by primarily controlling the range of motion of the subtalar joint. Excluding footwear, the proximal height of a custom pedorthic device does not extend beyond the junction of the gastrocnemius and the Achilles tendon. Pedorthic devices do not include non-therapeutic inserts or footwear regardless of method of manufacture; unmodified, non-therapeutic over-the-counter shoes; or prefabricated foot care products. “Therapeutic” devices address a medical condition, diagnosed by a prescribing medical professional, while “non-therapeutic” devices do not address a medical condition.

The pedorthist certified by ABC is bound by the ABC Code of Professional Responsibility which is enforced by a Professional Discipline program. The certified pedorthist is obligated to support and conform to professional responsibilities that promote and assure the overall welfare of the patient and the integrity of the profession. The time limited certification expires without compliance with the Recertification program. The practice of an ABC certified pedorthist includes but is not limited to:

- 1) Evaluation of patients with impairment of human movement or musculoskeletal abnormalities that would otherwise impede their ability to participate in their social/work environment or other activities in order to determine a functional intervention. Pedorthic patient evaluation may include, but is not limited to, the evaluation and documentation of:
 - anthropometric data
 - cognition
 - circulation
 - skin integrity
 - protective sensation
 - pain
 - peripheral nerve integrity
 - endurance
 - biomechanics
 - gait analysis including temporal and spatial assessment
 - range of motion
 - muscle strength

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- posture, balance and safety
 - proprioception
 - pedorthic requirements
 - environmental barriers including social, home, and work reintegration
- 2) Formulation of a treatment plan is based upon a comprehensive assessment to design an intervention to alleviate limitations, improve function and enhance quality of life. Pedorthic treatment includes, but is not limited to:
- verification of prescription/documentation
 - evaluation of the prescription rationale
 - a recommendation incorporating patient and/or caregiver input
 - development of functional goals
 - use of evidence-based practice
 - analysis of structural and design requirements
 - consultation with and/or referral to other health care professionals
- 3) Implementation of the pedorthic treatment plan includes, but is not limited to:
- acquisition of anthropometric data
 - modification and/or rectification of anthropometric data
 - material selection
 - fabrication of pedorthic devices
 - device structural evaluation
 - diagnostic fitting
 - gait training
 - assessment of intervention for appropriate outcomes
 - documentation of patient education and instruction
 - supervision of the provision of care
 - documentation of patient encounters
- 4) Utilization of a follow-up treatment plan that ensures successful pedorthics outcomes, patient health and quality of life which includes, but is not limited to:
- documentation of functional changes
 - formulation of modifications to ensure successful outcomes
 - reassessment of patient goals
 - reassessment of treatment objectives
 - development of long-term treatment plan
 - documentation of on-going patient education and instruction
 - documentation of patient encounters

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- 5) Compliance with practice management plans to develop and document policies and procedures to ensure patient protection includes, but is not limited to:
- adherence to applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations
 - following patient care guidelines and procedures maintaining a safe and professional environment for patient care
 - comprehension of claims development and submission
- 6) Promotion of competency and enhancement of pedorthic professional practice to contribute to the profession's body of knowledge includes, but is not limited to, participation in:
- training of residents/students
 - continuing education
 - clinical research
 - evidence based studies
 - promotion of public awareness of the pedorthic profession
 - consumer organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations

ABC Certified Fitter-Orthotics:

An ABC certified fitter-orthotics is a health care professional who is specifically educated and trained in the provision of certain orthoses. This includes patient evaluation, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, continuation of the treatment plan and practice management. An ABC certified fitter-orthotics is competent to practice orthotics within a scope of practice that is specific to fitting certain custom fitted, prefabricated and off-the-shelf orthoses as described below:

- Cervical orthoses, *except* those used to treat an unstable spinal condition*
- Prefabricated orthoses for the upper and lower extremities, *except* for the following: those used in the initial and/or acute treatment of long bone fractures and dislocations, therapeutic (diabetic) shoes/inserts and functional electrical stimulation orthoses (e.g. myo-orthosis, neuroprosthesis)
- Prefabricated spinal orthoses, *except* those used in the treatment of scoliosis or unstable spinal conditions, or halo cervical orthoses
- Pressure gradient garments
- Trusses

**See definition of unstable spinal conditions in the Definitions of Common Terms*

The ABC certified fitter-orthotics is bound by the ABC Code of Professional Responsibility which is enforced by a Professional Discipline program. The certified fitter-orthotics is obligated to support and conform to professional responsibilities that promote and assure the overall welfare of the patient and the integrity of the profession. The time limited certification expires without compliance with the Recertification program. The practice of an ABC certified fitter-orthotics includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) Evaluation of a patient's needs for prefabricated orthoses includes, but is not limited to, the evaluation and documentation of the following:
 - physical assessment
 - anthropometric data
 - circulation
 - skin integrity
 - posture, balance and safety
 - orthotic requirements
- 2) Formulation of a treatment plan is based upon an assessment to alleviate limitations and enhance function. The orthotic fitter's treatment plan includes, but is not limited to:
 - verification of prescription/documentation
 - a recommendation incorporating patient and/or caregiver input
 - development of functional goals
 - consultation with and/or referral to other health care professionals

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- 3) Implementation of the orthotic fitter's treatment plan includes, but is not limited to:
 - acquisition of physical assessment data
 - adjustments to accommodate individual anatomic contours
 - structural evaluation
 - documentation of patient education and instruction
 - documentation of patient encounters

 - 4) Utilization of a follow-up treatment plan that ensures successful orthotic outcomes, patient health and quality of life which includes, but is not limited to:
 - documentation of functional changes
 - performing modifications to ensure successful outcomes
 - documentation of on-going patient education and instruction

 - 5) Compliance with practice management plans to develop and document policies and procedures to ensure patient protection which includes, but is not limited to:
 - adherence to applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations
 - following patient care guidelines and procedures
 - maintaining a safe and professional environment for patient care
 - comprehension of claims development and submission

 - 6) Promotion of competency and enhancement of orthotic professional practice to contribute to the profession's body of knowledge includes, but is not limited to, participation in:
 - continuing education
 - promotion of public awareness of the orthotic profession
 - consumer organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations

ABC Certified Fitter-Therapeutic Shoes

An ABC certified fitter-therapeutic shoes is a health care professional who is specifically educated and trained to provide non-custom therapeutic shoes and non-custom multi-density inserts. This includes patient evaluation, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, continuation of the treatment plan and practice management.

The ABC certified fitter-therapeutic shoes is bound by the ABC Code of Professional Responsibility which is enforced by a Professional Discipline program. The certified fitter-therapeutic shoes is obligated to support and conform to professional responsibilities that promote and assure the overall welfare of the patient and the integrity of the profession. The time limited certification expires without compliance with the Recertification program. The practice of an ABC certified fitter-therapeutic shoes includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) Evaluation of a patient's needs for non-custom therapeutic shoes and non-custom multi-density inserts includes, but is not limited to, the evaluation and documentation of the following:
 - physical assessment
 - circulation
 - skin integrity
 - protective sensation and safety
 - pain
 - therapeutic shoe requirements
 - environmental barriers including social, home, and work reintegration
- 2) Formulation of a treatment plan is based upon an assessment to alleviate limitations and enhance function. The therapeutic shoe fitter's treatment plan includes, but is not limited to:
 - verification of prescription/documentation
 - analysis of shoe construction needs and design requirements
 - consultation with and/or referral to other health care professionals
- 3) Implementation of the therapeutic shoe fitter's treatment plan includes, but is not limited to:
 - measuring patient for shoes
 - material selection
 - shoe fit evaluation
 - minor adjustments to accommodate individual anatomic contours
 - documentation of patient education and instruction
 - documentation of patient encounters

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- 4) Utilization of a follow-up treatment plan that ensures successful outcomes, patient health and quality of life which includes, but is not limited to:
 - documentation of functional changes
 - minor adjustments to the fit of the shoe to ensure successful outcomes
 - documentation of on-going patient education and instruction

 - 5) Compliance with practice management plans to develop and document policies and procedures to ensure patient protection which includes, but is not limited to:
 - adherence to applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations
 - following patient care guidelines and procedures
 - maintaining a safe and professional environment for patient care
 - understanding claims development and submission

 - 6) Promotion of competency and enhancement of professional practice to contribute to the profession's body of knowledge includes, but is not limited to, participation in:
 - continuing education
 - promotion of public awareness of the profession
 - consumer organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations

ABC Certified Orthotic and/or Prosthetic Assistant

An ABC certified assistant is an individual educated and trained to participate in comprehensive orthotic and/or prosthetic care while under the Indirect Supervision of a certified and/or licensed orthotist and/or prosthetist. The maximum permissible ratio of certified assistants to the supervising prosthetist or orthotist is 5:1.

Certified assistants, under the supervision of a certified and/or licensed orthotist and/or prosthetist may perform orthotic and/or prosthetic procedures and related tasks in the management of patient care. The initial evaluation and formulation of the treatment plan is the responsibility of the supervising orthotist and/or prosthetist. The certified assistant may also fabricate, repair and maintain orthoses and/or prostheses. ABC certified assistants may not use their credentials as independent providers of patient care.

The certified assistant is bound by the ABC Code of Professional Responsibility, which is enforced by a Professional Discipline program. The certified assistant is obligated to support and conform to professional responsibilities that promote and assure the overall welfare of the patient and the integrity of the profession. The time limited certification expires without compliance with the Recertification program. The practice of an ABC certified orthotic/prosthetic assistant includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) Participation in the evaluation of patients with impairment of human movement or musculoskeletal abnormalities that would impede their ability to participate in their social/work environment or other activities in order to determine a functional intervention. Patient evaluation may include but is not limited to the evaluation and documentation of:
 - anthropometric data
 - cognition
 - circulation
 - skin integrity
 - protective sensation
 - pain
 - endurance
 - range of motion
 - muscle strength
 - posture, balance and safety
 - proprioception
 - orthotic and prosthetic requirements
 - environmental barriers including social, home and work reintegration
- 2) Implementation of the established orthotic or prosthetic treatment plan which includes, but is not limited to:
 - acquisition of anthropometric data
 - modification and/or rectification of physical data
 - preparatory care

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- material selection
 - fabrication
 - prototype development including evaluative wear
 - structural evaluation
 - diagnostic fitting
 - assessment of intervention for appropriate outcomes
 - gait training
 - functional training (both self-care and work related)
 - documentation of patient education and instruction
 - documentation of patient encounters
- 3) Utilization of a follow-up treatment plan that ensures successful orthotic and/or prosthetic outcomes, patient health and quality of life which includes, but is not limited to:
- documentation of functional changes
 - formulation of modifications within the established plan of care to ensure successful outcomes
 - reassessment of patient goals
 - reassessment of treatment objectives
 - assist in development of long-term treatment plan
 - documentation of on-going patient education and instruction
 - documentation of patient encounters
 - use of evidenced based practice
- 4) Compliance with practice management plans to develop and document policies and procedures to ensure patient protection which includes, but is not limited to:
- adherence to applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations
 - following patient care guidelines and procedures
 - maintaining a safe and professional environment for patient care
 - understanding claims development and submission
- 5) Promotion of competency and enhancement of orthotic and/or prosthetic professional practice to contribute to the profession's body of knowledge includes, but is not limited to, participation in:
- continuing education
 - training of residents/students
 - clinical research
 - evidence based studies
 - promotion of public awareness of the orthotic and/or prosthetic profession
 - consumer organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations

Certified Orthotic and/or Prosthetic Technician

An ABC certified technician is an individual trained and qualified to assist an ABC credentialed individual by providing technical support. ABC certified technicians may not use their credentials as independent providers of patient care. The certified technician fabricates, repairs and maintains orthoses and/or prostheses. The certified technician is proficient with current fabricating techniques, familiar with material properties and skilled in the use of appropriate equipment.

The certified technician is bound by the ABC Code of Professional Responsibility, which is enforced by a Professional Discipline program. The certified technician is obligated to support and conform to professional responsibilities that promote and assure the overall welfare of the patient and the integrity of the profession. The time limited certification expires without compliance with the Recertification program. The practice of an ABC certified orthotic and/or prosthetic technician includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) Evaluation of orthotic and/or prosthetic technical requirements. Technical assessment may include but is not limited to the evaluation of the following information:
 - physical assessment data
 - range of motion requirements
 - orthotic/prosthetic requirements
 - material selection
 - component application
 - structural analysis
 - device specific function
- 2) Formulation of fabrication requirements within the established treatment plan. This formulation includes, but is not limited to:
 - verification of documentation
 - consultation with manufacturing professionals as required
 - analysis of structural and design needs for implementation
 - development of device specific functional goals
 - consultation with clinicians and peers
- 3) Implementation of the fabrication requirements includes, but is not limited to:
 - application of physical data
 - modification and/or rectification of physical data
 - material selection
 - fabrication
 - structural evaluation
 - compliance with component selection and manufacturer recommendations
 - assessment of intervention for appropriate outcomes

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- 4) Utilization of a follow-up treatment plan that ensures successful fabrication outcomes which includes, but is not limited to:
 - documentation of structural changes
 - formulation of modifications to ensure successful outcomes
 - development of long-term service plan

 - 5) Compliance with practice management plans, policies and procedures which includes, but is not limited to:
 - adherence to applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations
 - following patient care guidelines and procedures
 - maintaining a safe and professional environment
 - application of manufacturer's guarantees, and conditions of use
 - performing applicable machine maintenance and calibration
 - maintaining applicable records of components, machines and other necessary equipment

 - 6) Promotion of competency and enhancement of professional practice to contribute to the profession's body of knowledge includes, but is not limited to participation in:
 - continuing education
 - training of residents and students
 - evidence based studies
 - promotion of public awareness of the profession
 - consumer organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations

Definitions of Common Terms

ABC

The American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics, Inc. establishes and advocates for the highest patient care and organizational standards in the provision of safe and effective orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic care. It is the mission of ABC to advance the competency of practitioners, promote the quality and effectiveness of orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic care and maintain the integrity of the profession.

Anthropometric

Pertaining to the measurement of the size, weight and proportion of the human body.

CAAHEP

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs is a programmatic accreditor of educational programs in the health science professions.

Cognition

The operation of the mind by which we become aware of objects of thought or perception; it includes aspects of perceiving, thinking and remembering.

Custom Fabricated Device

An orthosis, prosthesis or pedorthic device fabricated to comprehensive measurements and/or a mold or patient model for use by a patient in accordance with a prescription and which requires clinical and technical judgment in its design, fabrication and fitting.

Custom Fitted Device

A prefabricated orthosis or pedorthic device which is manufactured in quantity without a specific patient in mind. The device may be supplied as separate prefabricated components that require some assembly and/or fitting and adjustment. These orthoses or pedorthic devices must be trimmed, bent, molded (with or without heat), or otherwise modified for use by a specific patient.

Exam Applicant (Pedorthist, Assistant or Fitter)

An individual who has completed the required educational program and is actively obtaining the necessary hours of experience to qualify for the pedorthist, assistant, orthotic fitter or therapeutic shoe fitter exam is considered an Exam Applicant and can provide orthotic or prosthetic services under Indirect Supervision with the exception of initial patient evaluation and the final fitting/assessment related to a custom pedorthic device, prefabricated orthosis or therapeutic shoes/inserts; these activities must be performed under Direct Supervision. Pedorthist and assistant applicants can be considered Exam Applicants for up to two years after completing their educational program. Fitter applicants can be considered Exam Applicants for up to one year after completing their educational program. It is at the sole discretion of ABC to determine if an Exam Applicant should be given an extension based on unique circumstances.

Exam Candidate (Orthotist or Prosthetist)

An Exam Candidate is an individual who has successfully completed an NCOPE accredited residency in a comprehensive orthotic and/or prosthetic accredited facility, has met all eligibility criteria and has applied for and been accepted to take the ABC orthotist or prosthetist certification exam. While these individuals are within their official exam eligibility window they can continue to provide orthotic or prosthetic services under Indirect Supervision.

Functional Electrical Stimulation

Functional electrical stimulation provides a low level electrical current which results in the movement of a body part to accomplish a specific task. These systems impart transcutaneous stimulation of nerve and/or muscle groups.

Mastectomy Fitter

A health care professional who is specifically educated and trained in the provision of breast prostheses and post-mastectomy services. This includes patient evaluation, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, continuation of the treatment plan and practice management. Refer to the ABC Mastectomy Scope of Practice for specific guidelines for certified mastectomy fitters.

NCOPE

The National Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education is the accreditation body for the orthotic and prosthetic professions and the approval body for the pedorthic profession. NCOPE works in cooperation with CAAHEP. NCOPE's primary mission is to ensure education and/or residency programs meet minimum standards of quality to prepare individuals to enter these professions.

Non-custom Therapeutic Shoes

Shoes that meet the criteria of the Medicare Therapeutic Shoe Bill and that match the diabetic shoe descriptor, (i.e., off the shelf depth-inlay shoe manufactured to accommodate multi-density inserts) and are not custom fabricated from an impression or scan of the patient's foot.

Non-custom Multi-Density Inserts

Inserts that meet the criteria of the Medicare Therapeutic Shoe Bill that match the diabetic insert descriptor, (i.e., multi-density insert, direct formed, molded to foot after external heat source of 230 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, total contact with patient's foot, including arch, base layer minimum of ¼ inch material of Shore A 35 durometer or 3/16 inch of Shore A durometer (or higher), prefabricated) that are not custom fabricated from an impression or scan of the patient's foot.

Neuroprosthetics

A discipline related to neuroscience and biomedical engineering concerned with developing neural prostheses, artificial devices to replace or improve the function of an impaired nervous system.

Off-the-Shelf Device

A prefabricated orthosis sized and/or modified for interim, evaluative or short term use by the patient, in accordance with a prescription and which does not require clinical judgment and substantive alteration for appropriate use.

Orthosis

A custom designed, custom fabricated, custom fitted, prefabricated and/or modified device to treat a neuromusculoskeletal disorder or acquired condition.

Orthotic Fitter

A health care professional who is specifically educated and trained in the provision of prefabricated orthoses, with the exception of those orthoses noted in this publication. This includes patient evaluation, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, continuation of the treatment plan and practice management.

Orthotist

A health care professional who is specifically educated and trained to manage comprehensive orthotic patient care. This includes patient evaluation, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, continuation of the treatment plan and practice management.

Osseointegration

The surgical procedure that creates a direct skeletal attachment for a prosthetic limb.

Pedorthic Device

Pedorthic devices are therapeutic shoes, shoe modifications made for therapeutic purposes, prefabricated below the knee orthoses, partial foot prostheses for transmetatarsal and distal amputations, and foot orthoses. It also includes subtalar-control foot orthoses designed to manage the function of the anatomy by primarily controlling the range of motion of the subtalar joint. Excluding footwear, the proximal height of a custom pedorthic device does not extend beyond the junction of the gastrocnemius and the Achilles tendon. Pedorthic devices do not include non-therapeutic inlays or footwear regardless of method of manufacture; unmodified, non-therapeutic over-the-counter shoes; or prefabricated foot care products. “Therapeutic” devices address a medical condition, diagnosed by a prescribing medical professional, while “non-therapeutic” devices do not address a medical condition.

Pedorthist

A health care professional who is specifically educated and trained to manage comprehensive pedorthic patient care. This includes patient evaluation, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, continuation of the treatment plan and practice management.

Prefabricated Device

A prefabricated device is one which is manufactured in quantity non-specific to individual patients. The device may be supplied as separate prefabricated components that may require some assembly and/or fitting and adjustment. These devices may require some trimming, bending, molding or modification for use by a specific patient.

Proprioception

Perception mediated by the sensory nerve ending in muscles, tendons, and joints that provides a sense of the body’s position by responding to stimuli from within the body.

Prosthesis

A custom designed, fabricated, fitted and/or modified device to treat partial or complete absence of an external body segment for purposes of restoring physiological function and/or cosmesis.

Prosthetist

A health care professional who is specifically educated and trained to manage comprehensive prosthetic patient care. This includes patient evaluation, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, continuation of the treatment plan and practice management.

Recertification

ABC credentialed individuals are required to maintain competency by obtaining professional continuing education credits.

Residency

An NCOPE approved supervised program in a comprehensive orthotic and/or prosthetic accredited facility. This program allows the resident to acquire practical clinical training in orthotics and/or prosthetics which is part of the overall education required for ABC Orthotist and/or Prosthetist Certification.

Resident

An orthotic or prosthetic student who is actively fulfilling their residency requirements at an NCOPE accredited residency site. During the course of residency training, students should progress from observing to providing direct patient care. The care must be delivered initially under Direct Supervision, but will progress to Indirect Supervision as the resident's competency increases and is documented by the supervising ABC certified orthotist or prosthetist.

Subtalar-Control Foot Orthosis

A lower extremity orthosis designed to manage the function of the anatomy distal to the ankle joint by primarily controlling the range of motion of the subtalar joint. The proximal height of a SCFO does not extend beyond the junction of the gastrocnemius and the Achilles tendon. A SCFO is a method of treatment for conditions related to the foot demanding additional surface area to control forces.

Supervision and Privileging of a Credentialed Caregiver

Privileging of credentialed individuals to provide services beyond their defined scope of practice must ensure appropriate, effective, ethical and safe delivery of patient care. The credentialed caregiver may be privileged, under Indirect Supervision, to provide patient care beyond the scope of their credential based on Written Objective Criteria.

Privileging of a credentialed caregiver is limited to the following:

Prosthetics:

Orthotists and Prosthetic Assistants who are credentialed by a nationally recognized Orthotic, Prosthetic and Pedorthic certifying board or are licensed¹, if applicable, may be privileged based on Written Objective Criteria to provide prosthetic care.

Orthotics:

Prosthetists, Pedorthists, Orthotic Assistants and Orthotic Fitters who are credentialed by a nationally recognized Orthotic, Prosthetic and Pedorthic certifying board or are licensed, if applicable, may be privileged based on Written Objective Criteria to provide orthotic care.

Pedorthics:

Prosthetists, Orthotic Assistants, Orthotic Fitters and Therapeutic Shoe Fitters who are credentialed by a nationally recognized Orthotic, Prosthetic and Pedorthic certifying board or are licensed, if applicable, may be privileged based on Written Objective Criteria to provide pedorthic care.

ABC credentialed technicians may be privileged based on Written Objective Criteria to participate in direct patient care to provide repairs and minor adjustments, in the discipline they are credentialed, under Indirect Supervision.

The orthotic, prosthetic or pedorthic patient care services provided by the privileged credentialed caregiver which are beyond their scope of practice must not exceed ABC's defined scope of practice for Orthotists, Prosthetists or Pedorthists. The Supervisor must review the results of care and the documentation of the services rendered by the supervised individual and is responsible for countersigning within 15 days all entries by the caregiver in the patient's clinical record. The Supervisor is responsible for all services that the caregiver is being privileged to provide.

Supervision

Direct Supervision

This level of supervision requires the supervising credentialed individual to be available for consultation throughout the patient care process. The supervisor must be physically on site or be available in real-time via audio and visual technology while the care is being provided. The supervisor must perform a real-time visual assessment of the care provided to the patient, review the results of the services rendered by the supervised individual and is responsible for countersigning within 15 days all entries by the caregiver in the patient's clinical record.

Indirect Supervision

This level of supervision does not require the supervising credentialed individual to be on site however they must be available for consultation throughout the patient care process. The supervisor must review the results of care and the documentation of the services rendered by the supervised individual and is responsible for countersigning within 15 days all entries in the patient's clinical record. The maximum permissible ratio of certified assistants to the supervising prosthetist or orthotist is 5:1.

Any privileging must be in compliance with all state laws or rules that apply to the provision of orthotic, prosthetic or pedorthic items and services.

Supervisor

The supervisor is the designated individual credentialed by a nationally recognized Orthotic, Prosthetic and Pedorthic certifying board, or is licensed, who oversees and is solely responsible for the delivery of appropriate, effective, ethical and safe orthotic, prosthetic and/or pedorthic patient care. The supervisor may oversee patient care services only in the discipline(s) they are credentialed and within the ABC defined scope of practice.

Support Personnel

An ABC credential holder may delegate certain tasks in the provision of any custom fabricated or custom fitted orthosis, prosthesis or pedorthic device to non-credentialed support personnel. Any tasks delegated to Support Personnel must be supervised under Direct Supervision. Those delegated tasks must be within the ABC credential holder's scope of practice. These tasks must not include patient evaluation, formulation of the treatment plan, final fitting and assessment of the orthosis/prosthesis and any follow-up care that modifies the function of the orthosis/prosthesis as originally prescribed. Delivery of orthoses/prostheses to the patient after the credential holder has completed a final fitting and assessment may be performed without the Direct Supervision requirement.

If the Support Personnel holds a recognized license or certification in a related allied health profession (e.g., Physical Therapist/PTA, Occupational Therapist/OTA, Athletic Trainer, etc.), they may be supervised under Indirect Supervision.

Technician

An individual trained and qualified to assist an ABC credentialed individual by providing technical support. The technician fabricates, repairs and maintains orthoses and prostheses. The technician is proficient with current fabricating techniques, familiar with material properties and skilled in the use of appropriate equipment.

¹ Any privileging must be in compliance with all state laws or rules that apply to the provision of orthotic, prosthetic or pedorthic items and services.

Telehealth

(See ABC's Statement on Telehealth on our website)

Therapeutic Shoe Fitter

A health care professional who is specifically educated and trained to provide non-custom therapeutic shoes and non-custom multi-density inserts. This includes patient evaluation, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, continuation of the treatment plan and practice management.

Unstable Spinal Condition

An unstable spinal condition has a risk of further injury due to a lack of structural or neurologic stability of the spine. If the patient requires orthotic stabilization prior to basic activities (e.g., sitting up, standing, ambulation), the patient's condition is defined as unstable.

Written Objective Criteria

Written objective criteria is the documentation describing how a privileged caregiver's ability to provide a specific patient care service has been assessed and verified. How the caregiver has gained the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to provide a specific patient care service must be clear and related to the diagnosis involved and the orthosis, prosthesis or pedorthic device being provided. This documentation may take different forms including, but not limited to:

- Proof of completion of continuing education courses related to a particular diagnosis or device
- Documented in-house training/in-services that are specific to the patient care service that the caregiver is being privileged to provide
- Documented specific work experience participating in supervised patient care activities



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