Don’t Stop Believing—My Motto for a Monumental Year

Eric Ramcharran, CPO

S
everal ABC past presidents unwittingly gave me the same words of advice, “Enjoy the experience because it goes by fast.” As I come to the end of my presidency, I have to admit they were undeniably right.

When I look at the ABC Vision Statement: Setting Standards, Improving Outcomes, Changing Lives, it makes me appreciate all of the hard work dedicated staff and volunteers put in to making ABC a respected leader in the orthotic and prosthetic profession.

As I reflect upon this year, there were several accomplishments to highlight:

• I traveled roughly 19,000 miles throughout my presidency—Talk about a frequent flyer!
• I became an expert at ribbon cutting.

All jokes aside, I am pleased to have participated in many monumental events for ABC. From a new digital CPM exam, to the opening of the new state of the art ABC Testing Center, to passing the baton to ABC’s first female president, the phrase ‘Don’t Stop Believing’ could not hold truer.

Other noteworthy events that I had the honor to be a part of include the decision to combine the orthotic and prosthetic written exams into a single exam to be given immediately post-graduation from an O&P Master’s program, as well as the recent privileging changes to ABC’s Scope of Practice.

I am very grateful to have the counsel and guidance of many amazing ABC past presidents. In particular, I would like to thank Immediate Past President Chris Fairman, CPO for his guidance, advice, mentoring and

Passing the Baton

Deborah Merritt Plescia, CPO, Named First Female ABC President

E ric Ramcharran, CPO, officially passed the baton to incoming board president Debbie Plescia on December 1st. Plescia has served on the Board of Directors Executive Committee for the past two years and as a Board Director since 2011. She has volunteered with ABC for many years in numerous roles including prosthetic examiner, exam development and administration team member and facility accreditation surveyor.

“I’m very excited that the first female president

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ABC Welcomes Three New Board Members:

ABC WELCOMES three new members to its board of directors following the retirement of two members on November 30th. Those members who joined the board December 1st were Brett R. Saunders, CPO, FAAOP, Michelle A. Yakaboski, CPO and Colleen P. Coulter, PT, DPT, PhD, PCS, ABC’s new public member. At its September 5th meeting in Las Vegas, the ABC Board of Directors confirmed these appointments and also bid farewell to Jeanine Doty, CPO, CFm, RN and Stephanie Langdon, CPO, FAAOP(D).

Colleen P. Coulter, PT, DPT, PhD, PCS of Atlanta, Ga. is a Board Certified Pediatric Clinical Specialist through the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and has been practicing in the field of pediatrics for 43 years. For the past 31 years, Colleen has worked alongside orthotists and prosthetists at the Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Orthotics and Prosthetics Department. She is the team leader for the Limb Deficiency program and has lectured nationally and internationally and published in peer review journals and books on topics relating to physical therapy interventions in children with limb deficiencies.

Colleen also serves as a physical therapist in the Cranial Remolding Program at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta and was instrumental in co-authoring several works on the topic of congenital muscular torticollis. In 2009, Colleen was awarded honorary membership to the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetist. She is an active member of APTA as well as the Association of Children’s Prosthetics and Orthotics Clinics, ACPOC. She also works as an Assistant Adjunct Professor at Emory University’s School of Medicine Department of Rehabilitation and teaches at Georgia Tech’s MSPO program.

Colleen received her undergraduate Bachelor of Science degree from Boston University, Master’s degree in Developmental Disabilities from Long Island University, and Doctor of Physical Therapy and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Rocky Mountain University of Allied Health Professions.

“It is an honor to be nominated and elected to the ABC Board of Directors. I look forward to the next four years of service representing and advocating for the community, healthcare providers and most important, the individuals under our care and their families.”

Brett R. Saunders, CPO, FAAOP of Orlando, Fla. has been volunteering with ABC for 20 years. As an integral part of the Facility Accreditation Committee, he has worked to establish and maintain the standards of ABC’s Facility Accreditation program. He is also an active Prosthetic Clinical Patient Management (CPM) examiner and exam site coordinator.


Brett has also served on the St. Petersburg College’s J.E. Hanger College of O&P’s advisory committee and received a gubernatorial appointment to the Florida Board of Orthotists and Prosthetists by Governor Rick Scott in 2013 and 2015.

Since then, Brett has worked as a practitioner in the Central Florida area and now owns and practices at Saunders Prosthetics and Orthotics Group in Lady Lake, Fla. “I volunteer because I want to give back to the profession and have a positive impact. Being a volunteer with ABC
allows me to do that. I work with amazingly talented people and practitioners on the leading edge of patient care and I have become a much better practitioner, continually growing from the experience.”

Michelle A. Yakaboski, CPO of New York, N.Y. began volunteering with ABC in 2012 as an examiner for the Orthotic CPM Exam. Since then, she has served on the Orthotic CPM Exam Audit Team and is presently an exam site coordinator.

Michelle is a graduate of Loyola College in Maryland with a degree in mathematical sciences and a minor in secondary education. She received her O&P education through the Newington Certificate Program at the University of Connecticut and completed her O&P residencies at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center and Hanger Clinic, respectively.

Currently, Michelle is the Senior Orthotic Specialist in Pediatrics and WalkAides® for Hanger Clinic in New York, N.Y. She is very involved not only as a clinician but also as an educator, serving on Hanger’s National Cranial Education Team, teaching their introductory cranial remolding course and developing their advanced cranial remolding course.

She also serves as an NCOPE residency preceptor and advisor/preceptor for the University of Hartford’s summer internship program. “It has been an incredible experience volunteering with ABC and getting to see the exam from the other side. The tremendous amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to develop and give a fair and thoughtful exam is impressive. I’ve truly enjoyed my time thus far and look forward to my new role as an ABC board director and helping make positive changes for the future of the profession.”

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Privileging Changes

The ABC Board of Directors voted to revise ABC’s Orthotic, Prosthetic and Pedorthic Scope of Practice, specifically the way individuals can be privileged to provide patient care. The practice of privileging non-credentialed caregivers has been eliminated. The board also created a new definition of Support Personnel that allows ABC credential holders to delegate certain non-critical patient care tasks to non-credentialed individuals. In addition, changes were made to the definitions of Direct Supervision and Supervision and Privileging of a Credential Caregiver along with the addition of a new category for Support Personnel.

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. Those delegated tasks must be within the ABC credential holder’s scope of practice. These tasks must not include patient assessment, formulation of the treatment plan, final fitting and delivery and any follow-up care that modifies the function of the device as originally prescribed. Any tasks delegated to Support Personnel must be supervised under Direct Supervision.

These Scope of Practice changes take effect January 1, 2019 and do not affect the privileging of certified individuals.

These changes were made to ensure that individuals providing patient care are properly trained and educated. If you are not currently privileging non-certified individuals in your practice then no action is required. However, if you are using this business model in your practice, then you have more than a year to make changes. This could be accomplished either by those individuals obtaining certification or by assigning them to different roles as outlined in the Support Personnel definition.

For more information, please see the FAQs about privileging on the Patient Care Accreditation page of the ABC website.
Residency and Practitioner Eligibility Changes

Bachelor’s Degree

Master’s Degree

In 2006, NCOPE Proposed that entry level practitioner orthotic and prosthetic education should move from a bachelor’s to a master’s level program. They felt this was a necessary move to maintain the delivery of quality patient care due to the dynamic base of knowledge and rapidly emerging processes and technologies in the O&P profession.

Therefore, effective July 1, 2018, any individual applying to enter an NCOPE residency program, either domestic or foreign educated, must have a minimum of a master’s level O&P education.

Opps! Did You Miss the Annual Renewal Deadline?

The deadline for all annual renewal payments was December 1st. If you haven’t done so already, please make your payment today! You can easily pay online via your MY ABC account at abcop.org. You can also print your invoice from your account page and mail it in with your payment or call to make your payment over the phone.

As an ABC credential holder, payment of your annual renewal fee is an essential part of maintaining your credential.

Please note that late fees will be assessed for payments made past the December 1 deadline. For questions concerning your annual renewal payment, please contact Roxanne Bobb-Semple at rbobb-semple@abcop.org or 703-836-7114, ext. 238.

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Most importantly, his friendship. My sincerest appreciation to incoming President Debbie Plescia, CPO, and President-Elect Larry Word, CPO, for their support and unwavering steadiness. Lastly, I am grateful to Executive Director Cathy Carter for her unsurpassed organizational skills, support and wonderful sense of humor. I am going to miss those weekly conference calls.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation for the volunteerism of so many individuals, who without their efforts and dedication, ABC would not exist: the CPM examiners, the committee members and the Board of Directors!

I am forever humbled and honored for the privilege to have served as your President of ABC this past year. I am excited for the future and eager to see what’s next for ABC. Now, I have to go reintroduce myself to my office staff.

HCPCS Code Changes

Effective immediately, ABC no longer maintains a separate list of HCPCS codes that deviates from what Medicare classifies as off-the-shelf devices. All devices with the term off-the-shelf in the Medicare descriptor are now considered by ABC to be off-the-shelf devices and do not require a credentialed individual to dispense, fit or provide. These changes were made at the September ABC Board of Directors’ meeting.

If you have any questions about how this change may impact your practice, please contact ABC’s accreditation staff at accreditation@abcop.org or 703-836-7114.
Where’s Jim?

JIM PUTS THE capital B in BUSY. In three short months, he’s trekked through 13 states, visited 7 practitioner schools, and attended 7 state meetings and 3 national shows! Hang on tight and enjoy the ride!

POPS—And we don’t mean the cereal! It stands for the Pennsylvania Orthotic Prosthetic Society and Jim exhibited and co-hosted lunch at their Annual Meeting, Nov. 5-6 in Harrisburg.

Migrating South—What Jim was doing last month when he flew south to three different schools to speak with MSOP students, starting with Alabama State University and Georgia Tech on the east coast and then Loma Linda University on the west coast. Jim will return to sunny California in January when he visits CSU-Dominguez Hills to talk to students about ABC certification.

Leis Leis Leis!—What Jim will be greeted with when he arrives in Maui Jan. 21-24 for the 2018 Pacific Rim Conference. This meeting, sponsored by USISPO, will draw attendees from the US, Australia, Canada, Germany Japan, South Korea and Sweden.

Where’s Jim headed? Not to Brazil but to the Rio Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas for the 2018 Hanger Ed Fair. Jim will kick off the New Year by exhibiting at this event on Jan. 29–Feb. 2. If you happen to be there, stop by and say hello to Jim!

Tulsa—aka T-Town, The Original Oil Capital of the World, and Oklahoma’s second largest city—it’s where Jim will attend the Oklahoma State O&P Association and PrimeFare Central’s combined scientific symposium on Feb. 23-24.

Jim would like to thank the Academy—The Academy of Orthotics and Prosthetics, that is, for hosting their upcoming 44th Annual Meeting in New Orleans on February 14–17. There’s a little something for everyone, from Jim’s accreditation session to the Resident Networking event and ABC-sponsored Student Social.

—What we are at ABC for the opportunity to serve an amazing community of O&P professionals. Wishing you holiday greetings and a Happy New Year from ABC!
Your success is important to us and we hope that these tools will help take some of the stress out of compliance. 

Watch the mail this month for your facility’s calendar and remember that we are here to help with your accreditation needs.

2018 Accreditation Compliance Calendar Coming Soon!

NEXT YEAR’S calendar shows you how small steps can produce big results for your facility’s compliance. It is chock-full of advice and tips, highlighting some of the most critical and often missed standards. The calendar is a great way to make sure that everyone at your practice is keeping up with accreditation compliance throughout the entire year.

In addition to the 2018 calendar that accredited facilities will receive in the mail, there are two new resources available in the online Compliance Kit Resource Pack—an Equipment Maintenance Log and a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) FAQ flyer, as well as an updated Privileging Record Template. Be sure to check out these and the 19 other templates and forms in our online Resource Pack!

Free Lunch Postcard Challenge

WE’RE ONCE AGAIN running our postcard contest to test your accreditation compliance knowledge throughout the year. Simply answer the questions on the postcards included with your calendar and submit for a chance to win free lunch for your staff in December! Be sure to ask your facility’s accreditation compliance officer about participating. You can’t win if you don’t play—Good Luck!

Passing the Baton
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of ABC is someone who grew up in this profession and has seen it from all sides,“ said ABC Executive Director Cathy Carter. “Debbie has years of experience volunteering for ABC and truly believes in our mission.”

Plescia completed her orthotic and prosthetic education at Northwestern University, where she was part of the first equally split male to female cohort. “There were many obstacles to overcome as a new certifiee, business owner and female practitioner in a still male dominated profession,” remarked Plescia. “I was surrounded by many supportive friends, relatives and peers who provided encouragement and opportunities for success. One of my favorite quotes continues to be ‘The strongest steel is forged in the hottest fire.’ I certainly felt like I was in an inferno during some of those early days of being referred to as ‘the nurse,’ ‘the helper’ or ‘that girl.’

Currently, Plescia is a clinical director for Boston Orthotics & Prosthetics (formerly Boston Brace) and specializes in pediatric O&P care at their Lanham, Md. facility.

Plescia is a second-generation certified prosthetist-orthotist and Louisiana native. As a mother of two and daughter of an amputee, she puts a strong emphasis on treating each patient as she would want her own family to be treated.

“Being president of ABC is a responsibility I take very seriously,” says Plescia. “As THE credentialing and accrediting body for O&P, the actions and decisions of ABC are consequential to the past, present and future of the profession I have embraced all of my life. As a board member, I have witnessed the sincerity of the staff and board in their adherence to the ABC mission. I will work diligently to continue this dedication and vision.”

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ABC Participating at the Academy’s 44th Annual Meeting in New Orleans

WE ARE GEARING UP for the upcoming Academy Annual Meeting & Scientific Symposium, February 14–17 in New Orleans—one of the top events for O&P professionals seeking clinical, scientific and practice management education. In addition to exhibiting at this important meeting, Jim Lawson, Outreach Development Manager, will be presenting an accreditation session on Friday, Feb. 16, 1:50–3:20 pm. Be sure and join Jim for Compliance Excellence, Best Business Practices and the Successful Accreditation Survey. Learn ways your business can save time and money, how to comply with the standards that directly apply to your practice, the most common issues surveyors find during onsite surveys and how to avoid them, plus Jim will also share insights on how to market your hard-earned accreditation.

We are excited to welcome O&P’s youngest attendees and next generation of practitioners to the Academy’s Residency Networking Session and popular Student Social, which ABC and NCOPF are sponsoring again this year.

For more information about the Academy Annual Meeting, check out the events calendar at abcop.org/news-events.
The American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics & Pedorthics, Inc.
330 John Carlyle Street, Suite 210
Alexandria, VA 22314-5760
Phone: 703.836.7114
Fax: 703.836.0838
abcop.org

Calendar of Events

For further information on these events, please visit abcop.org or contact us at 703.836.7114.

January
1: Application Deadline for March Written and Written Simulation Exams
8-13: Written and Written Simulation Certification Exams
Over 300 Locations Nationwide

February
1: Application Deadline for Spring CPM Exams
1: Residency Completion Deadline for March Written and Written Simulation Exams

March
1: Application Deadline for May Written and Written Simulation Exams
1: Residency Completion Deadline for Spring CPM Exams
12-17: Written and Written Simulation Certification Exams
Over 300 Locations Nationwide

April

May
14-17: Academy Annual Meeting and Scientific Symposium
New Orleans
23-24: PrimeFare Central Regional Scientific Sym./Oklahoma Assoc. for O&P Annual Meeting
Tulsa

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

Alliance Update

ABC AND THE O&P ALLIANCE continue to advocate for state and federal policy that improves the practice of O&P and the quality of services provided to patients who require these health care services.

The Alliance is exploring its options to respond to CMS’s decision to withdraw the proposed rule to implement BIPA Section 427, which would establish who is qualified to provide custom O&P services to Medicare beneficiaries. Although this latest decision by CMS is disappointing, ABC believes there is still a path forward and will continue to encourage CMS to publish regulations to implement this 17-year-old federal statute.

Other topics ABC and the Alliance are working on include:

- Responding to the DME MAC/PDAC announcement related to how custom therapeutic inserts (A5513) must be fabricated
- Providing formal comment to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) for their report on Lower Limb Prostheses
- Commenting on a proposed rule that may impact how veterans receiving care within the VA system can choose where they receive their prosthetic services

The deadline for public comment on the VA proposed rule is December 15, 2017. Visit federalregister.gov and search 2017-22358 to read the proposed rule and submit your comments.