As the credentialing body for many O,P&P professionals and practices, we are committed to establishing and advocating for the highest patient care and organizational standards in O,P&P. As a leader in the profession, we also have the unique opportunity to help promote an anti-harassment culture. We hope you will join us in learning more through our two-part article series and harassment focused podcast.

If you recall from Part 1 of our Harassment in the Workplace article series, we focused on the role of employers, specifically the need for them to have harassment policies and procedures in place along with the importance of communicating to all staff both the employee’s right to raise a complaint and how to do so. We’d like to flip the script and take a closer look at how harassment affects an individual. Imagine you were the one experiencing harassing behavior. Would you feel comfortable mentioning it to someone or even filing an official complaint with your company’s HR department or your supervisor?

According to a 2018 report from Edison Research*, 21 percent of Americans say they have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. To put that in perspective, let’s say there are 20 employees at one single facility. Roughly four of those 20 would have experienced workplace sexual harassment at some point. That doesn’t account for other forms of harassment such as discriminatory, psychological and third-party harassment.

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Harassment in the Workplace
Continued from page 1

An even more startling statistic comes from the 2019 Guide to Workplace Sexual Harassment in which 81 percent of individuals believe that sexual harassment occurs in most American workplaces, but 90 percent believe it’s not a problem in their own office. So, if we all think it’s happening, but we don’t think it’s happening to any of us, there is clearly a disconnect. The Guide also states that 87–94 percent of individuals who are harassed do not file a complaint. Why not? There are probably a number of reasons such as fear of retaliation or embarrassment. In fact, 75 percent of employees that spoke out against workplace mistreatment reported that they faced retaliation, according to the Guide.

**The 2019 Guide to Workplace Sexual Harassment

While we may believe (or want to believe) that the O,P&P profession is different, that is likely not the case. That’s why it’s important that we all do our part to help shift the culture.

Despite the statistically low percentage of instances in which individuals do report harassment, ABC has received complaints over the years related to harassment issues and hostile work environments. One such example took place within an O&P practice. A female staff member alleged that a male co-worker had created a hostile work atmosphere by displaying inappropriate images in the office. These images were accompanied with coarse remarks that were sexual in nature. She also claimed that this person made remarks to her about her body that were personal and inappropriate. After encouragement from her human resource manager to handle the issue internally, she decided not to file an official complaint with ABC. Ultimately, the alleged harasser was terminated but continued to practice within the profession without any further repercussions or monitoring. If the complainant had filed an official complaint with ABC, the ABC Professional Discipline Committee would have opened a case and reviewed the situation. This information would have remained on record. If any additional complaints would have been submitted against this individual, the documented history of complaints would aid in ABC’s decision to take disciplinary actions and to what severity.

Another example of a harassment complaint involved a male employee with a history of making inappropriate comments to several female employees. Initially, these concerns were handled inter-
A BC'S FIRST combined orthotist and prosthetist written certification exam will be administered the week of August 5. All graduates of a combined CAAHEP-accredited O&P master's degree program are eligible to sit for this exam.

Traditionally, ABC’s written practitioner exams have been designed to test the knowledge of a post-residency candidate, however, the new combined exam is designed to test the knowledge of a master’s graduate pre-residency.

The change to the eligibility criteria will allow O&P master’s program graduates to take the written exam immediately after graduation. These changes will give candidates the opportunity to take the exam while their university knowledge is still fresh and give educators an outcome measure of students’ success with their curriculum.

Additional combined discipline exams will be administered in October and December. Deadlines for those exams are August 1 and October 1, respectively.

While we may believe (or want to believe) that the O,P&P profession is different, that is likely not the case.
Alliance Update

O&P VOICES UNITE ON CAPITOL HILL

ABC PARTICIPATED in the 2019 AOPA Policy Forum May 7-8th in Washington, D.C. Representing ABC were President-elect Rachael Friddle-Johnson, CPO, Treasurer Dennis Dillard, C.Ped, CTO, current Board Director-Public Member Anthony Sertick, Jr., JD, Executive Director Catherine Carter, Director of Clinical Resources Stephen Fletcher, CPO and Outreach Development Manager, Jim Lawson.

More than 100 O&P advocates came together at this year’s Forum to prepare for and meet with congressional representatives and their staff at over 250 scheduled appointments. Advocates encouraged the support and enactment of the Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act. The Act helps address the recent Department of Justice indictments against 24 defendants responsible for losses to Medicare through fraudulent schemes involving lead generation marketing to deliver medically unnecessary or unwanted orthoses. This legislation would distinguish O&P patient care encounters from durable medical equipment, re-assert the congressional definition of ‘minimal self-adjustment’ for off-the-shelf orthotics and exempt licensed and certified O&P providers from competitive bid contracts. Participants also asked for the enactment of the Wounded Warrior Workforce Enhancement Act, which improves O&P care for wounded warriors by ensuring an adequate workforce through grants provided to O&P education programs.

New this year was a luncheon keynote. John Register, four-time track and field all-American, Gulf War Army veteran and Paralympic silver medalist spoke to attendees about his continued battle to overcome adversity and turn obstacles into opportunities.

Additionally, ABC, NCOPE and the Academy once again sponsored breakfast for all current and alumnus O&P students participating in the Forum. The breakfast serves as an opportunity to provide education and mentoring to support and enhance the students’ experience at the Policy Forum and on Capitol Hill.

As a result of these united advocacy efforts, many Congressional representatives agreed to co-sponsor the Medicare O&P Patient-Centered Care Act upon its introduction and the Wounded Warrior Workforce Enhancement Act was introduced with eight cosponsors in the House and seven in the Senate.

ABC was proud to participate in the Policy Forum and represent the O&P profession on Capitol Hill. For additional information or to learn how you can participate in next year’s Forum, please visit AOPAnet.org.
Where’s Jim?

Legendary
How Columbus, Ohio should be described! This state capital is home to the Wright Brothers, astronauts John Glenn and Neil Armstrong, the LEGOLAND® Discovery Center and the popular Ohio State Buckeyes as well as this year’s Ohio Chapter Academy meeting where Jim spoke and exhibited, March 29-30.

Double Domes
What Jim saw after attending the Iowa P&O Assn. meeting in Des Moines April 5-6 and the Louisiana Assn. of Orthotist and Prosthetist meeting in Baton Rouge May 30-June 1. From Des Moines’ State Capitol building with 23 carat gold covered dome to Baton Rouge’s Old State Capitol with impressive stained glass dome and castle-like exterior, both were beautiful architectural sights to behold.

It’s better in Washington
Jim attended the AOPA Policy Forum in Washington, DC on May 7-8 and then headed straight to Washington, Pennsylvania to speak and exhibit at the Academy’s Pennsylvania Chapter meeting the 9th through the 11th.

60
The number of future O&P practitioners Jim visited this past spring. Between March and May, he met some very energetic and focused master’s students at Baylor University, Florida International University and the University of Washington. According to Jim, the future of O&P is looking bright!

An Apple a Day
Washington is not only the home state of Bill Gates and Starbucks coffee, but did you know this state is also the largest producer of apples in the United States? Jim traveled to beautiful Bellevue April 11-13 to attend the Academy’s Northwest Chapter three-day conference.

Star Spangled Sparks
Just east of Reno is Sparks, NV, Reno’s less flamboyant neighbor that has only one high-rise casino—the Nugget Casino Resort. This is where Jim exhibited and spoke at the Western & Midwestern O&P Assn. meeting May 16-18. While this city is less showy, it plays host to ‘Star Spangled Sparks’, the largest Independence Day fireworks show in Northern Nevada!
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**ABC Annual Report Available Online**

The 2018 Annual Report was published in May and made available to the public on the ABC website. This year’s report is a video summarizing ABC’s activities for the past year. It highlights our successes and provides data on each program area, including statistics on certified individuals and accredited facilities. To see what we did in 2018, visit abcop.org/news-events/annualreports.

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**Calendar of Events**

**July**

1: Residency Completion Deadline for the August Written & Written Simulation and Fall CPM Exams

12-13: PrimeFare East Regional Scientific Symposium Nashville

**August**

1: Application Deadline for October Certification Exams

1-3: Florida Assn. of Orthotists & Prosthetists Annual Conference Bonita Springs

5-10: Written and Written Simulation Certification Exams Over 350 Locations Nationwide

5-10: Combined Practitioner Written Exam Over 350 Locations Nationwide

17-18: Arkansas State Orthotics & Prosthetics Assn. Meeting Little Rock

**September**

1: Residency Completion Deadline for the October Written & Written Simulation Exams

6-7: Prosthetic Clinical Patient Management (CPM) Exam ABC Testing Center, Tampa

**October**

1: Application Deadline for the December Written & Written Simulation Exams

5-12: Written and Written Simulation Certification Exams Over 350 Locations Nationwide

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