



For Immediate Release

Contacts: Manisha S. Bhaskar
(202) 380-3663
mbhaskar@oandp.org

Amy Smith
(301) 367-2200
Amy@WriteIdeas.com

**Health Trends Increase Demand
for Orthotic & Prosthetic Practitioners**
Art, Science, Technology & Creativity Fuel Healthcare Boom

Washington, DC (September 22, 2016) – A number of health trends are continuing to increase demand for orthotic & prosthetic (O&P) practitioners. As a result, robust employment opportunities continue in this sector, despite the overall stagnant 4.9% unemployment rate reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

A special study published by the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists (the Academy) reported a number of health trends contributing to the demand for O&P practitioners, including an increase in diabetes (15.3 million new cases in the U.S. since 1980); heart disease (projected more than a 26% increase in cases by 2030); and obesity (on the rise, up more than 22% since 1960).

Plus, an aging population increases demand for O&P assistance, and with 72 million Americans predicted to be in the 65+ age group by 2030, the demand for practitioners is expected to continue. Likewise, within the field of practicing O&P professionals, almost 25% are 55 years or older and likely to retire in the next 10 years, leaving ample opportunity for new entrants to the profession.

The Academy, which has been at the forefront of research, advocacy, and career development in the O&P profession, suspects that the unique combination of skills required to work in this field has been a draw to not only recruit but also retain professionals. Specifically, a public service campaign created by the Academy described O&P careers as “a blend of science, art, technology, creativity & healthcare.”

Creative technologies, in particular, are thought to be fueling this increase in job opportunities. According to Academy President Rick Miller, CO, FAAOP, “As technology has advanced, for example in the areas of STEM and 3D printing, we see O&P professionals leveraging more effective solutions than ever before, yielding more opportunities for their patients.” The Academy has assembled industry thought leaders to share clinical and scientific advances and their application to patient care in their State of the Science Conferences. Miller said some recent examples include proprietary reports on microprocessor-controlled prosthetic knees, the biomechanics of ambulation after partial foot amputation, and a variety of tools for O&P professionals working with upper and lower limb prosthetics.

Average compensation within the O&P profession ranges from \$39,500 to \$75,300, according to the 2013 American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association (AOPA) Compensation and Benefits Report.

The trends and data associated are outlined on a recently published infographic by the Academy, available [via this link](#).

For more information, visit www.OandP.org or www.OPCareers.org.

About the Academy

The Academy, founded in 1970, is the professional organization representing certified and state-licensed practitioners, technicians, fitters, and others affiliated with the profession of orthotics and prosthetics (O&P). Through education, research, advocacy, and collaboration, it is dedicated to helping its members provide the highest level of professional care and service to their patients. The Academy is a member of the Orthotic & Prosthetic Alliance (www.oandpalliance.org), and started a research-based foundation, the Orthotic & Prosthetic Education and Research Foundation (www.operf.org). Also, through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment & Training Administration, the Academy created OPCareers.org, the most comprehensive professional O&P networking and resources site. To learn more about the Academy, please visit www.oandp.org.