

THE CASE FOR PARITY

Today, people with limb loss face more challenges than ever before. Growing healthcare costs and cuts by insurers' and employers' coverage of healthcare are putting increasing pressure on working families. This challenge is even more critical for people with limb loss. As benefits are cut, the very prostheses that they need to continue to participate in school activities, be an integral part of the work force and provide for their families are in jeopardy.

People living with the absence or loss of a limb face daunting obstacles when attempting to obtain appropriate prosthetic care. Some third-party payers place annual or lifetime caps on prosthetic devices. Others eliminate coverage altogether. These factors may very well prevent people with limb loss from living productive lives, lead to poor rehabilitation outcomes, and place amputees at risk for dangerous and costly secondary conditions.

Chronic secondary conditions such as depression, obesity and cardiovascular disease can lead to additional amputation. Each of these costly, devastating conditions exacts a tremendous emotional and economic toll on society, but they can be prevented by providing appropriate technology, support and education.

Companies are imposing unrealistic caps such as:

- One limb per lifetime
- \$2,500 per lifetime
- \$500 per year.

And some companies are eliminating orthotic and prosthetic coverage altogether!

A NEW CHAPTER

From its beginning in 1986, ACA has provided information and support to amputees, their families and healthcare providers in all 50 states. To further serve the needs of its constituency, ACA recently expanded its primary mission to include an advocacy program to influence public policy. This new focus is enabling the ACA to help local groups around the country and empower them to make the changes needed in their state legislature for access to prosthetic care.

BUILDING A NATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR PARITY

The Amputee Coalition of America (ACA) has assumed the challenge to address and improve prosthetic access for all amputees in the U.S., at both state and federal levels. The ACA is working to bring together patients and providers, trade groups and manufacturers through the Action Plan for People with Limb Loss (APPLL) to aggressively reverse these negative reimbursement trends and stem the emergency threats that could further erode coverage and access for prosthetic care.

Colorado was the first state to successfully pass a law mandating insurance coverage for prostheses, followed by Maine in 2003, New Hampshire in 2004, and Rhode Island, Massachusetts and California in 2006. ACA's APPLL program is providing the necessary guidance and assistance to local groups to facilitate the passage of prosthetic coverage legislation in additional states.

For more information or to get involved, contact the Advocacy Department at 202/742-1885 or apll@amputee-coalition.org