

# QUESTIONS

**I**n this issue, *O&P News* poses five questions to **Dennis Clark, CPO**.

Clark is the president of Orthotic and Prosthetic Group of America, a division of The VGM Group. He is the owner of Clark and Associates Prosthetics and Orthotics, O&P1 Central Fabrication, and Limb Lab.

Clark has been in the O&P field for more than 30 years. He has served as a certified orthotist and prosthetist, an instructor at Northwestern University and past president of the American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics. In addition, Clark is a former board member of American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists (AAOP), a former president of the American Orthotic Prosthetic Association, Region 7, and is a recipient of AAOP's Distinguished Practitioner Award.

In 2003, Clark and his partners were contracted by the U.S. Department of Defense to provide prosthetic care to wounded soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

## A Conversation With Dennis Clark, CPO



***O&P News:* Who has had the greatest influence on your career?**

***Clark:*** Initially, my father, **Dale Clark, CP**. We worked together from 1968 to 1987, and he mentored me for an additional decade before his death. From 2003 to 2005, I had the opportunity to be a part of the rehabilitation team at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Both experiences have left an indelible impression on me about the value and importance of our profession.

***O&P News:* What was the defining moment that led you to your field?**

***Clark:*** My father needed a willing and inexpensive technician. After seeing the impact he had on the lives of the patients and the families he served, I was hooked — and I am still hooked.

***O&P News:* What area of research in O&P most interests you right now? Why?**

***Clark:*** Outcomes research. It does not matter if you are a prosthetic upper extremity specialist or if you spend your days delivering foot orthoses, it is critical that you be measured by the value of care you provide and not just the cost of the orthosis or prosthesis. We do not make arms, legs and braces. We manage orthotic and prosthetic care to improve the function, health and quality of life of the people we serve. Until we can prove that through outcome measures and not patient satisfaction surveys, we will continue to spiral into the lowest cost provider universe. The value of our education and experience is in the management of care solutions, not supplying stuff.

***O&P News:* What do you enjoy doing to relax?**

***Clark:*** Relaxation for me includes sitting on a fishing boat in nearly any part of the world, but most of the time in northern Minnesota — and it does not have to include catching fish.

***O&P News:* What is up next for you?**

***Clark:*** Carrying the message of who we are and the value of what we do in the management of orthotic and prosthetic care. The value of what we do should be apparent to the patient, payer, health care network and our government. We can become professionals or go back to being craftsmen. It is our choice.

**For more information:**

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**Disclosure:** Clark reports no relevant financial disclosures.