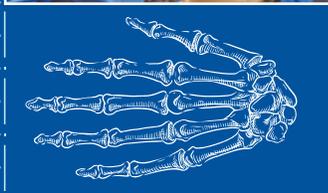
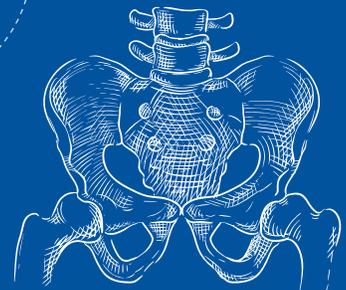
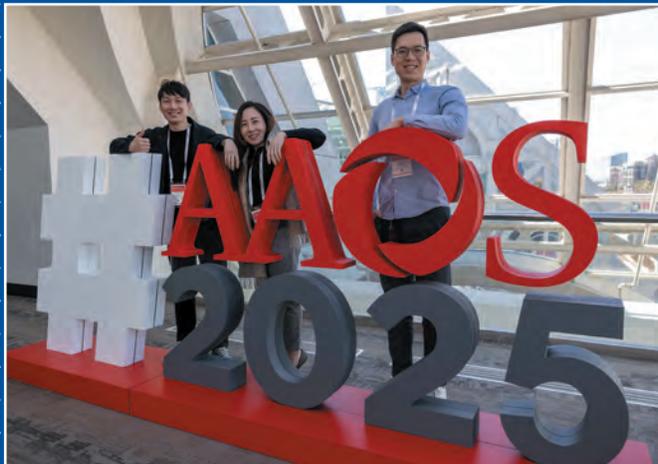


# BLUEPRINT FOR IMPACT

Building the Future  
of Orthopaedics



2025

ANNUAL REPORT

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# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Annunziato Amendola, MD, FAAOS**  
President  
Durham, NC



**Reid B. Nichols, MD, FAAOS**  
BOS Secretary  
Wilmington, DE



**Wilford K. Gibson, MD, FAAOS**  
1st Vice President  
Virginia Beach, VA



**Evalina L. Burger, MD, FAAOS**  
Member-At-Large  
Aurora, CO



**Michael L. Parks, MD, FAAOS**  
2nd Vice President  
New York, NY



**John T. Gill, MD, FAAOS**  
Member-At-Large  
Dallas, TX



**Mininder S. Kocher, MD, MPH, FAAOS**  
Treasurer  
Dover, MA



**Monica M. Payares, MD, FAAOS**  
Member-At-Large  
Miami, FL



**Paul Tornetta III, MD, PhD, FAAOS**  
Past President  
Chestnut Hill, MA



**Sean Tabaie, MD, FAAOS**  
Member-At-Large  
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**Michael J. Leddy III, MD, FAAOS**  
BOC Chair  
Alexandria, LA



**Timothy J. Constantine**  
Public Member



**James W. Barber, MD, FAAOS**  
BOC Chair-Elect  
Douglas, GA



**Lilly Marks**  
Public Member  
Greenwood Village, CO



**Jeffrey R. McLaughlin, MD, FAAOS**  
BOC Secretary  
Neenah, WI



**Adolph J. Yates Jr, MD, FAAOS**  
BOS Chair  
Pittsburgh, PA



**Julie B. Samora, MD, PhD, MPH, FAAOS**  
BOS Chair-Elect  
Akron, OH

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Thomas E. Arend Jr., Esq., CAE**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Dino Damalas, MBA**  
Chief Operating Officer

**Laura Abrahams**  
Chief Human Resources Officer

**Nathan Gluskamp, MA**  
Chief Quality, Registries, and Government Relations Officer

**Anna Salt Troise, MBA**  
Chief Commercial Officer



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE CEO

As we reflect on 2025, we are proud to highlight a year defined by progress, purpose, and momentum for the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) and the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Guided by our Annual Report's theme, Blueprint for Impact: Building the Future of Orthopaedics, AAOS advanced the orthopaedic profession while strengthening the foundation to lead it into the future.

This blueprint came to life at the 2025 AAOS Annual Meeting in San Diego where thousands of orthopaedic surgeons, residents, and allied health professionals gathered to exchange knowledge, explore emerging technologies, and engage in hands-on learning. From cutting-edge scientific sessions to dynamic educational programming and meaningful networking, the Annual Meeting reaffirmed AAOS as the premier destination and learning platform for orthopaedics worldwide.

Throughout the year, we made significant progress in protecting patient access to high-quality musculoskeletal care. We championed evidence-based practice and advanced policies that reflect the real-world challenges faced by orthopaedic surgeons. From reimbursement and site-of-service issues to scope of practice, research funding, and regulatory modernization, we elevated the priorities of our members and the needs of the patients we serve.

Our commitment to research and quality innovation also moved forward with purpose. AAOS expanded evidence-based resources, strengthened quality programs, and supported initiatives that promote data-driven decision-making and improved patient outcomes. The introduction of the AAOS Orthobiologics Registry is a powerful example of this work, underscoring our dedication to rigorous science, meaningful collaboration, and the future of musculoskeletal health.

In leadership and governance, 2025 marked a year of thoughtful evolution. AAOS continued to modernize its governance through streamlined bylaws, invest in leadership development, and reinforce transparency, engagement, and responsiveness. These efforts position the AAOS for long-term sustainability and relevance in an increasingly complex healthcare environment.

We are proud of the continued strength of our membership. In 2025, AAOS reached important membership milestones, enhanced member offerings, and streamlined the membership application process, reflecting the enduring value we deliver across career stages and practice settings. Our members are the heart of AAOS, and their engagement fuels our shared success.

Thank you for your dedication to AAOS, advancing musculoskeletal health, and improving the lives of the patients we serve. Together, we are building a blueprint for lasting impact and shaping the future of orthopaedics.



**Ned Amendola, MD, FAAOS**

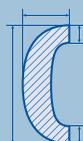
President

American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons



**Thomas E. Arend, Jr., Esq., CAE**

AAOS Chief Executive Officer





Attendees greeted AAOS mascot Skeletoni at the 2025 Annual Meeting.

## OVERVIEW

With more than 39,000 members, AAOS is the world's largest medical association of musculoskeletal specialists. AAOS provides educational programs for orthopaedic surgeons and allied health professionals, champions and advances the highest quality musculoskeletal care for patients, and is the authoritative source of information on bone and joint conditions, treatments, and related issues.

## MISSION

Serving our profession to provide the highest quality musculoskeletal care.

## VISION

The trusted leaders in advancing musculoskeletal health.

## CORE VALUES

Leading to Serve. Shaping the Future. Excellence Together.

## THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

Founded in 1933, AAOS is the preeminent provider of musculoskeletal education to orthopaedic surgeons and others in the world. Its continuing medical education (CME) activities include a world-renowned annual meeting, multiple CME courses held around the country and at the OLC Education and Conference Center, and various medical and scientific publications and electronic media materials.

## THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

Founded by the Academy Board of Directors in 1997, the Association engages in health policy and advocacy activities on behalf of musculoskeletal patients and the profession of orthopaedic surgery. The OrthoPAC is the only national political action committee in Washington, D.C., representing orthopaedic surgeons before Congress.



## Financial Position

(dollars in thousands)

		December 2025	December 2024
<b>Assets</b>	Cash and cash equivalents	35,381	33,206
	Accounts receivable	6,107	5,619
	Investments	159,303	143,905
	Property and equipment	13,856	15,887
	Other assets	25,069	28,863
	<b>Total assets</b>	<b>239,716</b>	<b>227,480</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	Accounts payable and accrued expenses	30,276	33,756
	Deferred revenue	21,468	20,646
	<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>51,744</b>	<b>54,402</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	Unrestricted	186,466	171,498
	Temporarily restricted	1,506	1,580
	<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>187,972</b>	<b>173,078</b>

## Change in Net Assets

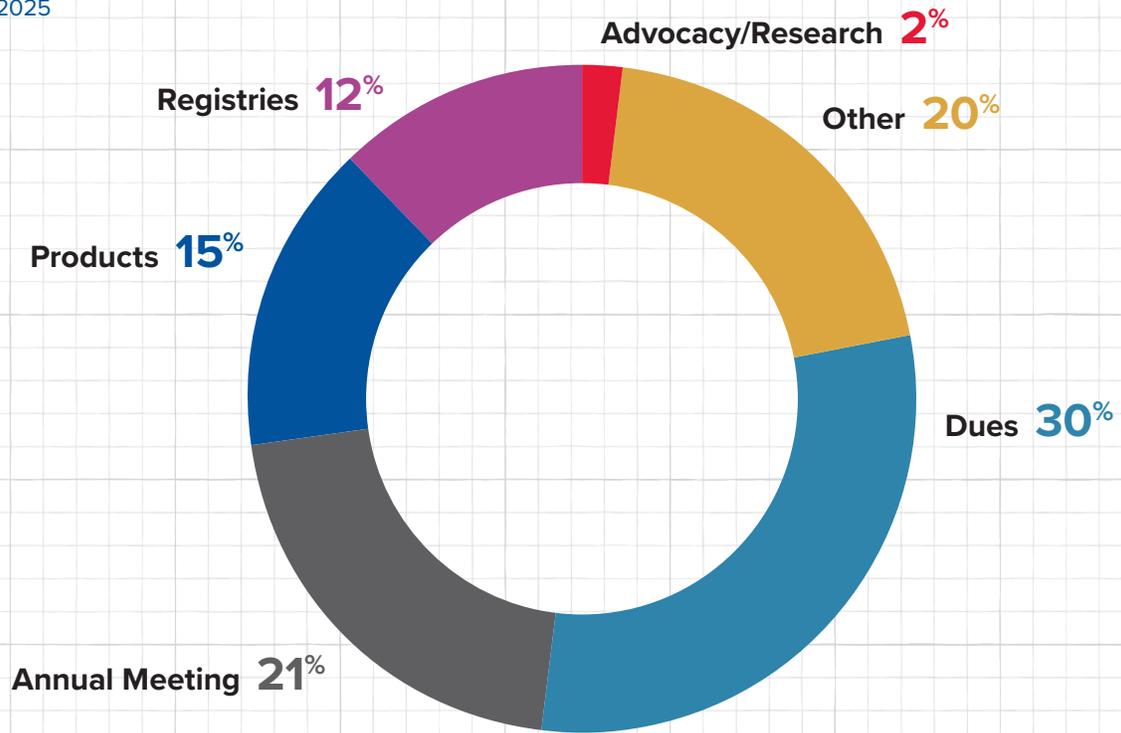
(dollars in thousands)

	December 2025	December 2024
Revenues	74,401	68,800
Expenses	72,168	68,675
<b>Net income from operations</b>	<b>2,233</b>	<b>125</b>
Investments	14,328	7,993
Investments in OPLLC	1,060	941
Investments in projects (from reserves)	(2,653)	(2,933)
<b>Change in net assets</b>	<b>14,968</b>	<b>6,126</b>



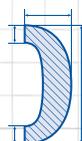
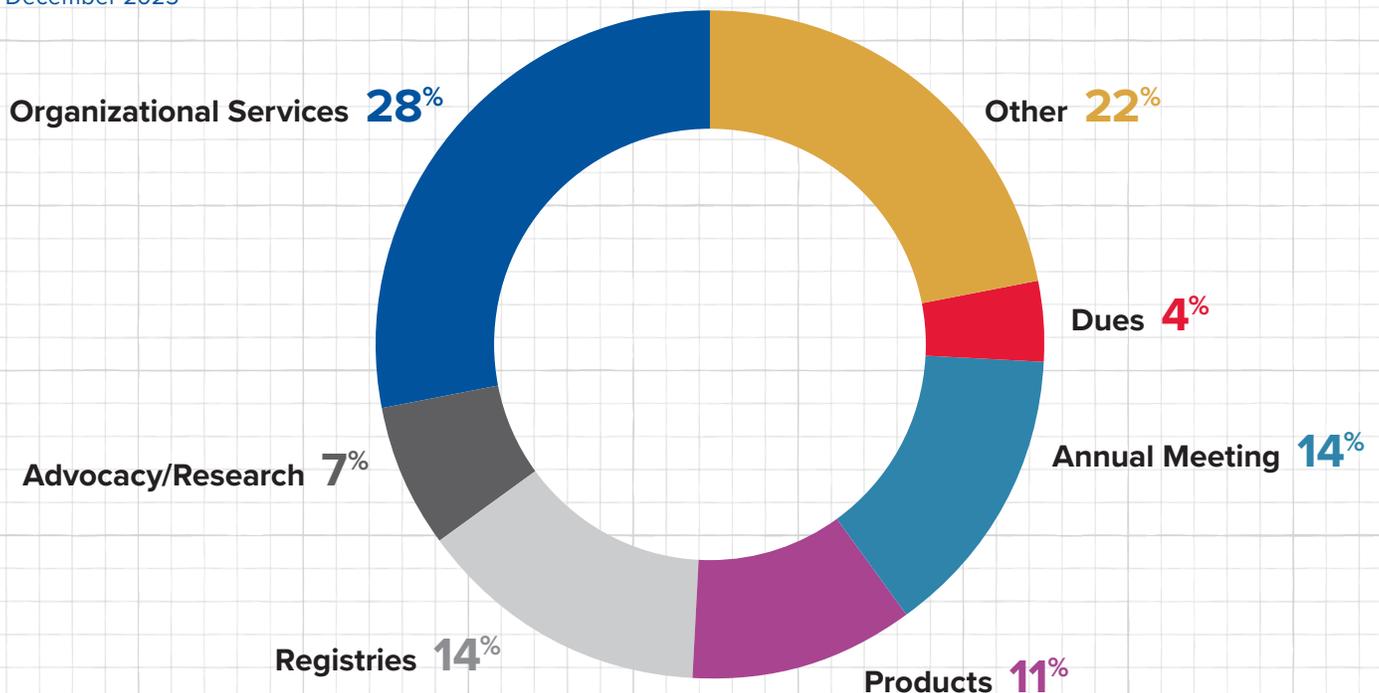
## Revenue by Source

December 2025



## Expenses by Source

December 2025



Hands-on skills courses hosted by AAOS help members sharpen their skills and learn new techniques to aid in treating their patients.



# Education



# Elevating Resident Learning

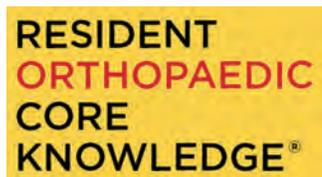
## ROCK and ResStudy

The Resident Orthopaedic Core Knowledge (ROCK) platform is the premier online tool for orthopaedic training, providing a free, comprehensive learning experience for residents, analytic tools for program directors, and supplemental material for faculty.

In 2025, ROCK achieved major milestones with the inaugural ROCK/Study Awards Ceremony at the AAOS Annual Meeting in San Diego. The ceremony honored residents and resident programs for their outstanding use of ROCK and ResStudy, a robust question bank designed to provide rigorous exam preparation. Awards included the ROCK 'n Scroll Award for most study time, ROCK & ResStudy Study Awards for most study sessions, the ROCK Partner Award, which honored a resident who went above and beyond to help improve the platform, and more.

Platform enhancements — including rolling content updates, advanced analytics, expanded faculty access, and the ability to designate a Chief Resident — streamlined program management and boosted engagement. As of 2025, ROCK shows a 93% retention rate, and ROCK subscribed programs grew 20% over the previous year.

New program enrollments and renewals showed strong growth, as well, while international subscriptions extended ROCK's reach to residents and programs around the world. Strategic marketing campaigns, social media initiatives, and premium support ensured all users could fully leverage the platform, solidifying ROCK as a leading global resource for orthopaedic education.



## Orthopaedic In-Training Examination

The 2025 administration of the Orthopaedic In-Training Examination (OITE) assessed more than 5,000+ residents from 263 residency programs from around the world, continuing the exam's long tradition of being the go-to knowledge assessment tool for residents. 2025 also marks the sixth consecutive year that the Education Assessments and Examinations Committee is working with the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery (ABOS) to link the OITE and ABOS Part 1 Written Examination. AAOS continues to collaborate with ABOS to improve the education of residents and the AAOS Fellowship.



Additionally, ROCK, ResStudy, and OITE continue to integrate seamlessly with residency programs to provide a comprehensive roadmap for residents, offering a blend of foundational knowledge, self-assessment, and exam preparation, all meticulously curated by leaders in the field of orthopaedics. AAOS offers a discounted bundle on all three programs.

## Self-Assessment Examinations

The AAOS Special Interest Self-Assessment Examinations continue to be a vital resource for orthopaedic surgeons seeking to enhance their knowledge and maintain board certification. In 2025, AAOS launched 3 new examinations: Foot and Ankle, Orthopaedic Fundamentals, and Pediatric Orthopaedics.

Looking ahead to 2026, Adult Spine and Musculoskeletal Trauma Self-Assessment Examinations will be released, as well.

Participation in these exams remains strong, underscoring the commitment of orthopaedic professionals to continuous learning and excellence in patient care.



## OLC Education & Conference Center

The OLC Education & Conference Center marked a milestone year in 2025, continuing to celebrate 30 years of advancing medical education. The celebration extended through July and included a Mobile Lab appearance at AOSSM’s Annual Meeting, bringing hands-on training directly to the surgical community on the show floor.



### Achieving Global Excellence

In July, the OLC earned official certification and membership with IACC (International Association of Conference Centres), joining the global association representing the top 1% of meeting venues worldwide. This prestigious recognition, achieved by only 375+ venues across 17 countries, demonstrates the OLC’s commitment to the highest standards in design, technology, sustainability, and service.

### A Premier Destination for Medical Education

The OLC stands as a premier event destination, welcoming over 10,000 distinguished medical professionals annually from all 50 states and more than 50 countries. Our 14,000-square-foot facility combines cutting-edge technology with comprehensive hands-on surgical training.

### Facility Enhancements

To maintain its state-of-the-art environment, 2025 brought several significant upgrades:

- Replaced all window roller shades in the auditoriums for improved lighting control
- Upgraded registration desks to enhance the attendee experience
- Installed new lead vests and protective equipment for the lab, prioritizing participant safety

### Innovative Educational Programming

The OLC hosted numerous groundbreaking courses with leading medical organizations, including:

- AAOS Fundamentals of Knee and Shoulder Arthroscopy for Orthopaedic Residents
- AANA SOMOS Knee Course, training military surgeons in advanced techniques
- Society of Vascular Surgeons bioskills lab course
- AANA’s Comprehensive Arthroscopic Refinement and Arthroplasty Basics, featuring customizable learning tracks by joint and procedure

### Expanding Partnerships

Building on longstanding collaborations with specialty partners AOSSM and the Arthroscopy Association of North America, the OLC expanded beyond orthopaedics in 2025 to host meetings in Critical Care, Vascular Surgery, Spine, oral surgery, and other medical disciplines.

Major industry partners continued to utilize the facility for numerous research and training lab events. In November, the OLC hosted its first Lunch and Learn event for AAOS staff, featuring a timelapse video of lab setup. This successful pilot will serve as the foundation for 2026 educational events, helping other organizations understand what it takes to execute successful lab training.

### Looking Ahead

Strategic marketing and promotion efforts throughout 2025 generated strong momentum, resulting in numerous bookings from new medical clients, both association and corporate, for auditorium presentations and lab training events extending into 2026 and beyond.



# Expanding Learning Through Digital Education

## Orthopaedic Video Theater

The AAOS Orthopaedic Video Theater (OVT) provides trusted, relevant surgical videos from globally renowned experts across the orthopaedic landscape. **In 2025, AAOS grew the OVT library to over 1,700 videos, reflecting strong member engagement and expanded educational offerings.**

Partnerships were also strengthened, including a renewed contract in India and the launch of the Paley Institute Channel, extending OVT's global reach. Committee activity ensured continued oversight across multiple specialties.

Looking ahead, a newly designed OVT platform is in development, positioning the Theater for a next-generation user experience.

## Webinars

AAOS offered 36 CME and 22 non-CME webinars throughout the year, led by expert faculty and designed to further advance members' education. Covering an extensive range of topics — from coding updates and leadership development to cutting-edge clinical insights in shoulder, knee, hand, trauma, spine, and practice management — these programs delivered meaningful learning for every orthopaedic specialty.

### Top 5 Webinars in 2025:

1. CPT & CMS Updates 2025
2. Ultrasound for Peripheral Nerves—Are Electrodiagnostic Studies Obsolete?
3. JAAOS Plus: Impact of Extended Prophylactic Antibiotics on Risk of Prosthetic Joint Infection in Primary Total Hip Arthroplasty: A Matched Cohort Analysis
4. JAAOS Plus: Evolution of Reverse Shoulder Arthroplasty Design Rationales and Where We Are Now
5. Fix or Replace—Shoulder to Knee

OF **168**  
NEW VIDEO  
SUBMISSIONS,  
**138**  
ADVANCED TO  
PEER REVIEW

Discover more with the AAOS Orthopaedic Video Theater.



## Online Learning

Over the past two years, AAOS has launched new educational product lines designed to meet diverse member needs, support different learning styles, and engage allied health professionals. In 2025, these launches included:

- **SkillSet Series**, a collection of educational programs designed for orthopaedic professionals at all career stages. Each series offers a focused, practical learning experience built around a single clinical topic.
- **Guidelines Navigator**, which comprises innovative online courses designed to enhance understanding and application of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Clinical Practice Guidelines.
- **Generalist Series**, an authoritative, self-paced series designed to help general orthopaedists navigate urgent and high-risk musculoskeletal conditions they may encounter in the emergency department, urgent care, or trauma call setting.

Another notable highlight is Orthopaedic Care for Physician Assistants (OPCA), launched in late 2024, which expanded the audience beyond traditional membership. More than 200 ideas from members, staff, and industry partners have fueled sustained creativity and growth in delivering impactful, interactive learning experiences.



## Live Courses

In 2025, AAOS offered a comprehensive lineup of in-person and online courses designed to advance orthopaedic education across all specialties. The year featured hands-on workshops in sports medicine, joint replacement, and arthroscopy; board preparation and expert witness training; and introduced OrthoSkills: Techniques in Sports Medicine and Total Hip, an immersive course allowing participants to focus on one specialty or bundle both for advanced cadaver lab experience.

**With 14 courses and 948 participants, these programs gave members year-round opportunities to sharpen skills, gain practical experience, and stay current with the latest techniques and best practices.**



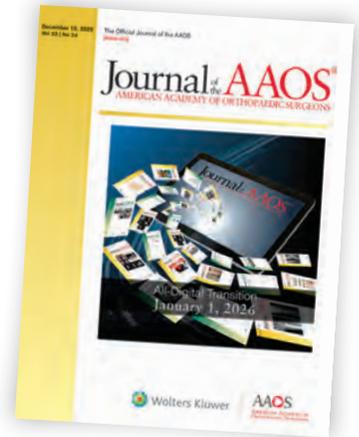
OrthoSkills courses, held in the OLC, provide an immersive experience that allows participants to customize their learning.

## AAOS Publications

### JAAOS

*The Journal of the AAOS*<sup>®</sup> (JAAOS) is the official journal of AAOS, providing evidence-based, peer-reviewed articles that directly impact orthopaedic surgery practice and education.

**Submissions to the journal portfolio grew to more than 2,100 in 2025, 15% more than in 2024, while JAAOS: Research submissions grew 19% and submissions to JAAOS: Global Research & Reviews grew 25%, a new record.**



Additionally, as of 2026, JAAOS is available exclusively in a dynamic, all-digital format. This change reflects a broader effort to modernize how JAAOS delivers content to members and the musculoskeletal community, and is designed to deliver a richer, more interactive experience. Members can visit [JAAOS.org](http://JAAOS.org) to seamlessly access clinical review and research articles, surgical videos, infographics, curated content collections, and more. With the advanced search tool and mobile-friendly design, staying informed is easier than ever.

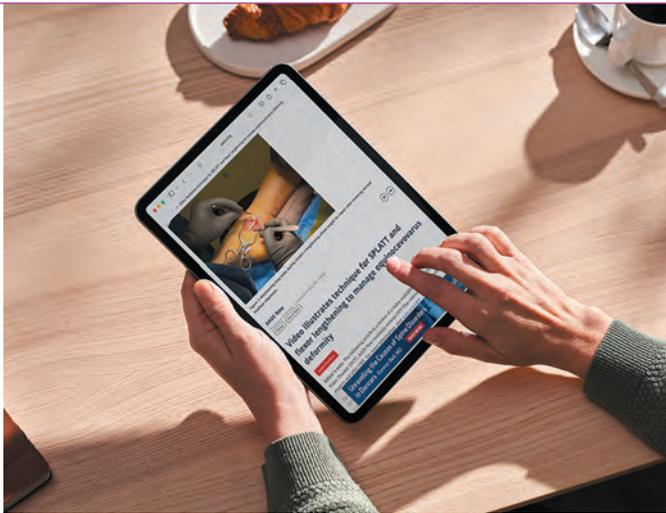
### Books

**Three new books were published for the 2025 Annual Meeting:**

- Instructional Course Lectures: Volume 74
- Orthopaedic Knowledge Update<sup>®</sup>: Shoulder and Elbow 6
- Orthopaedic Knowledge Update<sup>®</sup>: Musculoskeletal Tumors 5

The 2026 Annual Meeting will see the Instructional Course Lectures 75th Anniversary edition, the new Orthopaedic Knowledge Update<sup>®</sup> 15, and Orthopaedic Knowledge Update<sup>®</sup>: Hip and Knee Reconstruction 7. The Orthopaedic Knowledge Update<sup>®</sup>: Pediatrics 7 will be published in late spring.





## AAOS Now

AAOS Now, AAOS’ trusted news magazine for members, is evolving to better serve the musculoskeletal community. In 2026, AAOS Now transitioned to a digital-first format, with quarterly print issues. This change delivers more timely, relevant, and accessible content to all members. While the magazine’s editorial excellence and voice remain unchanged, the digital-first strategy reflects members’ preferences, industry trends and the continued need for sustainable and flexible delivery of content.

In 2025, AAOS transformed its successful Advocacy podcast into the AAOS Now podcast, enabling pursuit of broader content while continuing to cover critical advocacy news. In addition to advocacy and health policy issues, the AAOS Now podcast highlights the topics most relevant to orthopaedic surgeons, including research and quality, clinical innovation, practice management, and professional development.

Hosted by members of the AAOS Now Editorial Board, each episode offers expert insight and advice to help surgeons stay informed, enhance their practices, and provide the best possible care for their patients.



AAOS Now Podcast episodes and the Advocacy Podcast archive are available at [aaos.org/thebonebeat](https://aaos.org/thebonebeat).



## OrthoInfo

Embracing a new multimedia, multichannel approach, AAOS will launch the OrthoInfo podcast in early 2026. Hosted by and with strategic oversight from members of the OrthoInfo Editorial Board, the OrthoInfo podcast will provide in-depth answers to commonly asked questions about bone and joint conditions, treatments, injury prevention, and more.

### Premiere episodes include:

- “When Should I See an Orthopaedic Surgeon?”
- “Biologic Orthopaedic Treatments: Are They Right for Me?”
- “Total Hip Replacement: What Can I Expect?”

After the launch, episodes will be published monthly.

The podcast gives AAOS another meaningful and engaging way to provide accurate information directly to patients and combat health misinformation. It capitalizes on the fact that an increasing number of people are choosing to get their healthcare information from podcasts.

In addition to patients finding the podcast when they are searching for information on their own, doctors and providers can “prescribe” podcast episodes to their patients just as they do with OrthoInfo text content. The podcast is an extension of the website, with the same goal of empowering patients to make informed healthcare decisions and better communicate with their care team, but in a format patients can consume more easily within their busy lifestyles.

Audio episodes can be found within relevant article pages on OrthoInfo, and everywhere you get your podcasts. Full video episodes and clips are available on the OrthoInfo YouTube channel (@AAOSOrthoInfo), enabling patients to select the format they prefer.



## AAOS 2025 Annual Meeting

The AAOS 2025 Annual Meeting, held in San Diego, welcomed orthopaedic professionals from around the world.



The AAOS 2025 Annual Meeting in San Diego brought together orthopaedic professionals from around the world for a week of cutting-edge education, networking, and innovation. More than 2,000 faculty members provided insights into the latest trends in musculoskeletal health. Through a diverse range of educational formats, these experts showcased recent advancements in surgical techniques, technology, and patient care.

The Exhibit Hall once again delivered an unforgettable experience, bringing together more than 600 leading companies across more than 160,000 square feet of innovation, discovery, and collaboration. Attendees explored the latest breakthroughs in orthopaedic technology, products, and solutions, all in one dynamic space.

### Highlights from the Exhibit Hall include:

- **Hands-on education** that empowered attendees with practical insights to enhance patient care and elevate their practice.
- **Exhibitors joined the “OrthoQuest” scavenger hunt**, which was designed to bring meeting attendees directly to their booths and increase engagement.

- **Networking at its best**, including a packed Happy Hour where members connected and shared ideas.
- **Live product demos** that let surgeons see, touch, and experience the newest innovations firsthand.



### Other highlights from the conference include:

- **OrthoPitch** returned for the second year to showcase orthopaedic innovation like new technologies, research, and solutions to experts and peers.
- **Trending education topics**, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in orthopaedic surgery, with specific sessions and a Town Hall dedicated to the topic.

The 2025 Exhibit Hall featured more than 600 leading companies displaying the latest breakthroughs in orthopaedic technology.





The AAOS Resident Bowl allows orthopaedic residents to team up and compete in a live trivia challenge at each AAOS Annual Meeting.

- **The Resident Bowl and Peer Connect mobile app feature** made it easier than ever to meet and network.

Additionally, Captain and U.S. Ambassador “Sully” Sullenberger served as the Presidential Guest Speaker. Sullenberger is most known for the 2009 “Miracle on the Hudson,” during which he and First Officer Jeffrey Skiles safely landed a disabled Airbus A320 in the river near midtown Manhattan. He sat down with AAOS President Paul Tornetta III, MD, PhD, FAAOS, to discuss the famed water landing, how to develop a workplace culture of empathy and collaboration, and the importance of prioritizing safety.



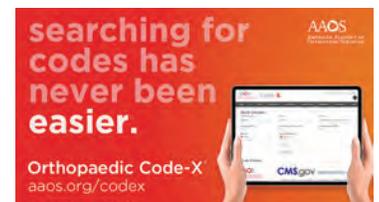
The 2025 Your Academy ceremony featured an exclusive chat between AAOS President and Captain and U.S. Ambassador “Sully” Sullenberger.

## Coding with Code-X®

AAOS' Code-X is the premier coding tool for orthopaedic surgeons. With an efficient Focused Search and an effective interface, it provides a user-friendly experience aimed at saving time and optimizing payments

The AAOS portfolio of coding resources also included the AAOS Coding Community, an all-in-one resource for Practice Management and Coding & Reimbursement resources. Users can explore premiere tools, news, advice, webinars, best practices, and more. New resources are always being added, including the Downcoding Action Guide and Osteoporosis Fracture Care Preventing Quick Coding Guide in 2025.

This year, the Coding Coverage and Reimbursement Committee strengthened AAOS' position as the most trusted resource for orthopaedic coding by delivering fully updated, expert-developed tools and centralized guidance across the coding portfolio. From refreshed Global Service Data to enhancements in Code-X and new practice management resources, AAOS made coding clearer, faster, and more reliable for the entire specialty.



## Practice Resources

AAOS offers a variety of Practice Management resources to support members in delivering the best patient care as they manage their practices in an efficient, compliant, and successful way. These resources include coding and financial information, patient education materials, savings opportunities, guidance on telemedicine, and new webinars such as “TEAM Bundled Payments: How the Game is Played” and “Fireside Chats on AI in Orthopaedics: What’s Working in the Real World.” AAOS members consistently rate these resources highly in the Member Value and Satisfaction Survey (MVAS).



During the 2025 Combined National Orthopaedic Leadership Conference (NOLC)/Fall Meeting, AAOS members met with members of congress, including Senator Todd Young (R-IN), to advocate for issues affecting orthopaedic professionals and their patients.



# Advocacy



## Medicare Payment Reform

AAOS continues to advocate for lasting Medicare payment stability. While Congress provided a temporary 2.5% increase to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) for 2026, other changes CMS finalized in the same rule will negate this increase, highlighting the need for legislative, systemic fixes. Key proposals AAOS supports are linking the MPFS conversion factor to inflation to match rising care costs, and reforming budget-neutrality rules. Current budget-neutrality requirements limit physician payments to a fixed “pot” and force specialties to compete for funds.

## Prior Authorization

Prior authorization — the need to acquire approval before certain services, procedures, or medications are provided — is common across Medicare Advantage (MA) and commercial insurance plans as a tool to manage healthcare costs. However, a study presented at the AAOS 2025 Annual Meeting found that prior authorization was an ineffective cost-saving measure for patients undergoing primary total hip arthroplasty (THA). The study, “Prior Authorization Does Not Reduce Costs in Patients Undergoing Primary Total Hip Arthroplasty,” also saw lower preoperative functional outcomes scores and significantly longer wait times before surgery when prior authorization was required. It is the first study to quantify the time and costs associated with obtaining prior authorization in patients undergoing THA.

AAOS also led an initiative in 2025 that collected testimonials from members on how prior authorization has impacted their practices and patients. From frustrating peer-to-peer reviews to seemingly endless denials, orthopaedic surgeons understand firsthand the barriers imposed by today’s prior authorization system. Sharing these stories helps illustrate the real-world challenges of navigating prior authorization and the need for reform. AAOS will continue to bring these stories to light in 2026 to drive change in musculoskeletal care.

AAOS called on members to contact their representatives about the Improving Seniors Timely Access to Care Act

(H.R. 3514), which aims to address these challenges. Thanks to an overwhelming response from our members, the bill reached the 218 majority threshold of cosponsors in the House. Fifteen new cosponsors signed onto the bill following our grassroots action, 14 of whom had received letters from our members requesting their support. If the bill were to come up for a vote today, it now has enough support in both the House and Senate to pass.

## Physician-Owned Hospitals

AAOS, along with 87 other leading healthcare organizations, sent a letter of support for H.R. 2191/S. 1390, the Physician Led and Rural Access to Quality Care Act. This legislation aims to address the healthcare shortage in rural areas by promoting the development of new physician-led hospitals and the expansion of existing POHs. These policies will significantly increase patients’ access to care, particularly in rural and underserved areas, and strengthen the patient-physician relationship.



## Musculoskeletal Research Funding

As a part of ongoing efforts to restore funding to the Department of Defense’s Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, AAOS joined more than 100 other organizations in sending a letter to congressional leadership on the importance of this research.

### Additionally, AAOS:

- Joined other physician specialty groups to meet with the GOP Doctors Caucus on Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP)
- Advocated for reversal of cuts for FY25 and to restore full funding for FY26
- Endorsed H.R. 3906 the Medical Research for Our Troops Act, which would fully restore funding for FY26



## Value-Based Care

AAOS submitted thoughtful and constructive feedback to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on two new value-based care models. The Transforming Episode Accountability Model is mandatory for certain hospitals, with the option for gainsharing with physicians. The Ambulatory Specialty Model will impact certain orthopaedic surgeons treating patients for low back pain starting in 2027. AAOS is working to educate our members on these models and the potential impact on their practices.

## Coding

AAOS supports orthopaedic professionals through its coding program, which is overseen by the Coding Coverage and Reimbursement Committee (CCRC). The CCRC advocates for orthopaedic surgeons regarding coding and physician payment and develops resources to aid the community in practice management, delivering high-level patient care, and ensuring fair compensation.

To meet the coding needs of its members, AAOS offers a portfolio of coding tools that provide clear guidance on billable services, denials, and appeals. Three key materials make up AAOS' coding portfolio: the Complete Global Service Data for Orthopaedic Surgery (GSD), Code-X®, and the Musculoskeletal Coding Guide. Additionally, the online AAOS Coding Community serves as a valuable resource for orthopaedic professionals.

## Private Payer

In 2025, AAOS led a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight (CCIIO) requesting the agencies act on the downcoding of Evaluation & Management (E/M) services. AAOS and the physician organizations that signed the letter expressed concerns about the unwarranted burden to physicians and their staff if the new policy is implemented, as well as barriers to patients' access to quality care. This coding adjustment practice sets a dangerous precedent and raises several issues

regarding the legality of this type of policy, and may lead to undercoding to avoid having claims adjusted.

**Additionally, along with other physician organizations, AAOS:**

- **Signed a multispecialty letter to Cigna** expressing opposition to Cigna's policy change related to Modifier 50. Specifically, the letter objected to the reduction of reimbursement for imaging services that have a bilateral indicator of "3" (most radiological services) from 100% for each service to 50% for the second service. This policy is not aligned with CMS's own policies and inappropriately reduces physicians' reimbursement.
- **Signed a letter to Elevance Health** expressing opposition to the implementation of their Facility Administrative Policy: Use of a Nonparticipating Care Provider by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans in 11 states beginning Jan. 1, 2026. The policy states that in-network facilities could face a 10% penalty for working with out of network physicians. This is an attempt to game the No Surprises Act passed by Congress to prevent patients from receiving surprise medical bills.

## Orthopaedic Advocacy Week 2025

As champions for the musculoskeletal care community and advocates for orthopaedic surgeons across the U.S., AAOS was proud to commemorate the fifth annual Orthopaedic Advocacy Week with three days of virtual, collective action focused on today's most pressing health policy issues. Each day centered on a different facet of orthopaedic advocacy:

- **Day 1: Growing Support with Grassroots** – Orthopaedic surgeons sent letters to their congressional representatives on priority healthcare policy issues.
- **Day 2: Get Invested with OrthoPAC** – Participants learned more about the AAOS Orthopaedic PAC, the only national political action committee dedicated solely to representing orthopaedic surgeons before Congress.
- **Day 3: Shaping Policy Through Rulemaking** – Advocates sent a joint letter to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on recent physician fee schedule rules that impede orthopaedics.



Notably, advocates from 46 states sent nearly 1,500 letters to legislators and regulatory agencies to strengthen the future of musculoskeletal care.

**1,426**  
LETTERS

sent to lawmakers  
about MSK policy

**39%** INCREASE FROM 2024

**56**  
LETTERS

sent on federal  
healthcare regulations

**366%** INCREASE FROM 2024

**\$43,339**  
RAISED

for the OrthoPAC Charity Match  
from 49 individual donors

**93%** INCREASE FROM 2024

## Capitol Hill Visits

In conjunction with the 2025 Combined National Orthopaedic Leadership Conference (NOLC)/Fall Meeting, members actively engaged in hundreds of meetings with congressional offices, including 66 direct discussions with senators and representatives. More than 250 participants representing 43 states worked to advance the interests of AAOS members and orthopaedic surgeons.

As a result of these efforts, congressional support for AAOS priorities grew, leading to 10 new cosponsors in the House and three in the Senate for the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act. This increased advocacy directly benefits AAOS members and orthopaedic surgeons across the country by strengthening legislative backing for improved patient access and streamlined care delivery.



NOLC/Fall Meeting brings together leaders from all corners of AAOS to discuss the future of the profession.



## Orthopaedic Political Action Committee (OrthoPAC)

As the largest political action committee (PAC) dedicated to representing orthopaedic surgeons in the nation’s capital, AAOS OrthoPAC provides one of the clearest opportunities for AAOS to shape the future of musculoskeletal care for members, patients, and the orthopaedic profession, both in Washington, D.C., and across the country. In 2025, OrthoPAC remained the third largest PAC in the physician community and raised more than \$1.1 million.



The AAOS OrthoPAC is the largest Political Action Committee dedicated to representing orthopaedic surgeons.



Members visited the OrthoPAC booth at the 2025 Annual Meeting to learn how they can advocate for the orthopaedic profession.



## Orthopaedic Advisor's Circle

The Advisor's Circle is designed to provide AAOS Members' group practices with a leadership role within OrthoPAC. A donation allows orthopaedic group practices to work together to maximize political opportunities on issues of importance to the orthopaedic community.

Participation in the Advisor's Circle program provides quality opportunities to each group and facilitates dialogue and relationship building among the members. Membership is granted based upon availability. In 2025, the Advisor's Circle welcomed its newest member, the North American Spine Society.

### Members include:

- American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons (AAHKS)
- American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons (ASES)
- American Society for Surgery of the Hand (ASSH)
- American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society (AOFAS)
- American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopaedics (AOAO)
- Musculoskeletal Tumor Society
- North American Spine Society (NASS)
- Rothman Orthopaedics
- OrthoVirginia
- Resurgens Orthopaedics/ United Musculoskeletal Partners
- Campbell Clinic Orthopaedics
- EmergeOrtho
- Atlantic Orthopaedic Specialists
- OrthoSC
- Midlands Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery
- Delaware Orthopaedic Specialists (DOS)
- Fondren Orthopaedic Group
- J. Robert Gladden Orthopaedic Society (JRGOS/Gladden)
- OrthoAtlanta
- Peachtree Orthopaedics
- New Mexico Orthopaedics
- Capital Region Orthopaedics Bone & Joint Center

## Advocacy Action Center

AAOS launched the newly redesigned Advocacy Action Center, built to streamline the advocacy process for members, allowing them to visit the site year-round to learn more about lawmakers and policy issues and get involved.

In fact, the Advocacy Action Center was pivotal in the fight for prior-authorization reform. Thanks to the revamped advocacy system, AAOS was able to connect directly with members whose representatives had not yet endorsed this legislation. Members were also able to send customized, prewritten messages to their representatives based on whether they had supported a similar bill in the 118th Congress. All it required was a few clicks from advocates to confirm their support.

## State Advocacy

Orthopaedic surgeons' daily practice is significantly impacted by state legislative and regulatory activities. The AAOS champions and advocates for the orthopaedic community's perspective at the state level, actively supporting state orthopaedic societies in their grassroots advocacy initiatives.

AAOS tracked 1,719 state-based legislative and regulatory actions in the categories below approved by the BOC.

- Prior authorization and post procedure reviews
- Scope of Practice
- Certificate of Need
- Medical Liability Reform
- Workers' Compensation
- Artificial Intelligence
- Deductible Collections

OGR has developed new action guides for use by stakeholders and advocates in the states on important issues and policy priorities including Medical Liability Reform, Prior Authorization and Downcoding.

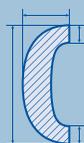
The BOC Committee on State Legislative and Regulatory Issues (SLRI) awarded approximately \$40,000 in grants to four state orthopaedic societies as part of the fall cycle for the Health Policy Action Fund, including multiple first-time awardees.



AAOS works tirelessly to support its members at every career stage.



# Membership



## Updated Membership App

In 2025, the AAOS Membership app received several key upgrades, designed to improve accessibility and user experience. One notable enhancement is the new JAAOS widget on the home screen that helps members stay current with the latest JAAOS articles related to their specialties.



## Spotlight on Social Media

From appearances by Skeletoni — the friendly and pun-loving skeleton who’s passionate about musculoskeletal health — to joining in on the fun of viral internet memes and trends, AAOS continued to connect with members in 2025 through social media.

By organically participating in these conversations and cultural moments, AAOS seeks to maintain relevance for the orthopaedic community. This involvement ensures that members feel understood by and connected to AAOS. **In 2025, AAOS social media channels amassed over 255 thousand engagements, nearly 8 million impressions and gained more than 22 thousand new followers.**

With the support of the AAOS Social Media Ambassadors to organically participate in these conversations and cultural moments, AAOS continues to connect with members across all career stages and subspecialties.

### “Know Your Ortho” Campaign

AAOS launched the new “Know Your Ortho” awareness campaign, a video series with dual goals: educating patients about the musculoskeletal system — including how it works, common issues, treatment options, and injury prevention — and humanizing orthopaedic surgeons.

The campaign highlights the people behind the surgical mask, showcasing the value of care from an FAAOS surgeon. Surgeons discuss their extensive training, the significance of the FAAOS designation, their dedication to patient care, and even their personal interests outside of the clinic and operating room.

By pairing these personal insights with clinical education videos that establish the featured surgeons

as authentic and trustworthy experts, “Know Your Ortho” appeals to both AAOS members and a global patient audience. In its first five months, the campaign was highly successful, generating more than 84,000 impressions across Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, X, and the new AAOS YouTube channel (@AAOSOrthoInfo).

## We Heard You

Each year, the AAOS invites members to “Be Heard” through the Member Value and Satisfaction Survey (MVAS) to understand their needs. The data provided allows AAOS to drive new content, suggest new initiatives, and enhance resources and tools. As a member-focused organization, AAOS uses the MVAS as a powerful way for members to voice their opinions and to advance AAOS as an authoritative, trusted, relevant resource throughout each member’s career.

**Since last year, the member satisfaction rate and the rate of those very likely to recommend AAOS both increased.**



## Member Insights Panel

To give AAOS members more opportunities to voice their valued opinions about their membership, AAOS created the Member Insights Panel in 2025. The panel is an exclusive research community connecting orthopaedic surgeons with curated opportunities to influence the future of the profession. It comprises a group of members who agree to participate regularly in short, mobile-friendly surveys. By participating, members can share expert perspectives that help guide AAOS initiatives and may also inform select industry partners on emerging trends, innovations and areas of unmet needs in orthopaedic practice and patient care.

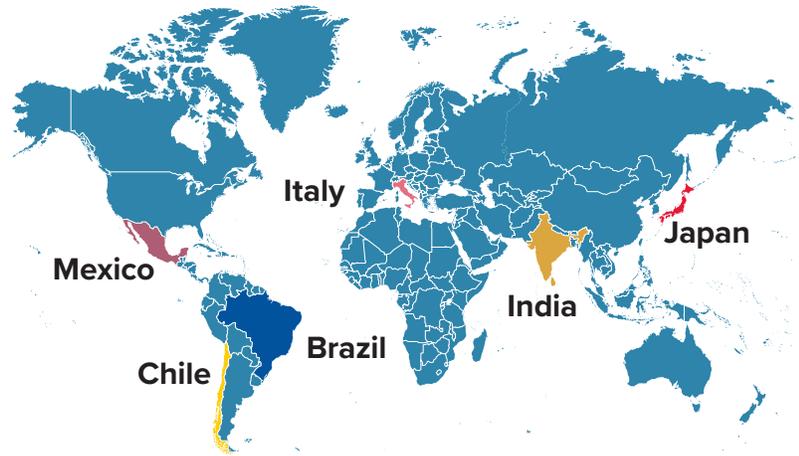
## Orthopaedics in the News

AAOS regularly connects members with journalists and media outlets to elevate their expertise, educate the public, and ensure accurate representation of musculoskeletal health in the news. In 2025, AAOS coordinated close to 100 reactive media interviews, positioning members as trusted spokespeople across high-profile national and local outlets, including *The New York Times*, *AARP*, *CNN Health Digital*, *Everyday Health*, and more. Through this coverage, AAOS members helped inform public understanding on a wide range of orthopaedic and injury-prevention topics.

The AAOS *Prevent Injuries America!* media relations program continues to serve as a consistent, consumer-focused media effort that advances the Strategic Plan pillar of patient education and reinforces AAOS as the trusted voice of musculoskeletal health. Program outreach, which leverages content from OrthoInfo.org, generated strong media interest and engagement, with top-performing releases driving significant journalist inquiries and broad national pickup. Recent coverage has addressed timely topics such as e-bike safety, injury prevention following joint replacement surgery, early sport specialization, backpack safety, and more.

## International Membership

Connecting with peers and exchanging knowledge with peers around the world is key to AAOS' pursuit of excellence. The International Committee collaborated with orthopaedic societies from India, Japan, Mexico, Italy, Brazil, and Chile to host programs that drew 3,500 attendees and more than 19 AAOS faculty.



## Streamlined Membership Applications

AAOS made it easier to apply for International and OrthoTeam membership, streamlining the process so applicants can enjoy a better experience during the 2026 application cycle. Joining AAOS has never been easier!

## Member Advantage Program

This year, the AAOS Member Advantage Program continued to grow, welcoming three new partners and expanding the exclusive savings and solutions available only to AAOS members. From rental cars and financial planning to wealth management and lending services, the program brings trusted discounts and benefits designed to support you in your work and beyond.

In June and July 2025, AAOS conducted an online survey to evaluate member awareness, usage, and



perceptions of the MAP. The quantitative survey was distributed to U.S.-based AAOS members across all membership categories, with 311 members completing the four-minute survey. Results showed that both awareness and usage of the program showed significant growth since its launch. Members who used the program reported high satisfaction, with business-related discounts, particularly technology, patient communication tools, credit cards, and car rentals, used most frequently.

Moving forward, AAOS will focus on expanding high-interest benefits, including personal discounts such as travel, dining, insurance, and wellness offerings, alongside practice-related resources like AI tools, coding support, career counseling, and financial services.

## The AAOS Launchpad Experience

AAOS Launchpad is an exclusive pilot program created to support PGY5 AAOS resident members as they transition from residency to fellowship and ultimately into independent practice, including preparation for ABOS Part I and Part II examinations. Spanning approximately 20 months, this immersive program

blends in-person and virtual experiences to provide tailored, milestone-based support.

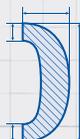
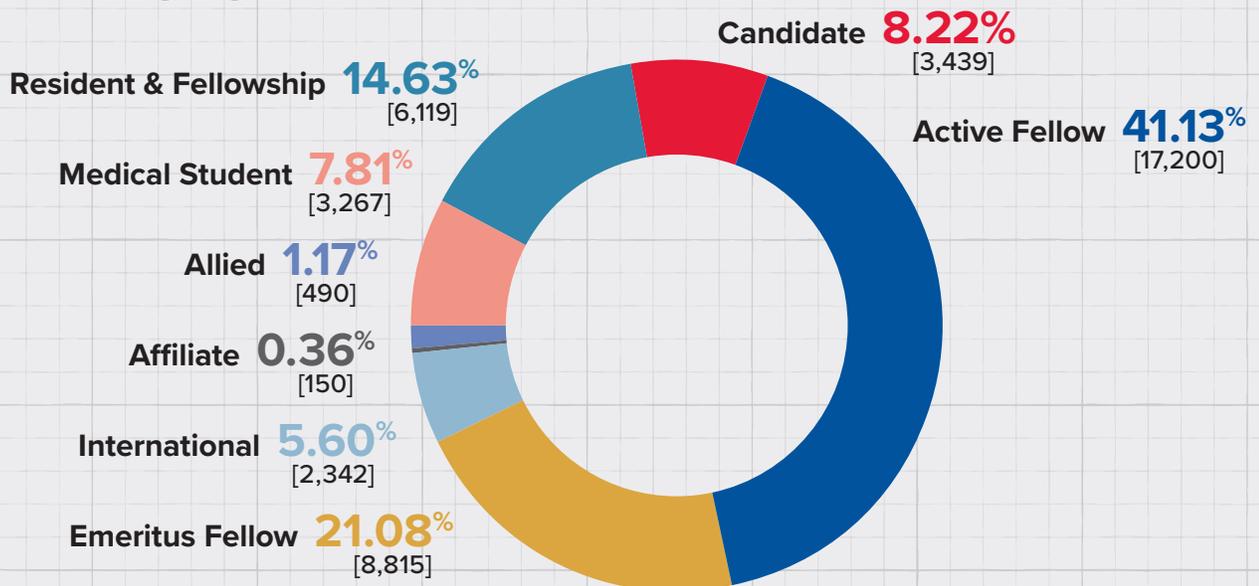
Participants, known as Crew Members, receive personalized guidance from expert Crew Chiefs, who serve as near-peer mentors. As a pilot initiative, Launchpad is continuously refined based on real-time feedback from PGY5 participants to ensure the program evolves to meet their needs.

Cohort 1 launched at the 2025 AAOS Annual Meeting in San Diego and featured a Welcome Reception, access to an exclusive Launchpad Lounge, and daily roundtable discussions within Sub Crews. Each Sub Crew consists of 8–10 Crew Members paired with two Crew Chiefs and organized by subspecialty.

Following the Annual Meeting, participants gained access to a members-only, milestone-based Launchpad platform, with resources released precisely when they are most needed. Key milestones include Board Part I Preparation, Finding a Career, Entering Fellowship, and beyond. Throughout the year, Crew Members also participate in virtual sessions aligned with these milestones.

Recruitment for Cohort 2 opened in October 2025 and closed on December 31, 2025. We are excited to welcome the second cohort to their first Annual Meeting as Launchpad participants at AAOS 2026 in New Orleans this March.

## Membership By Type



During his address at the Your Academy event at the AAOS 2025 Annual Meeting, AAOS President Ned Amendola, MD, FAAOS, spoke about increasing the value of AAOS membership through essential programs and services.



# Leadership



## Governance Changes

AAOS is grateful to every participant who made their voice heard in the 2025 Fellowship Vote. With almost 19% of eligible voters participating, this year's voter turnout exceeded past participation, underscoring the importance of the issues at hand.

Fellow participation in the 2025 balloting process reflects a strong commitment to AAOS and plays a critical role in strengthening our governance process and our organization. AAOS is strong, and we remain committed to a future shaped by active surgeons and improved patient care. AAOS' mission has always been bigger than any single issue: to support orthopaedic surgeons and to advance the care of the patients they serve. Achieving that mission requires strong, modern governance.

Building a better future for orthopaedics starts with a resilient foundation. These changes are designed to make AAOS more nimble, more member-focused, and better equipped to respond to the real-world challenges members face, whether in clinical innovation, advocacy, or education. Above all, this is about ensuring that members' voices and priorities as practicing surgeons remain at the center of AAOS.

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## Medical Student Engagement Forums

To further engage future orthopaedic surgeons at the medical student level, AAOS holds quarterly Medical Student Engagement Forums, attended by up to 75 medical students each. These forums serve as a resource for early-career professionals navigating the day-to-day responsibilities of practicing medicine, and they provide guidance on how to get involved in both AAOS and orthopaedics in general. Forum topics in 2026 included applications, networking, interviews and advocacy.

## Strengthening Volunteer Leadership

At the heart of AAOS is its dedicated membership and the volunteers who generously contribute their time and expertise to advance the orthopaedic profession. AAOS is proud to have so many members actively engaged across councils and committees.

AAOS is committed to broadening participation within its governance structure. With more than 70 councils and committees, the goal is to highlight the abundance of opportunities available while aligning members with roles that best match their experience, interests, and aspirations.

Each year, members may apply for volunteer positions of interest through the Committee Appointment Program (CAP). The application period opens at the AAOS Annual Meeting and closes on August 1.

Volunteering is essential to the vitality of the organization. It ensures that members help shape the policies, programs, and educational resources that support the profession. By contributing their perspective and expertise, volunteers help strengthen AAOS' ability to respond to emerging challenges and guide the direction of musculoskeletal care.

Beyond the impact on the profession, volunteering provides meaningful opportunities to expand professional networks, develop leadership skills that extend beyond the organization, and make a lasting contribution by giving back to the orthopaedic community.

To further support the development of future volunteer leaders, AAOS offers the AAOS



Leadership Institute (ALI), a multi-level program designed to prepare members for increasing levels of engagement and leadership within AAOS and beyond. ALI provides training, resources, and experiential learning to help members build the skills and insights needed to contribute effectively in a range of roles. The program is currently being enhanced for 2026 to strengthen its curriculum and better support members at each stage of their leadership journey, making it an invaluable resource for those looking to serve.



## Supporting States and Specialties

The Board of Councilors (BOC) and Board of Specialty Societies (BOS) play vital advisory roles within AAOS governance, contributing significantly to the organization's mission and its connection with key stakeholders. Both bodies have a long history of addressing critical issues and fostering collaboration within the orthopaedic community.

To ensure that AAOS remains dedicated to facilitating orthopaedic partnerships with members of the musculoskeletal community, multiple funds and grants have been established over the years to aid in the advancement of orthopaedic research and further the development of individual state and specialty societies.

In 2025, the BOS Research Support Fund awarded a total of \$98,500 between two recipients:

- Kenneth Urish, MD, of the Musculoskeletal Infection Society: "Chronic Suppression of Prosthetic Joint Infection Using Bacteriophage Treatment"
- Dr. Neil Sheth, MD, FACS, of the Hip Society: "Improved Iliac Exposure and Abductor Function with an Extended Posterior Approach (Adelaide Approach) for Revision Total Hip Arthroplasty"

The BOC administers two funding opportunities designed to strengthen and support the state orthopaedic societies.

The BOC State Orthopaedic Societies (SOS) Assistance Fund was designed to foster the development of state orthopaedic societies through projects that support education, technology, outreach, membership, and governance initiatives. In 2025, funds were awarded to the Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Virginia state orthopaedic societies.

The BOC SOS Health Policy Action Fund provides support for state orthopaedic society initiatives that respond to local, legislative, and regulatory issues affecting orthopaedic practices and patient care. Grantees are selected through two funding cycles each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. In 2025, funds were awarded to state orthopaedic societies in Alaska, California, Colorado, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Tennessee.

## Combined National Orthopaedic Leadership Conference (NOLC)/Fall Meeting

AAOS Board of Directors, Board of Councilors, Board of Specialty Society, residents, and other invited leaders convened at the 2025 AAOS Combined NOLC/Fall Meeting in Washington, DC, to discuss the following critical orthopaedic issues:

- Recent Developments in Medical Liability Reform
- Asset Protection
- Prior Authorization: Rules, Legislation, and New Challenges
- Physician Payment Reform: Little Relief and New Challenges
- Orthopaedics at a Crossroads: AI, Orthobiologics, and the Shifting Regulatory Landscape
- The Research Horizon in Orthopaedic Surgery and Threats to Funding: Safeguarding Innovation for the Future of Patient Care
- AI and Cybersecurity
- Unifying the House of Orthopaedics Through Advocacy: Working with State, Regional, and Specialty Societies



OrthoPAC Executive Committee Chair Wayne Anthony Johnson, MD, FAAOS, spoke to attendees at the 2025 Combined NOLC/Fall Meeting.



## The IDEA Grant Program

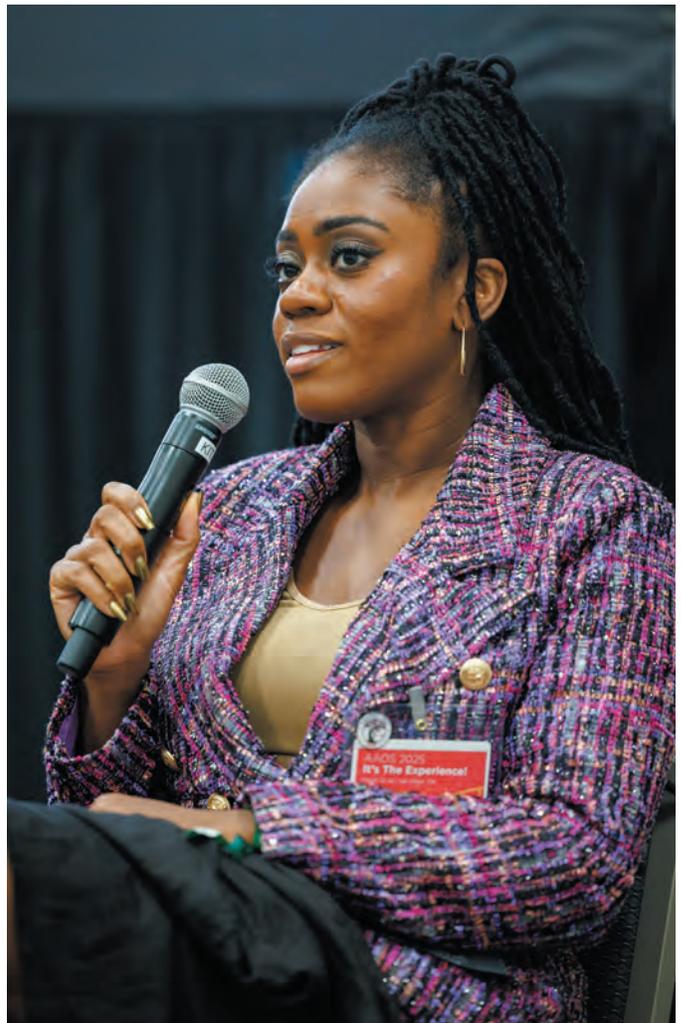
AAOS announced the 30 recipients of its 2025 IDEA Grant Program, awarding a total of \$300,000 annually to support initiatives that foster a culture within orthopaedic surgery that is welcoming, accessible, and responsive to the needs of the patients and communities we serve. The program creates and expands pathways for individuals to pursue careers in orthopaedics, nurtures a workforce that reflects the communities we care for, and expands access to AAOS learning and networking opportunities for all aspiring and practicing clinicians.

Grants are distributed across four tracks: pathway touchpoints, academic retention, community retention, and patient advocacy and health access. Among the awardees are organizations like the American Association of Latino Orthopaedic Surgeons, Nth Dimensions, Ruth Jackson Orthopaedic Society, and major academic centers.

**Since its launch in 2022, IDEA grant funding has supported nearly 75 programs nationwide and contributed over \$900,000 to accessibility efforts in the specialty.** This effort helps strengthen the orthopaedic workforce and expand access to training and career pathways for a broader range of students and clinicians.



2025 AAOS President Ned Amendola, MD, FAAOS, and 2026 First Vice President Michael L. Parks, MD, FAAOS, welcomed members during the combined NOLC/Fall Meeting.



Incoming 2026 BOS Secretary Lattisha Bilbrey, MD, FAAOS, addressed future AAOS Leaders during the 2025 Resident Assembly Education Forum.



Incoming 2026 AAOS President Wilford K. Gibson, MD, FAAOS speaking at the Board of Directors meeting at the 2025 Annual Meeting.



AAOS provides resources to help members utilize data for improved patient outcomes.



# Research & Quality

## Orthopaedic Research Excellence Awards

AAOS is proud to introduce the Orthopaedic Research Excellence Awards to continue recognizing groundbreaking contributions to musculoskeletal science. The awards, which serve as a successor to the previously awarded Kappa Delta Awards, are given to individuals and teams whose work exemplifies scientific rigor, innovation, and clinical relevance across the research continuum, from emerging discovery to impactful translation.

Awards include:

- **Improving Musculoskeletal Patient Care Through Outcomes Research (IMPACT) Award:** Recognizes exemplary outcomes-based research that has measurably advanced musculoskeletal patient care, informed clinical practice, or influenced healthcare policy.
- **Orthopaedic Research Bridging Innovation and Translation (ORBIT) Award:** Honors transformative translational research that bridges the gap between basic science and clinical application.
- **New Emerging eXperts in Translational Science (NEXT) Award:** Celebrates early-career investigators poised to become future leaders in orthopaedic research.



## Biologics

The AAOS Biologics Dashboard is an online tool that helps orthopaedic surgeons track the approval status and latest clinical evidence for biologic-based interventions. It provides up-to-date FDA guidance and evolves alongside advances in orthobiologic therapies.

### Device Recall Dashboard

The Device Recall Dashboard provides orthopaedic surgeons with timely, up-to-date information on medical device recalls. This year's updates enhance access to critical recall data, as well as supporting patient safety and informed clinical decision-making.

### Caplan Award

Now in its second year, the Arnold I. Caplan Award for Distinguished Research in Orthobiologics (Caplan Award) honors researchers whose work has significantly advanced orthobiologics and medicinal signaling cell (MSC) therapies. The award celebrates the legacy of Dr. Caplan and is supported by the Caplan family through the Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation.

The 2025 Caplan Award recipient was Daniel B.F. Saris, MD, PhD., for his study, "RECLAIM: Allogenic MSCs Facilitation of Autologous Cartilage Recycling."

**"Dr. Caplan was often called the 'godfather of MSCs' — a critical thinker and scientist who spent decades exploring ways to translate stem cell biology to the clinic. It is a pleasure to work with the Caplan family to honor his unwavering dedication to scientific advancement. This award will recognize those who embody Dr. Caplan's spirit of innovation and excellence, and we are confident it will continue to fuel the future of orthobiologics."**

—Jason L. Dragoo, MD, FAAOS  
Chair, AAOS Committee on Devices,  
Biologics and Technology



Daniel B. F. Saris, MD, PhD, accepted the inaugural Arnold I. Caplan Award for Distinguished Research in Orthobiologics in 2025.

## Committee on Healthcare Safety

The AAOS Committee on Healthcare Safety focuses on advancing orthopaedic surgical safety. It achieves this by supporting the development, validation, and dissemination of effective culture and processes, which in turn guides Academy policy on these matters.

### AAOS PROMs in Practice

AAOS Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) are regularly utilized to evaluate outcomes of a surgical procedure and facilitate capturing of this useful data. By systematically measuring this information, orthopaedic surgeons and team members can improve clinical decision-making, monitor treatment effectiveness, and identify areas for improvement to deliver better patient care.

In 2025, the Committee on Healthcare Safety developed a suite of patient-facing educational resources to increase awareness and understanding of PROMs. The materials — including a fact sheet, FAQ and conversation guide, and infographic — support meaningful patient-clinician discussions and are featured on OrthoInfo.

### Preserving Physician-Led Care Teams

This initiative highlights the importance of physician-led care teams in delivering safe, effective orthopaedic care. Through a fact sheet, infographic, and video, orthopaedic surgeons can help patients understand each team member's role and how a coordinated, physician-led approach supports the best possible outcomes.

## Registries

### Orthobiologics Registry (OBR)

In 2025, AAOS launched the Orthobiologics Registry (OBR), a new, disease- and condition-focused registry aimed at advancing evidence-based research on orthobiologic therapies for patients with knee osteoarthritis by tracking long-term safety, efficacy, and real-world outcomes. The pilot will begin with 10 sites and expand over the next three to five years, addressing a significant evidence gap in the rapidly



growing use of treatments like platelet-rich plasma and other injectables, where robust data are limited. Designed with centralized longitudinal follow-up, linkage to the BARB Biorepository, and standardized data collection protocols, the registry reflects AAOS' commitment to high-quality musculoskeletal care and builds on its existing Registry Program infrastructure and strategic biologics initiatives. Partnerships with Elimu Informatics and PatientIQ support the technical platform, and the effort is supported by the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine, the Arthroscopy Association of North America, and the Biologic Association.

### American Spine Registry (ASR)

ASR, a collaborative effort between the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and the AAOS, surpassed the 500,000 procedure mark, while the AAOS Registry Program in its entirety collected more than 5.5 million procedures. This growth will help provide a more accurate picture of orthopaedic and spine surgery in the U.S.

### American Joint Replacement Registry (AJRR)

AJRR introduced a new risk-adjusted revision rate measure. Accessible on RegistryInsights, this new measure provides orthopaedic surgeons and quality officers with more equitable and meaningful feedback on revision rates.

AJRR also submitted data on behalf of sites to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for first mandatory reporting window of the Inpatient Quality Reporting (IQR) Total Hip Arthroplasty/Total Knee Arthroplasty (THA/TKA) Patient-Reported Outcomes Performance Measure (PRO-PM).

An upcoming enhancement to AJRR that was announced was the integration of Epic's cloud-based Community Registries for data collection and insights during 2026. This strategic initiative will make it easier for health systems to participate in AJRR by reducing the burden of data collection and making more real-time information available. These changes will aid in enhanced clinical decision-making, improve quality improvement and operational efficiency, support better patient outcomes and simplify data-specific adoption.

### Registry Publications

The AAOS Registry Program published annual reports analyzing the data from four registries. This year marks the first time that annual reports were published for all four registries, including the Musculoskeletal Tumor Registry (MsTR) and ASR. In 2025, registry research produced 15 peer-reviewed publications across the year and 6 accepted poster/podium presentations at the 2025 AAOS Annual Meeting.



# AAOS Toolkit Portfolio

The AAOS Toolkit Portfolio is overseen by the Committee on Healthcare Safety and consists of 16 comprehensive toolkits tailored to support orthopaedic surgeons, surgical teams, and patients. The AAOS Toolkits are meticulously curated by member volunteers to provide a wide array of resources aimed at enhancing members' clinical practice. They offer a blend of education materials for clinicians and patients, evidence-based quality-improvement tools, strategic practice-management insights, and essential advocacy and regulatory information.

Each toolkit is dedicated to a distinct aspect of orthopaedic practice, whether to enhance surgical techniques, optimize patient care pathways, or stay ahead of regulatory changes.

## The portfolio includes:

- Biologics Toolkit
- Decision Aid Implementation Toolkit (Endorsed)
- Hand and Wrist Toolkit
- Osteoarthritis of the Knee Toolkit
- Pain Alleviation Toolkit
- Pediatric Toolkit
- Shoulder and Elbow Toolkit
- Sports Medicine Toolkit
- Surgical Risk Reduction Toolkit
- Total Hip Arthroplasty
- Total Knee Arthroplasty
- Trauma Toolkit
- Upper Extremity Fractures Toolkit
- Wellness for Healthcare Professionals Toolkit
- Workplace Violence Toolkit

## The portfolio also includes one newly added toolkit:

- **The Optimizing Care Teams Toolkit:** A practice management resource that helps AAOS members enhance team efficiency and collaboration. It provides training, onboarding tools, and guidance to improve communication, clarify roles, and support ongoing quality improvement across orthopaedic care teams.

# Evidence-Based Quality Products

## 2025 updates to Clinical Practice Guidelines:

- **Management of Rotator Cuff Injuries:** This guideline includes 14 strong and seven moderate recommendations, supplemented by four limited and consensus options, to support high-quality care for adult patients with rotator cuff tears.
- **Management of Acute Compartment Syndrome:** This rapid update features three moderate recommendations, along with five limited and six consensus options, providing clinicians with guidance for diagnosing and managing acute compartment syndrome.

## 2025 Appropriate Use Criteria:

- **Treatment of Mid-Shaft Clavicle Fractures:** This AUC was developed to determine the appropriateness of surgical and non-surgical treatments in patients with a mid-shaft clavicle fracture.
- **Management of Patients with Orthopaedic Implants Undergoing Dental Procedures:** This AUC was developed to determine the appropriateness of antibiotic prophylaxis to reduce theoretical risk of post-surgical prosthetic joint infection in patients seeking dental care.

## AAOS released the following Position Statement in 2025:

- **Psychosocial Factors Associated with Patient Outcomes in Adult Orthopaedic Trauma Position Statement:** Highlights that psychosocial factors significantly influence outcomes in adults following orthopaedic trauma and recommends that these factors be incorporated into the assessment and management of these patients.



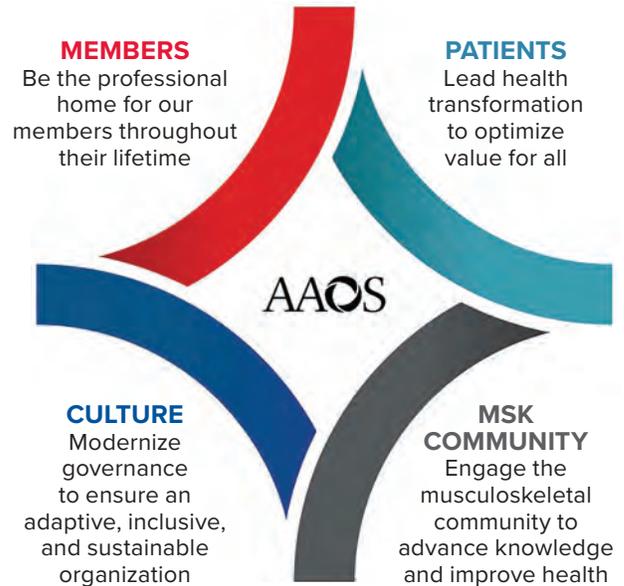


Members of the AAOS Board of Directors meet throughout the year to discuss and evaluate the strategic direction of AAOS.

# Strategic Planning

## Member Experience

- Kicked off the Launchpad program at the 2025 Annual Meeting and launched the program dashboard
- Launched a powerful new online search experience that unifies content from [aaos.org](http://aaos.org), the AAOS Store, JAAOS, and more
- Transitioned JAAOS from print to digital with member input, and developed the new AAOS Now digital strategy
- Advocated for improved reimbursement and physician-led hospitals, including H.R. 879, which was introduced to reverse current payment cuts and tie increases to inflation
- Launched new exam creation platform for item bank replacement and validated AI usage to develop a medical student exam



## Patient & Quality

- Patient Task Force focused on priority engagement activities from the Board of Directors (BOD), including:
  - ◆ Investing in OrthoInfo to improve experience, accessibility, multi-language translation, infrastructure, and SEO
  - ◆ Collecting patient stories from members to support advocacy efforts
  - ◆ New industry partnerships
- Advocated for patient-focused issues such as prior authorization
- Launched American Joint Replacement Registry (AJRR) quality scorecard with risk adjustment and approved a new biologics registry

## Culture

- AAOS membership voted to approve new bylaws
- Conducted an annual review of the Strategic Plan with the Board of Directors
- Created BOD Liaison Program, matching BOD members with councils and committees to foster enhanced two-way communication

## MSK Community

- Conducted a strategic task force to assess the impact of digital health on orthopaedics and AAOS' future strategy
- Began piloting an enhanced Board of Councilors (BOC) grant program with state societies
- Held Research Summit in December with members of the Board of Specialty Societies (BOS)
- Developed State Advocacy Guides, providing templates and action plans to support state societies with local advocacy

## Real-Time Analysis of the Strategic Plan

In 2025, AAOS set its sights on collecting and acting in real-time on feedback from members and volunteer leaders. Multiple focus groups, including members at varied career stages, were created to evaluate the 2024–2028 Strategic Plan. Focus groups met at the 2025 Annual Meeting to support more bidirectional communication with members, and adjust the roadmap for the future of the Academy as needed. In addition, AAOS conducted an environmental scan on key topics such as membership trends, the rise of artificial intelligence, and the future of advocacy to inform an annual review of the Strategic Plan by the Board of Directors. The results of this scan, in conjunction with feedback from various sources, led to an enhanced commitment to research in the Strategic Plan.

## Workplace Awards

Thanks to a focus on generous benefits, effective communication, impressive retention rates, and commitment to our values, AAOS consistently fosters a best-in-class workplace culture. This dedication has resulted in continuous recognition, including being **named one of the Chicago Tribune's Top Workplaces for the sixth consecutive year in 2025, and earning selection among the Best and Brightest Companies to Work For® (both nationally and locally) for the fifth consecutive year. AAOS was also recognized as one of the Top 101 Best and Brightest Companies to Work For® in the Nation for the first time in 2025.**

Results from the 2025 Employee Engagement Survey, conducted by New Measures, LLC, revealed impressive scores across various metrics used to gauge employees' level of commitment and motivation. A 97% participation rate lent a high degree of confidence to the results, which showed that, overwhelmingly, staff members feel proud to be employees of AAOS, are satisfied with AAOS as an employer, feel valued as an employee of AAOS, and would recommend AAOS as a great place to work. AAOS' overall Engagement Index score, 86%, is a 3% increase from the previous year, and is among the 81st percentile as compared to the Nonprofit Benchmark for Employee Engagement.





BioSkills labs during the 2025 Annual Meeting gave attendees the opportunity to put the skills and techniques they learned about into action.



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