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NCOPE/ABC Awarded ISPO Category I Recognition

Alexandria, VA-On March 20, 2009, the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) awarded the National Commission on Orthotics and Prosthetics Education (NCOPE) and the American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics, Inc. (ABC) Category I recognition. ISPO's acknowledgement of NCOPE/ABC's educational pathway to receive a certified orthotist/prosthetist (CPO) designation has helped propel NCOPE/ABC onto the international stage. NCOPE and ABC are the only accrediting/credentialing bodies in the United States that has received Category I recognition from ISPO.

To receive the Category I recognition, NCOPE and ABC applied to ISPO together as a pathway for those individuals interested in obtaining their CPO designation. ISPO reviewed the entire method for becoming credentialed as a CPO from primary education, residency and to the ABC credentialing examinations.

In December 2008, NCOPE and ABC hosted surveyors from ISPO in Dallas, TX to conduct an onsite visit. This included visiting an O&P education program at the University of Texas Southwestern and two NCOPE accredited residency programs, a hospital-based program and an O&P patient care facility. Finally, the surveyors were onsite to observe the ABC clinical patient management (CPM) examination. While the surveyors were at the exam, they also reviewed the orthotic and prosthetic written and written simulation exams to evaluate ABC's comprehensive examination process.

In the early 1990s, ISPO, an international society created to facilitate improvements in the care of patients with neuromuscular and skeletal disabilities, integrated a classification system that evaluates organizations on the processes used in educating, training and certifying orthotic and prosthetic students. The standards ISPO enforces are recognized by the World Health Organization, so by obtaining Category I recognition NCOPE/ABC has demonstrated the equivalency of the approach used to properly educate, train and assess the competency of O&P practitioners in the United States, as compared to international standards. ISPO Category I recognition will be awarded to those ABC certifees who received both their orthotic and prosthetic (CPO) designation using the NCOPE/ABC pathway effective December 2008.

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