

Local Amputees to Benefit from New Technology

A number of local individuals with amputations will soon be experiencing unparalleled levels of comfort, functionality and cosmesis thanks to a Montgomery prosthetic company's ongoing commitment to bring the latest technology available to the area.

During the fourth quarter of 2004, prosthetists from Alabama Artificial Limb & Orthopedic Service, Inc. (AAL&OS) traveled to Waterloo, Iowa with one of their patients, for intense training on casting, modifying and fitting the revolutionary M.A.S.® socket design. According to OPGA, the company who conducts the course, AAL&OS is the only prosthetic company in Alabama that has been trained to work with this socket. Glenn Crumpton, L.P.O., C.Ped, and Keith Uuro, L.P., became two of a small number of prosthetists who are qualified to fit the M.A.S. ® socket in the country.

The two AAL&OS prosthetists escorted their patient Dexter Snipe to the program so that they could participate in the hands-on training by performing the technique with an actual patient. Snipe, who has an above knee/transfemoral amputation, lost his leg in an accident several years ago.

Since then, he has struggled with several different fittings in order to be more comfortable and perform at the high level he is expected to while attending to his family and the business ventures he manages.

Because of Snipes' struggle, he often chose to go without a leg to wear instead of subjecting himself to the discomfort his prosthesis caused him. In many instances, Snipe did not wear his prosthesis because the device actually slowed him down.

"Dexter's high demands are not unlike that of many other individuals with an amputation and the main objective is always to return our patient to normal activities that most people take for granted," said Crumpton. "This is why he (Dexter) made arrangements to travel with us, so that he and other patients like him will benefit from these developments in prosthetic design."

Sockets are a very important part of any lower-extremity prosthetic device because these are the components that must be engineered to bear the weight of the individual. It is critical that the wearer's weight be distributed properly throughout the residual limb (commonly referred to as the stump).

The M.A.S.® socket design provides several clinical benefits including full range of motion, better functional gait and improved cosmesis. It also allows patients to sit more comfortably because there is no plastic beneath the gluteus and the prosthesis is easier to don. And despite the intimately fitting contours, the design seems to be surprisingly skin-friendly. In most cases, there is no skin irritation and some individuals have even reported that existing skin problems have cleared up since being fitted with the M.A.S.® socket design. Marlo Ortiz Vasquez, a prosthetist and engineer from the city of Guadalajara in Mexico, originally developed the M.A.S.® socket in 1999 and since then he has been making improvements to the design.

"We were really impressed by the remarkable results that we saw during the training program," said Crumpton. "After three years of development and over a hundred fittings, Mr. Vasquez has refined the technique and made it possible for others to replicate."

"We really do try to live up to our slogan--redefine the possible," said Crumpton, who also serves as the

company's vice president. "We are always willing to go the extra mile if it means that we can offer our patients an improved device. That's why I have been especially eager to bring this concept to Montgomery and central Alabama for the benefit of anyone with a transfemoral above knee prosthesis."

Alabama Artificial Limb & Orthopedic Service, Inc. is a fully-accredited facility and is located at 1223 East South Boulevard in Montgomery, AL. The company also has an office located in Opelika.

Information may be obtained by calling the main office at (334) 284-0250 or toll-free, 1-800-457-4544.