

# Amputee Coalition National Convention Recap Celebrating 40 Years

The 40th Anniversary of Amputee Coalition's National Convention was a place for the limb loss and limb difference community to gather for a week of connection, learning, and most of all celebration (Vegas, anyone?).

Alongside other prominent players in the O&P space, Ottobock led with a strong presence at the event—both inside the booth and out.

## Leading the charge: Ottobock's presence at ACNC26

On the show floor, the Ottobock booth was packed with folks streaming through the convention hall to get a look at the latest technology, ask questions, or simply to say hi and share their stories.

Aside from getting to meet and connect with so many people throughout the show, we were also able to answer questions and—in some cases—yes, even help people in real time.



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### Storytime

*A visitor to our booth stopped by to ask about her self-care routine. She wanted to know if she could wear her MPK in the infrared sauna. Our team at the booth didn't have the answer immediately, so we set out to find the average temperature of an IR sauna as well as the heat restrictions and limitations of the MPK she was wearing.*

*We researched and reached out to our technical team in real time who provided the info within an hour. Needless to say she was pleasantly surprised (even though the ultimate answer was to avoid the extreme temps).*

*Thanks for stopping by, Rita, and remember to always be mindful when you're enjoying the sauna!*

It's this kind of connection and closeness with the community that makes an event like ACNC so special. There are very few places, if any, where so many people from different places in the limb loss and limb difference community can come together, and it's a true joy to be part of.

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## Speaking to the cause: The importance of self-advocacy

Aside from soaking up the energy on the show floor, we also held speaking sessions to showcase Ottobock products and, even more importantly, educate people on the importance of self-advocacy while navigating life with limb loss and limb difference.

Kimberly Hanson, Senior Director of Reimbursement for Ottobock North America, Dr. Andreas Kannenberg, Executive Medical Director for Ottobock North America, and Aaron Holm, Head of Consumer Engagement for Ottobock North America joined forces to share their expertise from insurance, medical, and consumer points of view, respectively.



Aaron is a bilateral above the knee amputee himself, and he says it best when talking about attending an event like ACNC, “That is definitely the first step... educating yourself on what to expect, how to prepare, what to anticipate, and how not to get frustrated, because it can be somewhat of a process.”

It’s not just about education either—it’s about genuine connection. He goes on to say that immersing oneself in the community, “is a great opportunity to see the future. Build your team, your family, your friends, and if you don’t feel you’re able to self-advocate? Talk to people here: Who did they use? Who did they lean on?”

Whether someone already has a support system or not, Ottobock is in their corner to help them regain or maintain their freedom of movement. A huge component of that is advocacy at the state and federal levels to increase access to life-enriching prostheses, but it’s also about empowering people to advocate for themselves too.

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It can be a long journey to get the prosthesis someone needs to live the life they want, and that's another aspect of attending Amputee Coalition that's both touching and enlightening to practitioners and patients alike. Stories are what inspire people, and sometimes it's what allows them to press forward with courage:

*“When you do win that fight, share it. Share it with others and let them know your story and how you did it. And let them know there's hope.”*

## **We're here for you, now and into the future**

Celebrating 40 years of an institution like Amputee Coalition brings what we do every day into crystal clear focus. Meeting the people, hearing the stories, and seeing the strength on display from everyone in attendance shows us that “inspiring” barely scratches the surface.

And we will continue showing up for you. Whether it's at events like these, on the field of adaptive sports, or on Capitol Hill, finding ways to advocate for (and serve) the limb loss and limb difference community is our guiding principle above all else.