

**Baylor College of Medicine**  
**Second Annual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Showcase**  
**Tuesday, October 5, 2021**

**Title of Proposal:** EVALUATING HEALTHCARE DISPARITIES IN ORTHOTICS AND PROSTHETICS

**BCM Mission Area:** Education

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**Abstract:**

Common goals in healthcare should include accessibility, equality, high quality care and a focus on positive patient outcomes. To further these pursuits, it is crucial to review barriers to care, including clinician to patient bias, how these biases affect patient outcomes, and access to orthotics and prosthetic care. Medical research has found that clinician bias does exist in the health care settings, and results in negative patient outcomes. Racial and ethnic disparities in primary amputation, and inequity in factors leading up to this procedure, are well documented. There has been anecdotal evidence that bias also exists within Orthotic and Prosthetic (OP) professionals. However, there is currently a gap in documenting, through scientific process, that bias exist in OP. Additionally, there is no current evidence on how this bias affects decision making and outcomes in OP care. Research in this area is needed to better understand, and potentially minimize, underlying causes of these disparities to ensure patients receive care, free from the influence of the negative effects of bias. In the United States, regions with a higher number of minorities have a higher prevalence of PVD, diabetes, and amputations. This cohort subsequently is at a higher risk and need for prosthetic and orthotic care. Racial and ethnic disparities in primary amputation, and inequity in factors leading up to this procedure, are well documented. Published scientific data in OP lacks exploration of how, and if these barriers persist post- amputation and/or for orthotic needs. Identifying these barriers, and the magnitude thereof, will provide the orthotic and prosthetic field with an increased awareness

of how these factors affect patient care, and aid in developing steps towards accommodating their main patient population.