

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



The Next Decade in Osteopathic Medicine

Robert C. DeLuca, DO, FACOFP *dist.*

2019 - 2020 ACOFP President

Happy New Year and welcome to the 2020s! With the current rate of osteopathic students going into family medicine at 27 percent and the increase in the number of DO graduates in the next five years of around 12,000, we have the opportunity to welcome over 3,000 family medicine residents into the profession and ACOFP family. Compare that to only 1,600 MD graduates choosing family medicine in 2018.

Some exciting things are developing in osteopathic family medicine over the next few years. I hope that innovation, technology, and the need for more family physicians across the country will inspire even more students and residents to choose osteopathic family medicine through 2030 and beyond.

IMPORTANT INITIATIVES OF THE 2020s

Innovation in Osteopathic Certification

I have covered the new changes in initial certification and recertification requirements in previous *OFP* issues, so I won't go into detail again here. One new development is the Initial Certification Grant being offered by the ACOFP Education & Research Foundation. The grant will award up to \$1,400 for exam fees and travel expenses to residents, who don't otherwise have funding support from their program, to be used for the AOBFP exam. You can find details on the Foundation website.

Family Medicine Leading in Technology and AI

Health data technology has become more complicated and detailed with advances in imaging, the measurement of vital signs, biochemical analyses such as blood glucose levels, augmented intelligence (AI) in several areas of medicine and much more. AI is ideal for information on patients and patient populations by using tools such as pattern identification, location knowledge and eliminating bias with an endless capacity for machine learning. Family physicians can take advantage of these AI functions, combining them with human characteristics of compassion, morals, imagination and common sense.

There are countless opportunities to use AI for increased efficiency in diagnosis and treatment, predicting and preventing complications, and the integration of disparate health information. By using these tools in the family medicine setting, physicians and

clinicians will save time on administrative tasks and be able to perform at the highest level of their license.

Practicing at the Top of Our Profession

The time saved with technology allows physicians to practice at the top of their profession, rather than spending countless extra hours on EHRs and following cumbersome requirements for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Additionally, CMS has initiated a series of sweeping changes regarding health record documentation and payment level scoring. The CMS "Patients Over Paperwork" initiative seeks to cut the red tape and streamline regulations with goals to reduce unnecessary burden, increase efficiencies and improve the beneficiary experience.

In May, the ACOFP Board approved a white paper produced by the Public Health & Wellness Committee that highlights an emerging outpatient E/M workflow process that fulfills "Patients Over Paperwork" goals while also accommodating proper compliance with federal rules and regulations. Of note, the new rules allow medical students, ancillary staff members and patients to fill out patient history information, which does not need to be re-entered over time by an attending physician. This helps both the physicians and the students while making patients happy that they won't have to provide the same information several times.

Focus on the One-on-One Doctor-Patient Relationship

As osteopathic family physicians, we pride ourselves on creating lasting relationships with our patients. It is a main reason many students and residents choose family medicine. The purpose of new technology and CMS changes is to reduce the burden of paperwork and save time for physicians, allowing meaningful conversations and establishing trust between physicians and patients. Office visits can be about listening to and examining the patient; not entering data on the computer. There is even a movement to bring back the old-time house calls, but only time will tell if that practice could be feasible.

Physician Wellness and Fitness

This leads us to physician wellness. Eliminating some causes of physician burnout should help to alleviate stress and depression within the family physician community. ACOFP recognizes the need for a healthy lifestyle on several fronts. Its Board Task Force

on Physician Wellness is working to find ways to help members and eliminate the stigma of seeing a mental health physician. Several Namey Burnett Preventive Medicine Writing Award blog submissions cover how exercise and eating healthy can help with depression, diabetic symptoms and much more. These posts can be found on the ACOFP website. Also, ACOFP '20 will feature fun exercise classes and healthy activities in the Health Expo's third year at convention.

OMT: The Hands-On Approach to the Opioid Crisis

With health risks and dependence on opioids so often in the news, more patients are searching for opioid alternatives for pain management. OMT can reduce pain and improve function in both acute and chronic pain patients. OMT is associated with significant measures for recovery from chronic lower back pain. It can restore mobility and normal movement, and in turn, reduce pain.

The new ACOFP OMTotal Video Library, which you can find in the eLearning Center, is a great way to practice and learn OMT techniques.

OMT Boot Camps

Of course, another great way to brush up on your OMT skills, or learn new techniques, is the OMT Boot Camp. ACOFP offers these useful hands-on sessions throughout the year: at ACOFP annual conventions, at the ACOFP Intensive Update and Board Review and at OMED.

Bringing Obstetrics Back to Family Medicine

For several years, the importance of training family physicians in obstetrics, including preconception, prenatal, delivery and postpartum care, has been documented repeatedly but not acted upon by many health care systems throughout the country. Unfortunately, the number of family physicians providing maternity care continues to decline. Family medicine with obstetrics has become a cost-effective solution offering improvements in access, cost and quality of care in underserved areas.

ACOFP promotes training for family physicians and provides several OB/GYN sessions for CME and general training in its programs at the annual events and in its eLearning Center. Also, the *OFF* journal regularly features research and case study articles that keep members up to date on OB/GYN issues.

ACOFP will continue to be your source of updates to keep you in the loop on all that is happening in the profession. I hope that you are as excited for the next decade in osteopathic family medicine as I am!

Osteopathically yours,



Robert C. DeLuca, DO, FACOFP *dist.*
2019 - 2020 ACOFP President



acofp | AMERICAN COLLEGE
OF OSTEOPATHIC
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

**REGISTER BY
FEBRUARY 7
AND SAVE.**

ACOFP 57th Annual Convention & Scientific Seminars

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN. acofp.org/ACOFP20