

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Innovating Amid Continued Uncertainty: Progress in a Virtual World

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The month of May brings the end of the school year, summer vacation plans and sunny days. It is typically when we see our many state ACOFP chapters hold their annual meetings as a time to gather with colleagues and their families for education and fun. As this will be the start of our second COVID summer, these celebrations, plans and gatherings are still veiled in uncertainty, facemasks and more virtual interactions. It is fair to say we are in a much better place than last year, not only in our fight to end the pandemic, but also in our capabilities and creativity in making our virtual world more inclusive and interactive. The ACOFP Annual Convention & Scientific Seminars, held virtually in March, highlighted our efforts to enlighten, celebrate and educate our collective family in new formats to foster connectivity and a sense of normality.

The first order of business was the delivery of a participatory Congress of Delegates led by Speaker Elizabeth A. Palmarozzi, DO, FACOFP, and Vice Speaker Antonios J. Tsomponidis, DO, FACOFP. They masterfully navigated the Lumi platform that allowed more than 200 votes cast on 19 resolutions. Delegates had the opportunity to listen to pre-recorded messages from our dignitaries and special guests at their convenience. Additionally, a combined ACOFP President and Executive Director video paralleled the newly created 30-page annual report that highlighted the work of ACOFP in 2020. For many, this format was more efficient, accessible and engaging than our traditional two-day Congress.

Then we moved into our programming with a dynamic and thought-provoking keynote presentation from Sekou Andrews, a Grammy-nominated poetic voice artist, sharing *Power Through the People: Diversity Is Disruption*. In his unique format, our eyes, hearts and minds were opened by his forthright depiction of cultural, generational and racial differences. He challenged our thinking about the continuum of love represented as hate. He inspired while making some feel uncomfortable, a good sign seeing that some form of disruption is needed for positive change. He delivered exactly what was needed to result in over 50 pages of real-time chat dialogue and praise. The momentum continued as we introduced the inaugural Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Award honoring Tejal R. Patel, DO. This award was established to recognize a physician's commitment to enhancing DEI in osteopathic education and practice. The combination of these events set the stage for three days of lectures, discussions and accolades. Many thanks to the Program Committee, Program Chair Matthew W. Told, DO, and Program Vice Chair Robert Danoff, DO, MS, FACOFP, FAAFP, for developing an outstanding CME program with various tracks of learning to meet the individual needs of our attendees. If you were not there, you missed out on

the full experience—but maybe not completely (read on to learn more).

The utilization of the Pathable platform gave attendees the opportunity to tour a virtual exhibit hall with access to vendors in between the informative and diverse lectures, as well as a chance to chat with new and old colleagues through the Idea Exchanges and Conversation Circles. Throughout the entire event, there was an underlying Connect the Dots & Collect the Dots game that sparked friendly rivalry in obtaining the most points to win coveted prizes. The chat function that accompanied every lecture and event worked seamlessly to answer questions, provide insight, banter with good humor and congratulate award recipients. The recognition of our deserving physicians with personal introductions and acceptance speech videos throughout the convention was just a slight variation from our traditional awards program. The following individuals were recognized:

- Bruce C. Brink, Jr., DO, FACOFP | Osteopathic Family Physician of the Year
- Joel M. Feder, DO, FACOFP *dist.* | Lifetime Achievement Award
- Robert C. DeLuca, DO, FACOFP *dist.* | Certificate of Special Recognition
- Barbara E. Walker, DO, FACOFP, FAAFP | Outstanding Female Leader Award
- Ira P. Monka, DO, MHA, FACOFP | Excellence in Advocacy Award
- Rachel A. Young, DO | New Physician of the Year
- Peter F. Bidey, DO, MEd, FACOFP | Osteopathic Family Medicine Educator of the Year
- Carol L. Henwood, DO, FACOFP *dist.* | Distinguished Service Award
- Steven Legault, MSW | Distinguished Service Award

The honored tradition of the Fellows ceremony was magically created with academic regalia and videos from Florida to Colorado and everywhere in between. Once again, congratulations to the 2021 class of ACOFP Fellows:

- Eileen Conaway, DO, FACOFP
- Paula Gregory, DO, MBA, FACOFP
- Mark Kauffman, DO, MSMEd, FACOFP
- Anthony Leazzo, DO, FAOASM, FACOFP

- Rebecca D. Lewis, DO, FACOFP
- Priscilla Tu, DO, FAOASM, FAAFP, FAAMA, FACOFP
- John C. Welch, Jr., DO, FACOFP
- Hallie Y. Zwibel, DO, MPH, FAAFP, FACOFP

The awards continued as the ACOFP Education & Research Foundation and Auxiliary to the ACOFP bestowed their honors on the following residents and students:

- David Tyler King, DO | Sander A. Kushner, DO, FACOFP Memorial Osteopathic Family Medicine Resident Award
- Heather McGuire, OMS-IV | Marie Wiseman Outstanding Osteopathic Medical Student of the Year
- Athena Chatzigiannidis, DO; Kendall Harris, DO; and Dustin Beck, DO | Namey/Burnett Preventive Medicine Writing Award, First Place
- Colleen Maher, OMS-IV | Namey/Burnett Preventive Medicine Writing Award, Second Place
- Shikha Patel, OMS-IV | Namey/Burnett Preventive Medicine Writing Award, Third Place
- Seema Mehta, OMS-III; Vikesh Shrestha, OMS-II; and Jasmine Nguyen, OMS-II | Emerging Leader Awards
- 19 Osteopathic Family Medicine Student Awards

And on Sunday morning, the Student Association of the ACOFP elected their new National Student Executive Board:

- Joe Li, OMS-III | President
- Ashley Beckham, OMS-II | Vice President
- Rachel Souza, OMS-II | Secretary
- Kensley Grant, OMS-I | Parliamentarian
- James Wyatt Eikermann, OMS-IV | Student Governor

Additionally, there were nearly 100 scientific posters submitted and available for viewing throughout the convention. The future of osteopathic family medicine is in good hands with these student and resident leaders.

To say the least, besides the lack of physical connection with osteopathic hugs, OMT Boot Camp and procedural workshops, this virtual meeting was the closest I have felt to my osteopathic family since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. To make that happen took the work of a forward-thinking Board of Governors, a dedicated and visionary ACOFP staff, engaged speakers, and—for the individual attendee—good bandwidth and a WiFi connection. So, if you were not one of the almost 2,800 participants that joined us live for this history-making event—you have not completely missed out. You will have the opportunity to use our eLearning Center to purchase this on-demand and obtain CME as if you were at a live event. There is also our upcoming Intensive Osteopathic Update that will be held virtually this summer as another opportunity to see our platforms and innovation work in

real-time.

Whichever you choose, thank you for your confidence in ACOFP to provide you with your educational needs and connection to your colleagues during this challenging time. I hope this summer brings all of us more certainty and increased opportunities for in-person engagement while not losing sight of the gains we have made in our virtual environment.

Osteopathically,



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