

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



### Making a Statement to Make an Impact

Bruce R. Williams, DO, FACFP

"I do hereby affirm my loyalty to the profession I am about to enter. I will be mindful always of my great responsibility to preserve the health and the life of my patients, to retain their confidence and respect both as a physician and a friend who will guard their secrets with scrupulous honor and fidelity, to perform faithfully my professional duties..."

These are the words that begin the osteopathic oath—the words that every osteopathic physician has publicly stated and sworn to. But what does it mean? What are we committing ourselves to?

We are committing to advocating for our patients. We are saying we will do the best we can to look out for the best interest of our patient. As osteopathic physicians, we took that oath, and as ACOFP members, we are keeping that commitment to our patients.

Advocacy is a significant part of ACOFP, as we are the voice for our patients. Advocacy means educating our patients on good and poor health choices; getting what our patients need from employers, insurance carriers and legislators; and volunteering on medical staff committees, healing arts boards, and local, state and national organized medicine committees and boards to educate others as to what our patients need. **Advocacy means being engaged and involved.**

Advocacy also involves getting your hands dirty. It means politics—writing letters, attending rallies and signing checks. It has been said many times and in many places: "If you are not at the table, you are on the menu." Unfortunately, that is a true statement. But what can you do for your patients?

For me, I look back at the oath I took as an osteopathic physician, and I look at the faces of my patients and feel their pain. I have the resources to do what is needed. I can be a member. I can write letters. I can visit legislators. I can sign a check. I can make a statement. I can be a voice.

A single voice makes a statement. Multiple voices make an impact. ACOFP can make an impact. When we say we represent over 20,000 osteopathic family physicians, residents and students, that gets attention. When we combine our voices with other family medicine organizations, that voice multiplies even further. When we are combined with the American Osteopathic Association, the American Medical Association and the House of Medicine, that voice becomes thunder—a force to be reckoned with. Voices are votes, and we represent more than one voice and more than one vote.

Family medicine needs to be recognized as the major specialty. We provide the prenatal care; we deliver the babies; we administer our children's immunizations; we set the broken bones; we remove the skin lesions; we provide the family counseling; we treat the back pain; we complete the workers compensation and disability forms; we treat the chronic conditions; we provide the palliative care; and we are there for the patient and their family for their last day. We advocate for our patients in listening to them, advising them, directing them, treating them, referring them and speaking for them. Family physicians treat the family, and we need to be recognized and reimbursed for the work we do.

Most recently, ACOFP championed the introduction of the *Rural Physician Workforce Act of 2021* in the U.S. House of Representatives, as an expansion of our efforts to promote graduate medical education to rural and underserved areas. We also have publicly opposed—and continue to oppose—Medicare Payment Fee Schedule proposed cuts to physician payments, launching call-to-action campaigns, submitting our own comment letters and partnering with other organizations to maximize our voice. Finally, in early August, we responded to the U.S. Health and Human Services' initiative to strengthen primary care.

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To provide guidance on ACOFP's advocacy priorities and positions—in collaboration with advocacy firm Alston & Bird—we have developed the 2022 Principles of Healthcare System Reform. This document gives direction on issues for Alston & Bird to lobby and advocate for, such as preserving the family medicine model of care, addressing the primary healthcare workforce shortage, addressing reimbursement policies, reducing unnecessary paperwork requirements, and promoting and supporting osteopathic manipulative treatment.

It does take a village—members, committees, the Board of Governors, Alston & Bird and you! ACOFP will reach out to you. We will ask you to complete those forms, make those phone calls, document those issues. We will ask you to connect with your legislator through an ACOFP communication. We will ask you to write, call, visit and contribute to your legislators.

But what is important, is that you consider the oath you took as an osteopathic physician. Are you living up to that oath: "To affirm my loyalty to the profession. I will be mindful always of my great responsibility to preserve the health and the life of my patients, to retain their confidence and respect both as a physician and a friend who will guard their secrets with scrupulous honor and fidelity, to perform faithfully my professional duties?" I know you are.

Osteopathically yours,



Bruce R. Williams, DO, FACFP

2022-23 ACOFP President

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### OCTOBER 27-30, 2022

OMED 2022  
American College of Osteopathic  
Family Physicians  
Boston, MA  
[omed.osteopathic.org](http://omed.osteopathic.org)

### DECEMBER 2-4, 2022

IOA 41st Annual Winter Update  
Indiana Osteopathic Association  
Indianapolis, IN  
[Inosteo.org](http://Inosteo.org)

### DECEMBER 3, 2022

Illinois ACOFP Membership Reception  
Illinois Society of the ACOFP  
Chicago, IL  
[acofp.org/Illinois](http://acofp.org/Illinois)

### JANUARY 20-21, 2023

IACOFPP Midwinter Osteopathic  
Family Practice Conference  
ACOFPP Iowa Chapter  
Des Moines, IA  
[acofp-ia.org](http://acofp-ia.org)

### JANUARY 26-29, 2023

Winter Family Medicine Update  
Missouri Society of the ACOFP  
Columbia, MO  
[msacofp.org](http://msacofp.org)

### JANUARY 27-29, 2023

2023 ACOFP Faculty Development  
and Program Directors' Workshop  
American College of Osteopathic  
Family Physicians  
Virtual  
[acofp.org](http://acofp.org)

### MARCH 29 - APRIL 2, 2023

ACOFPP 60th Annual Convention  
& Scientific Seminars  
American College of Osteopathic  
Family Physicians  
Orlando, FL  
[acofp.org](http://acofp.org)

### CME Resource: *Osteopathic Family Physician* Offers 2 Hours of 1-B CME

ACOFPP members who read *Osteopathic Family Physician* can receive two hours of Category 1-B continuing medical education credit for completing quizzes in the journal. Visit the eLearning center at [www.acofp.org](http://www.acofp.org) to access the quizzes.