

November 20, 2004

Letters to the Editor
Springfield Post-Gazette
202 W 1st St Springfield, WA 98718-2266

Dear Editor:

I appreciate that the November 15 article titled "Know a Doctor's Title to the Letter" points out that different types of health care providers complete different types of training. However, the information you presented about osteopathic medicine does not accurately describe the extensive training that osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) receive.

Your article states that D.O.s often complete basic M.D. training with additional training in skeletal manipulation. This statement misleads readers to believe that the training D.O.s receive is not as extensive as the training that allopathic physicians (M.D.s) receive. I want to point out that D.O.s must complete four years of osteopathic medical school, the first two consisting of osteopathic medical curriculum and the third and fourth emphasizing clinical training in hospitals, major medical centers, and doctors' offices. Following osteopathic medical school, D.O.s go on to complete internship and residency programs in a specialty area of their choice.

As fully licensed physicians, D.O.s can prescribe medication and perform surgery. They may specialize in any medical specialty area, such as obstetrics and gynecology, internal medicine, pediatrics, and neurology.

Osteopathic medicine is a unique and comprehensive branch of American health care. D.O.s focus on treating their patients as a whole, instead of only treating specific symptoms or illnesses. They consider factors such as their patients' medical history, as well as personal health habits when determining illness. D.O.s also offer a hands-on treatment known as osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT), which they may use to diagnose and treat a variety of conditions, such as asthma, back pain and migraines.

If you would like to learn more about osteopathic medicine, please contact the American Osteopathic Association's (AOA) communications staff at 1-800-621-1773, ext. 8291, or visit the AOA's "Media Center," at www.osteopathic.org. I have also enclosed additional educational materials.

Sincerely,
George Thomas, D.O.
President

Enclosures