

SUBJECT: MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY **AND MISSION** OF COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE (COM) AND UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCE CENTERS (UHSC) GRANTING THE DOCTOR OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE DEGREE (DO)

SUBMITTED BY: American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFPP)

REFERRED TO: Committee on Educational Affairs

1 WHEREAS, the Barbara Starfield report update in 2006, from the original 1999 report, gives
2 evidence that adults who have a primary care physician have 33% less cost of care,
3 and a 19% less mortality (i.e. are less likely to die prematurely), and this report also
4 indicates that patients who have a primary care physician are consistently associated
5 with improved health outcomes, and in the United States an increase of 1 (one)
6 primary care physician is associated with 1.44 fewer deaths per 10,000; and

7 WHEREAS, a white paper from the American College of Physicians (ACP) 2008, entitled
8 “How is a Shortage of Primary Care Physicians Affecting the Quality and Cost of
9 Medical Care?”, reveals that a dramatic decline is occurring in the number of
10 graduating medical (MD) students entering primary care; and, that a 2007 survey of
11 4th year medical students reveals only 2% of students intended to pursue careers in
12 general internal medicine; and

13 WHEREAS, in this same report from the ACP, the authors found that by increasing the
14 number of primary care physicians by 1 per 10,000 population was associated with a
15 reduction in overall spending of \$684 per Medicare beneficiary, and an increase of 1
16 specialist per 10,000 population increased spending of \$526 per Medicare beneficiary;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, a special communication authored by Miller, Hooker and Mains, entitled
19 “Characteristics of Osteopathic Physicians Choosing to Practice Rural Primary
20 Care”, from JAOA May 2006, revealed that male and female osteopathic physicians
21 were 2.3 and 2.5 times respectively, more likely than all other physician groups to
22 practice rural primary care; and

23 WHEREAS, in this same communication from Miller, Hooker and Mains, there continues
24 to be disparities in access to healthcare in the United States, especially evident for
25 rural and other underserved communities, and that osteopathic medicine has
26 emerged as one of few consistent remedies for these inequities, and that in contrast
27 with allopathic physicians, most osteopathic physicians choose primary care
28 specialties, and furthermore, the literature suggests that osteopathic physicians
29 practice in rural areas relatively more than their allopathic colleagues; and

1 WHEREAS, an article by Benjamin Brewer, MD, from January 2009, relates that decades of
2 research have shown that good primary care reduces costs and improves outcomes,
3 yet this is a blind spot as the biggest flaw in the healthcare system, and that an
4 adequately funded system of primary care is the key to adequate healthcare; **AND**

5 **WHEREAS AN ESSENTIAL MISSION OF COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC**
6 **MEDICINE HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON DEVELOPING PRIMARY CARE**
7 **PHYSICIANS;** now, therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, that the American Osteopathic Association uphold and support
9 **MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY AND MISSION OF** ~~that all~~ Colleges of
10 Osteopathic Medicine and University Health Science Centers granting the Doctor of
11 Osteopathic Medicine Degree (DO) ~~;~~ ~~preserve that integrity.~~

References:

<http://www.acponline.org/> How Is A Shortage Of Primary Care Physicians Affecting The Quality And Cost Of Medical Care? A Comprehensive Evidence Review A White Paper Of The American College Of Physicians

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15769797> The effects of specialist supply on populations' health: assessing the evidence. Barbara Starfield, Leiyu Shi, Atul Grover, James Macinko

<http://www.jaoa.org/> “Characteristics of Osteopathic Physicians Choosing to Practice Rural Primary Care”, from JAOA May 2006, by Miller, Hooker and Mains

ACTION TAKEN APPROVED AS AMENDED

DATE 7/17/09