

**DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**  
**Robert S. Juhasz, DO, Chair**

**BUREAU OF COMMUNICATIONS – William M. Silverman, DO, Chair**

The AOA continues to promote DOs and osteopathic medicine to the media. The following are highlights of news stories resulting from the AOA's media relations efforts since July 2008:

DOs/Osteopathic Medicine Media Coverage

**“Morning News Calendar”- *WLS-TV ABC 7 Chicago*, July 18, 2008**

The Morning Calendar segment of the 6:30 a.m. news broadcast informed viewers that the AOA's annual meeting was taking place that weekend in Chicago. The segment specifically mentioned that delegates would be voting about taser safety.

**“Osteopath Association Cites Financial, Political Strength”- *Modern Physician*, July 18, 2008**

This article highlighted AOA House of Delegates speeches and reports from Peter B. Ajluni, DO, and John B. Crosby, JD, and the installation of Carlo J. DiMarco, DO, as AOA president. The article called attention to the recent passage of the “Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act” and the AOA's lobbying efforts on behalf of patients and physicians.

**“Clarifying Certifications”- *Angie's List Magazine*, July 2008**

*Angie's List Magazine* is a consumer-driven online and monthly print publication that informs readers about topics such as health care, travel, family and retail. This article offered guidance on selecting a new doctor and explained the roles that the AOA and ABMS play in certifying physicians. It also provided information about the specialty areas in which DOs practice.

**“WA Medical School Celebrates Opening”- *Associated Press*, July 23, 2008**

This article about the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences, College of Osteopathic Medicine in Yakima, Wash., takes a close look at osteopathic medicine and the impact the college will have on health care in the Yakima area. The article ran in several newspapers such as the *Seattle Times* and *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. It also ran on the Web sites of several television stations, including *KNDO* in Washington and *MSNBC*.

**“The Osteopathic Physician's Role in Primary Care” and “The Osteopath's Role in Encouraging Patients Toward a Medical Home” and “Research in the Osteopathic Medical Profession” - *ReachMD/XM Radio Channel 157***

AOA Executive Director John B. Crosby, JD, was interviewed on several topics for *ReachMD*, a program on Satellite Radio's XM Radio Channel 157. The first interview, which ran on June 16, was about workforce projections for DOs in the United States and their implications for health care to the underserved. On July 21, the second interview ran about the role of DOs in the patient-centered medical home model. A third interview on the topic of research in the osteopathic medical profession aired September 2.

**“Medicare Cuts Threaten Access to Health Care for Seniors”- *KGO-AM* Radio San Francisco, July 8, 2008**

The AOA distributed an audio news release about the threat to access to care for Medicare beneficiaries resulting from the 10.6% cuts to Medicare payments that went into effect on July 1. The release featured an audio message from James J. Dearing, DO, expressing his regret that the cuts would force him to stop seeing Medicare patients in order to keep his practice running. As a result of the release, Dr. Dearing was interviewed by *KGO-AM* in San Francisco about how cuts to Medicare payments to physicians threaten patients' access to care. The live interview aired on July 9 at 8:15 a.m. PDT during the number one-rated morning program in the sixth largest media market in the United States.

**“Elite Sport Comes with a Health Warning” – *Reuters*, August 21, 2008**

Marcia Whalen, DO, of Newport Beach, Calif., explains the physical risks facing elite-level athletes. Dr. Whalen is one of the team physicians for the U.S. Olympic women's water polo team.

**“What a DO Does That an MD Doesn't Do” – *Chicago Tribune*, November 2, 2008**

Media relations staff continued to work on media placements in the Chicagoland area this year including this article to educate consumers that there are two types of licensed physicians in the U.S. The news story also highlighted the differences between DOs and MDs.

**“The Osteopathy Option” and “Training DOs in FM,” – *Fibromyalgia Aware*, Autumn Issue**

Two articles written by DOs appeared in this quarterly magazine published by the National Fibromyalgia Association (NFA). The first article, “The Osteopathy Option,” by Mark S. Cantieri, DO, and Douglas J. Jorgensen, DO, educates readers about osteopathic medicine and the use of OMT in treating this condition. The second article, “Training DOs in FM,” by Michael Seffinger, DO, further examines how DOs are taught to use OMT as a unique and effective treatment option for patients suffering from Fibromyalgia.

**“Ask the Expert” – *Shape*, November 2008**

In *Shape*'s monthly Ask the Expert column, women's health expert Victoria Maizes, MD, answers the question "What's the difference between a DO and an MD when it comes to their qualifications?" Dr. Maizes, executive director of the University of Arizona Center of Integrative Medicine, explained that while both physicians attend medical school and pass accreditation exams, the two diverge in their philosophy of medicine. She added that DOs emphasize diet, exercise and lifestyle changes to their patients and described the additional training DOs receive in osteopathic manipulative treatment.

**“25 Largest Health Care Associations” - *Modern Healthcare*, December 22, 2008**

The American Osteopathic Association ranked 12th in *Modern Healthcare's* listing of the 25 largest health care associations. The rankings are based on 2006 revenue.

**“This year I Will ...! New Year's resolutions to Help Strengthen Your Family” - Bend Bulletin (Oregon), December 26, 2008**

Natalie Nevins, DO, shares tips on how families can set achievable goals for the New Year when making resolutions.

Other Media Outreach

Partnered with the American Medical Association, American College of Surgeons and AARP to hold a news conference to vocalize support for Congressional action overriding President Bush’s veto of the “Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act.” The news conference, which took place at AOA headquarters, featured President Ajluni and representatives from the other associations expressing their thanks and relief that Medicare payment cuts were avoided, ensuring that many physicians would be able to continue treating Medicare patients. A multimedia news package featuring highlights from the press conference was distributed to the media over the newswire that afternoon. News stories resulting from the press conference ran on 142 TV stations, reaching a potential audience of more than 3 million viewers with a TV advertisement value equivalent of \$220,000.

Distributed the AOA Annual Convention Online Media Kit to select national and Las Vegas media on Sept. 26. The distribution prompted two articles prior to convention in trade publications. The first “2008 AOA Convention to Spur Developments in Health Care, Medical Research,” ran in *Exhibitor City News* on Oct. 2. The second ran in the *Physicians Travel & Meeting Network CME Planner* on Oct. 8. In addition, three Nevada public radio stations, *KCNV-FM*, *KNPR-FM* and *KPLV-FM*, included mention of the Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program presented by the Advocates for the American Osteopathic Association.

Updated content for two Wikipedia entries on the osteopathic medical profession: the Osteopathic Medicine entry and the Comparison of MD and DO entry. The updates included adding current statistical information from the Osteopathic Medical Profession Report as well as presenting additional information about the California merger in the 1960s.

**Other communications efforts covering internal communications and marketing communications overseen by the Bureau, include:**

Approved a public education support request to become a national sponsor for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Health and Fitness Day USA, promoting family involvement in physical activity. As a sponsor, the AOA was included in press releases and print promotional materials in exchange for including information about the day on AOA Web sites and informing members about the day, which was held on September 27, 2008.

Awarded Unity II OPP/OMT Grants to 15 osteopathic state/specialty associations to help promote the use of OMT. Grants were made possible by the generous support of the Dale Dodson Educational Fund.

Developed an AOA Facebook page and continued to use the AOA’s MySpace page and YouTube channel as a way to disseminate information beyond traditional media outlets. YouTube videos titled “AOA: Health Dose” were produced featuring DOs as expert

sources on various health care topics. In addition, staff began monitoring blogs, online networks and alternative sources of information about osteopathic medicine.

Released the 2008 Osteopathic Medical Profession (OMP) Report, which contains the latest statistics on the osteopathic medical profession. The OMP Report is available in the “About AOA” sections of DO-Online and Osteopathic.org.

Produced “Tips, Tactics and Truths: A Guide to Making the Most of Your Osteopathic Medical Education,” In October of 2008, the guide was distributed via jump drives to first-year students. Second through fourth-year osteopathic medical students received an e-mail with a link to the Guide which was posted on DO-Online. In an effort to keep students aware of the available resources and remind them of the AOA, regularly scheduled e-mail communications was implemented, to keep the most timely information in front of the students and remind them that the AOA is a resource for them.

Created a NOM Week Mini-Medical School event planning guide to assist the osteopathic family in coordinating this event in their local areas. The Guide included template resources and tips for reaching out to the media during NOM Week, March 1-7, 2009.

#### **BUREAU OF STATE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS – James J. Dearing, DO, Chair**

The BSGA most recently met on October 30, 2008 in Las Vegas, Nevada in conjunction with the AOA Convention. The next meeting is expected to be a conference call in March 2009. The following is a summary of the major issues discussed by the Bureau. While the issues contained in this report represent the key issues being monitored, the Bureau continues to research and respond to new developments as they arise.

##### Clinical Rotations for International Medical Students

Clinical rotation slots for medical students in New York have been contractually set aside for international students from the Caribbean because of a recent contract. Members are concerned about the effect on local students and the access to these clinical rotation slots. The Bureau has directed staff to draft a policy on this issue and bring it back to the BSGA in March 2009.

##### Physician Education Advancing Community Health (PEACH)

The BSGA is looking at the Physician Education Advancing Community Health (PEACH) program, which would create additional funding for GME programs through an all-payer system implemented at the state level. The documents regarding the PEACH concept were originally sent to states in 2001 and states were not responsive to it at the time. The same documents have been sent out to states to seek their comments. Two factors have caused this proposal to resurface. First, that the new AOA President Carlo DiMarco’s priority is GME and this is one way to advance his cause. Secondly, the economy is likely to put pressure on the federal government to stop or decrease funding for GME.

##### Health System Reform

The BSGA continues to monitor health system reform issues. Recently a universal healthcare bill was defeated in California and a major health system reform law was passed in

Massachusetts. The start of the 2009 legislative year will surely show many more bills related to health system reform from a variety of perspectives.

#### Scope of Practice

BSGA puts a significant focus on scope of practice issues. Legislation is monitored and additionally, the AOA participates in the Scope of Practice Partnership, which is a coalition of organizations working together towards the protection of the physician community as non-physician clinician attempt to expand their scope of practice.

#### Patient Centered Medical Home

BSGA also focuses on the patient centered medical home concept. The Bureau monitors legislation, local pilot projects, and demonstrations.

#### On-Line Medicine

At the October 2008 BSGA meeting, the Bureau voted to approve a draft of the updated AOA policy on on-line medicine. The draft language has since been sent to the state affiliates and divisional societies for their feedback.

#### 2009 Program of Work

The BSGA approved the 2009 Program of Work, which directs staff. A key change from last year's Program of Work is the educational priority. This is based on the new president priorities of President Carlo DiMarco. The priorities for 2009 are:

- Ensure the continued recognition of the distinctiveness of osteopathic education, postgraduate training, examination, and specialty board certification at the state level.
- Ensure that the state osteopathic medical associations, specialty colleges, and other affiliates have detailed information on issues of importance to the profession.
- Ensure the AOA's representation at meetings of key associations or organizations – i.e., the American Association of Osteopathic Examiners (AAOE), Administrators in Medicine (AIM), American Medical Association (AMA), Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB), National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), National Governors Association (NGA), and Council on State Governments (CSG) – to assure continued awareness and recognition of the osteopathic profession.
- Provide the state osteopathic medical associations, specialty colleges, and other affiliates with an opportunity to gain education and training on how to influence state policy makers on legislative and regulatory affairs.

#### **BUREAU OF FEDERAL HEALTH PROGRAMS – Marcelino Oliva, DO, Chair**

The Bureau on Federal Health Programs (BFHP) held a meeting on September 26, 2008. The agenda included staff reports on legislative and regulatory activities, as well presentations by outside speakers. In addition, the 2008 Class of Osteopathic Fellows received their certificates of graduation. Three of the Fellows presented their papers.

Thomas R. Russell, MD, FACS, Executive Director, American College of Surgeons, gave an overview of the health care system and possibilities for reform. Dr. Russell also complimented the AOA on the constructive relationship that the two organizations have developed over recent years. Sue E. Nelson, Vice President of Federal Advocacy, American

Heart Association (AHA), spoke on the role Federal advocacy plays in promoting the goals and vision of the AHA. Ms. Nelson also discussed the need for collaboration between the patient and physician communities. Major Martin Doperak, DO (U.S. Army) made a presentation on expanding options for DOs in today's Army. The luncheon speaker, John Mercurio, political columnist for the *National Journal*, talked about the upcoming elections.

During Executive Session, members participated in a discussion of the revised Code on Interactions with Healthcare Professionals released by PhRMA on July 10, 2008. Chairman Oliva, with the Bureau's concurrence, sent a letter to the chair of the AOA Bureau of Ethics, asking that group to examine the Guidelines to determine if current AOA policy is sufficient. Additionally, the Bureau discussed follow-on biologics. The Bureau agreed that the subject is not in its purview. Chairman Oliva sent a letter to the chair of the AOA Bureau of Scientific Affairs and Public Health indicating that, in the view of the BFHP, AOA policy on follow-on biologics needs to be developed. The Bureau reviewed recommendations from the Medical Education Summits I and II. These recommendations have been incorporated into the AOA legislative and regulatory agendas. Finally, the Bureau and DGR staff discussed Agenda 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. The Agenda will be developed by staff for consideration by the Bureau during the January 2009 meeting. Requests for input from state and specialty societies were made using a variety of communications.

The next meeting of the Bureau is January 23, 2009.

#### **JOINT COMMITTEE ON QUALITY AND REIMBURSEMENT – Ray E. Stowers, DO, Chair**

##### **BUREAU OF SOCIOECONOMIC AFFAIRS – David F. Hitzeman, DO, Chair**

As a result of an AMA/Specialty Society RVS Update Committee (RUC) on-going refinement process and the CMS FY 2009 proposed rule, the AOA was informed of the imminent review of the relative values of the Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT) codes. Subsequent to learning this information, the AOA Division of Socioeconomic Affairs convened an Expert Panel conference call on August 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss this and other issues. This Expert Panel developed an RFP proposal for a reimbursement consultant to perform a strategic/risk analysis of the codes. Also in August, the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) submitted a confidential reimbursement proposal to the AOA for review. The AAFP proposal was related to the revision of existing Evaluation and Management (office visit) policy.

The AOA Bureau of Socioeconomic Affairs (BSA) met by conference call on September 18<sup>th</sup> to consider the two proposals. The BSA approved the recommended RFP process and documents, as well as the list of potential consults. Based on the meeting discussions and deliberations of the AAFP proposal, a recommendation was developed and approved by the BSA. This recommendation was forwarded to the Joint Committee on Quality and Reimbursement (JCQR) for additional review and consideration prior to the formal submission of an AOA response back to the AAFP.

The Bureau most recently met on December 13, 2008 and discussed several policy and educational initiatives. The BSA addressed the “Incident To” Physician Services Resolution that was referred to the BSA from the July 2008 House of Delegates. The BSA reviewed the resolution and agreed on the response that should be developed explaining that there is existing policy that addresses this resolution, and to further describe the on-going efforts by the Division of State Government Affairs that addresses and is responsive to this proposed resolution.

As a result of the economic down turn several educational efforts were not funded as a part of the 2010 budget and these were discussed by the BSA. The Osteopathic Carrier Advisory Panel (O-CAP) meeting, the AOA Convention Practice Management programs, and the development of a National Practice Management curriculum, were all initiatives discussed. The O-CAP is the group of physicians who are advisory to Medicare regarding regional reimbursement policies. As the Carrier regions are being realigned and the Medicare Contractors are changing this is a policy area that the BSA believes it will be very important to monitor. The Convention practice management programs and the National practice management curriculum of programs would all be held in conjunction with States and Specialties to provide information and tools to assist physicians in running their practices like a business. In these challenging economic times it was agreed that the BSA should continue to advocate for these programs and submit budget adjustments for these initiatives.

The BSA further discussed the 2009 Medicare payment policies such as the 2009 positive payment update, the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI), and the E-Prescribing programs that are now available to allow physicians to realize a 5% increase in Medicare payments from 2008. The AOA CAP program was also discussed and the BSA was informed how physicians may now utilize the CAP program as a mechanism to realize increased Medicare reimbursement.

The Bureau will continue to prioritize and develop initiatives that are consistent with the objectives of the Strategic Plan.

### **BUREAU ON INTERNATIONAL OSTEOPATHIC MEDICAL EDUCATION AND AFFAIRS – Wayne Z. McBride, DO, Chair**

BIOMEA last convened on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The following is a summary of the major issues discussed by the Bureau, from September 2008 to February 2009. While the issues contained in this report represent the key topics being pursued, the Bureau continues to research and respond to new developments as they arise.

#### Collaboration with Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

BIOMEA is seeking collaboration with colleges of osteopathic medicine (COMs) through advocating the establishment of standards for OMS international education, including guidelines for elective clinical rotations and cultural competency training. BIOMEA has formed a committee to draft a white paper that will discuss these issues and provide recommendations that will promote a standard program framework, academic rigor, and participant as well as patient safety. Once this white paper is completed, the Bureau will apply to present it to the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) at their annual conference. The Bureau also sent a letter to President DiMarco,

expressing concerns about international student rotations, which will be included in the white paper. These concerns include curriculum standards, sustainability of care, centralization of information, gaining licensure, and above all ensuring high quality care and patient safety.

#### BIOMEA Initiatives

The Bureau was informed about Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) of Illinois' initiative to require evidence-based research for insurance reimbursement. This was brought to BIOMEA's attention because there is a need to expand the amount of OMT research being done in the US. Though the AOA's Council for Osteopathic Research and Osteopathic Research Center (ORC), among other entities, continue to conduct research, there is also a significant body of osteopathic research occurring internationally. The Bureau has begun to proactively seek out international osteopathic researchers and research to be published in US journals, such as the JAOA, as is required by BCBS for this new initiative.

To that end, staff attended the Seventh International Conference on Advances in Osteopathic Research (ICAOR7), which was hosted by Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine Bradenton branch (LECOM - Bradenton), September 5-7, 2008. This conference was organized in collaboration with British College of Osteopathic Medicine (BCOM) in London, UK, and was chaired by Prof. Reza Nassiri of LECOM and Dr. Ian Drysdale, the Principal of BCOM. There were osteopathic professionals representing eight countries at the conference, including Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, UK, and USA. Dr. John Licciardone, DO, of the ORC was the keynote speaker of the conference. The ICAOR7 awarded prizes in the following categories: New Researcher to Robert Froud, DO (UK); Established Researcher to Lisa Hodge, Ph.D (ORC, USA); and Best Poster to Florian Schwerla, DO (Germany). BIOMEA will also begin working with the ORC to advance this initiative.

In a further effort to gain practice rights in foreign countries, BIOMEA is starting an initiative to identify and contact foreign-born US-DOs and osteopathic medical students. BIOMEA will work with SOMA, Touchpoints, and other sources to help identify these individuals. Typically familiar with their countries of origin and speaking the language, some of these individuals may additionally have knowledge or contacts within the medical communities of their respective countries. Asking them to act as unofficial liaisons for osteopathic medicine when traveling to their home countries, may yield some who can meaningfully assist building understanding, removing barriers and establishing contacts that may lead to progress in promoting practice rights internationally. For those who indicate interest in this role, written materials, contacts and some scripting will be provided to assist them. These volunteers would not be "ambassadors" in the way a similar effort was attempted by BIOMEA some years ago, in which any D.O. who traveled internationally was able to get involved. This program was met with mixed results and was discontinued.

#### Annual BIOMEA International Seminars

BIOMEA's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual International Seminar, "American Osteopathic Medicine: Establishing International Freedom," was held on Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, during the AOA Convention in Las Vegas, NV, with more than 300 attendees throughout the day-long Seminar. DOCARE International was heavily involved with the Seminar this year, giving two presentations, including one on mission director training. Dr. Bodell, AOA Trustee,

also gave a presentation on his outreach work in Haiti. The poster session was very successful this year, attracting 37 applications – nearly doubling the number from last year. Further, the poster session attracted presentations with a higher level of academic rigor and scientific merit than in previous years. The Bureau is considering adding more scientific requirements for poster submissions, possibly even having two separate categories of posters in the future, one more scientific based and one more experience based.

The committee for the 2009 International Seminar was formed and is chaired by Dr. Peter Adler-Michaelson and co-chaired by Professor Reza Nassiri. Work has begun on the program agenda and efforts are underway to secure a WHO representative to be the keynote speaker, presenting on the global status of health and how osteopathic medicine can play a role in international health outreach. The Seminar will also look at cultural competency, building on Prof Nassiri's presentation in Las Vegas, as well as student perspectives of clinical rotations.

#### Canadian Update

The Medical Council of Canada (MCC) is responsible for developing and administering the national qualifying examinations for the Canadian medical schools, in a role similar to the NBOME. All provinces require successful completion of the MCC examinations by Canadian graduates for registration. Some provinces also insist on successful completion of these exams for international medical graduates, including Americans. For several years American trained DOs have had access to the Qualifying Examination of the MCC, but first had to successfully challenge the Evaluating Examination that is administered to international medical graduates re-locating to Canada. American MD graduates were able to bypass the Evaluating Examination and challenge the Qualifying Examination directly. The Canadian Osteopathic Association (COA) has reported that they have early indications that this same exemption is likely going to be extended to American DO graduates as well, saving students the cost and inconvenience of having to write the additional examination.

#### International Federation of Manual/Musculoskeletal Medicine

The International Federation for Manual/Musculoskeletal Medicine (FIMM) is an international medical association comprised of 30 individual national societies, with the predominance being MD organizations whose members practice manual or musculoskeletal medicine. The US member of FIMM is the American Academy of Osteopathy (AAO).

Because of financial limitations, the AAO has not kept current with their dues obligation to FIMM. On September 27, 2008, FIMM met in Bulgaria and revised their dues structure, resulting in the AAO being supplanted by Germany (as the organization with the most members) paying the largest amount of dues by far. The new structure also reduced the AAO's dues significantly, from approximately \$7,000 to \$1,500-\$2,000 per year. However, to continue their membership, the AAO is required to pay past, unpaid dues. Inasmuch as the AAO has indicated they do not have the resources to fully meet these unpaid obligations, a resolution has been drafted requesting the Board of Trustees to authorize a one-time budget adjustment to pay for half of the AAO's debt.

The Osteopathic Research Center provided the FIMM International Academy, the research arm of FIMM, with a \$5,000 educational grant. The FIMM International Academy is planning to break away from the FIMM structure and become a stand alone organization,

similar to our COCA, because it is studying the potential to become a credentialing body for manual medicine internationally. The Bureau notes that our COMs do not reflect in their transcripts the true OMT/OPP training that students receive throughout their osteopathic medical schooling. The hours reflected in the transcripts are much less than what is actually taught, which may prove to be an issue if FIMM becomes a manual medicine accreditor.