

**AOA BASIC DOCUMENTS
JULY 2011**

CONSTITUTION

Article I - Name

The name of this Association shall be the American Osteopathic Association.

Article II - Objectives

The objectives of this Association shall be to promote the public health, to encourage scientific research, and to maintain and improve high standards of osteopathic medical education.

Article III - Divisional Societies

This Association shall be a federation of divisional societies organized within state or foreign country boundaries, or within the uniformed services of the United States, which may be chartered by this Association as provided by the Bylaws, and all such organizations or divisions now a constituent part of the American Osteopathic Association are declared to be chartered as federated units of this Association.

Article IV - Affiliated Organizations

Affiliated organizations may be organized in conformity with the Bylaws of the Association.

Article V - Membership

The membership of this Association shall consist of Doctors of Osteopathy and of such others as have met the requirements prescribed by the Bylaws of the American Osteopathic Association.

Article VI - House of Delegates

The House of Delegates shall be the legislative body of the Association, shall exercise the delegated powers of the divisional societies in the affairs of this Association, and shall perform such other functions as are set forth in the Bylaws.

Section 1-Composition

The House of Delegates shall consist of delegates elected by the divisional societies and other authorized units, the elected officers and trustees of the Association and of such other members as may be provided for in the Bylaws.

Each divisional society shall be entitled to one delegate and such additional delegates as follows: One additional delegate for each 100 regular members of this Association located in the state represented by that divisional society, provided that if there are 75 or more unrepresented regular members of this Association in the area of that divisional society, it shall be entitled to one additional delegate, and one additional delegate as a student council representative of each college of osteopathic medicine accredited by this Association and located in the state represented by that divisional society, such student delegate to be elected according to the Bylaws of the American Osteopathic Association.

Section 2-Presiding Officer

The presiding officer of the House of Delegates shall be the Speaker and, in his absence or at his request, the Vice Speaker shall preside.

Article VII – Officers

Section 1-Elected Officers

The elected officers of this Association shall be the President, President-Elect, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President and Third Vice-President. The First Vice-President shall be a person who has had previous experience as a member of the Board of Trustees. The officers shall be elected annually by the House of Delegates for a term of one year, or until their successors are elected and installed. The President-Elect shall automatically succeed to the presidency upon his installation, during the annual meeting of the House of Delegates following his election to the office of President-Elect. In the case of the inability upon the part of the president to serve during the term of office for which he/she has been elected, and therefore the office becomes vacant, the President-Elect shall become president for the unexpired portion of the term and continue in that office for the term in which the President-Elect was originally elected. In such case, if the President-Elect is unable to serve for the full unexpired term of the president's office, then the responsibility of filling the office of President shall devolve upon the Board of Trustees.

Section 2-Administrative Officers

The administrative officers shall be an Executive Director, a Controller, a General Counsel, and an Editor who shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees and employed to serve for such term as the Board shall define. The duties of these officers shall be those usual to such officers in their respective offices and such others as are set forth in the Bylaws. The Executive Director shall be the Secretary of the Association.

Article VIII - Board of Trustees and Executive Committee

Section 1-Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees of this Association shall consist of the President, President-elect, the Past Presidents for the preceding two years, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Third Vice-President, and twenty other members, six of whom shall be elected annually by the House of Delegates to serve for three years, a new physician in practice to serve for one year, an intern/resident member elected by the House of Delegates to serve for one year. Candidates for the new physician in practice position shall be osteopathic physicians who have completed their postdoctoral training within the past five years or received their do degree within the previous ten years and shall be nominated by the council of new physicians in practice. Candidates for the intern/resident position shall be enrolled in an AOA-approved internship or residency or, if enrolled in an ACGME-approved residency shall have applied for AOA approval of their ACGME-approved residency. Candidates for the intern/resident position shall be nominated by the Congress of Interns/Residents. Candidates for the student position shall be nominated, in alternating years, by the Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents (COSGP) and the Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA). The Board of Trustees shall be the administrative and executive body of the Association and perform such other duties as are provided by the Bylaws. All trustees, with the exception of the President, President-Elect and the Past Presidents for the preceding two years, the aggregate terms of Office of Trustees shall be limited to twelve (12) years, with the exception that a trustee may complete the term in which twelve (12) years or more of service is completed. The intern/resident member shall be elected for a one-year term, but may be elected to serve an additional one-year term as the intern/resident member.

Section 2-Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of this Association shall consist of the President, President-elect, Immediate Past President, First Vice-President, the chairmen of the Departments of Professional Affairs, Public Affairs, Business Affairs, Governmental Affairs and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Department of Educational Affairs.

Article IX - Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by the House of Delegates at any annual meeting by a two-thirds vote of the total number of delegates accredited for voting, provided that such amendments shall have been presented to the House and filed with the Executive Director at a previous annual meeting, who shall cause them to be distributed by first class mail, postage prepaid, to each divisional and specialty society entitled to and voting representatives to the House of Delegates, posted on the AOA's website, and printed published in *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* not less than two months or more than four months prior to the meeting at which they are to be acted upon.

Article X - Gender Disclaimer

The American Osteopathic Association is open to persons of both sexes and does not discriminate against any persons because of sex; therefore, the wording herein importing the masculine or feminine gender includes the other gender and imports no such discrimination.

BYLAWS

Article I - Divisional, District and Affiliated Societies

Section 1-Divisional Societies

Any state, territorial, provincial or foreign osteopathic organization, or an organization of osteopathic physicians serving in the uniformed services of the United States, which may desire to become a divisional society of the American Osteopathic Association and be chartered as a divisional society of this Association, shall apply on a prescribed form, submit evidence that its constitution, Bylaws, and Code of Ethics generally conform to those of this Association, and maintain an organizational structure which shall generally conform to that of this Association.

Upon such application, the Executive Director and the Board of Trustees shall investigate and, finding satisfactory proof, shall recommend to the House of Delegates that a charter be issued. The Association shall not issue such a charter to more than one divisional society in a given area.

Section 2-District Societies

Divisional societies may, within their own areas, organize district societies whose relationship to the divisional society shall in all respects conform to that existing between the division and this Association.

Section 3-Affiliated Organizations

Upon application from any organization for a charter as an affiliated organization, the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director shall investigate such organization and, upon satisfactory proof of a general agreement in policy and governing rules with those of this Association, shall recommend to the House of Delegates the issuance of such a charter. The Association shall not issue a charter to any organization, which duplicates the function or prerogatives of any presently affiliated organization. All organizations which have as their membership osteopathic physicians in good standing with the AOA, whether holding a current charter of affiliation or not, shall have as a medium of communication all publications of the AOA.

Section 4-Amendments to Governing Documents

Any amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws, Code of Ethics, and other governing documents, by whatever name called, of such a divisional society or affiliated organization shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees of the American Osteopathic Association, who shall review such amendments to determine whether, with the proposed amendments, the Constitution, Bylaws, Code of Ethics, or other governing documents would continue to conform generally to those of this Association and, with respect to the divisional society only, whether the organizational structure would continue to conform generally to those of this Association. Until such proposed amendments are given written approval of the Board of Trustees of the American Osteopathic Association, the divisional society or affiliated organization shall continue to operate under its previously approved Constitution, Bylaws, or other governing documents.

Article II – Membership

Section 1-Classification

The members of this Association shall be classified as follows:

- a. Regular Members
- b. Honorary Life Members
- c. Life Members

- d. Associate Members
- e. Student Members
- f. Honorary Members
- g. International Physician Members
- h. Allied Members

Section 2-Membership Requirements

a. Applicants for Regular Membership

An applicant for regular membership in this Association shall be a graduate of a college of osteopathic medicine approved by the American Osteopathic Association and shall be eligible for licensure as an osteopathic physician and/or surgeon or shall be in a training program, which is a prerequisite for his licensure.

Application shall be made on the prescribed form and shall be accompanied by payment of the appropriate dues amount.

Unless specifically noted, an applicant whose completed application and payment of appropriate dues has been received and processed shall be enrolled as a regular member. An applicant whose membership in this Association has previously been withdrawn for reasons other than failure to meet CME requirements or non-payment of dues, or who has previously been convicted of a felony offense or whose license to practice has at any time been revoked, shall be further required to obtain the endorsement of the secretary of the divisional society in the state, province, or foreign country in which the applicant resides (or the endorsement of the secretary of the uniformed services divisional society in the case of applicants currently serving in the uniformed services of the United States), or, lacking this endorsement, an applicant who is in good standing in his community shall provide letters of recommendation from three members of the Association and provide a personal written statement as to why membership in the Association should be extended or restored. Such information and application shall be carefully reviewed by the Committee on Membership, which shall make an appropriate recommendation for reinstatement to the Board of Trustees.

An applicant whose license to practice is revoked or suspended, or who is currently serving a sentence for conviction of a felony offense, shall not be considered eligible for membership in this Association.

b. Honorary Life Member

Honorary life membership shall be conferred on each president upon conclusion of his term of office.

Such honorary life membership shall not exempt the holder thereof from the maintenance of regular membership in his divisional society or from assessments levied by this Association.

Honorary life membership may also be conferred by the Board of Trustees on a regular member who has been in good standing for 25 consecutive years immediately preceding, and who has rendered outstanding service to the profession at either the state or national level, or who is recommended for such a membership by official action of his divisional society and the Committee on Membership. Such honorary life members shall have the privileges and duties of regular members including the payment of assessments levied by the Association, but shall not be required to pay dues.

c. Life Member

Life membership may be granted to any regular member who has reached the age of 70 years, or who has completed 50 years of osteopathic practice, whichever comes first, and who has been in good standing for 25 consecutive years immediately preceding. The Committee on Membership may waive this requirement on individual consideration. Such members shall have the privileges and duties of regular members, but shall not be required to pay dues or assessments beginning the year in which the age of 70 is attained.

Life membership may also be granted by the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committee on recommendation of his divisional society, to any regular member who has become permanently totally disabled. Such members shall have the privileges and duties of regular members, but shall not be required to pay dues or assessments.

d. Associate Member

By specific action of the Board of Trustees, or its Executive Committee, associate memberships may be granted to the following:

Graduates of accredited schools of medicine, dentistry or podiatry holding teaching, research or administrative positions in AOA accredited healthcare facilities and colleges or who practice jointly with regular members of this Association;

Doctors of philosophy or education and other nondoctoral personnel holding teaching, research or administrative positions in AOA accredited healthcare facilities or colleges; administrative employees of this Association, affiliated organizations and divisional societies; and any other professionals as determined by the Board of Trustees, excepting doctors of osteopathy and students in osteopathic colleges.

Such associate members shall be required to pay dues and assessments as determined by these Bylaws. They shall receive a complimentary subscription to the Association's publications and shall be eligible for such benefits as are periodically established by the Board of Trustees.

Associate members shall not be eligible for membership in the House of Delegates or the Board of Trustees, or to hold any elective offices of this Association. Special listing in the *AOA Yearbook and Directory* shall be provided.

e. Student Member

Student membership status shall be granted to each undergraduate student in an approved college of osteopathic medicine.

At such time as a student member graduates from his osteopathic college, he shall automatically become enrolled as a regular member of the Association. Each student member shall receive such publications and other literature, except the *AOA Yearbook and Directory*, as may be directed by the Board of Trustees or the House of Delegates.

f. Honorary Member

By specific action of the Board of Trustees, honorary membership may be granted to individuals, not eligible for any other category of membership, who support the goals and objectives of this Association. Such honorary members shall not be required to pay dues or assessments. They shall receive complimentary copies of the Association's publications and such other services as authorized by the Board of Trustees. Honorary members shall not be eligible for membership in the House of

Delegates or the Board of Trustees, or hold any elective offices of this Association. Special listing in the *AOA Yearbook and Directory* shall be provided.

Such membership, when conferred, shall remain in full force and effect unless revoked by action of the Board of Trustees of the American Osteopathic Association.

g. International Physician Members

By specific action of the Board of Trustees, or its Executive Committee, international membership may be granted to the following allopathic physicians who are:

Graduates of schools of medicine located outside of the United States on an official list of schools recognized by the AOA, and holding a license for unlimited scope of medical practice including the authority to prescribe without limitation in their country of practice, and these allopathic physicians reside and practice outside of the United States and who support the goals and objectives of the AOA and the AOA Code of Ethics

Such International Physician Members will be required to pay dues and assessments as determined by these Bylaws. They shall receive a complimentary subscription to the Association's publications and shall be eligible for such benefits as are periodically established by the Board of Trustees.

International Physician Members shall not be eligible for membership in the House of Delegates or the Board of Trustees, or to hold any elective offices of this Association. Special listing in the *AOA Yearbook and Directory* shall be provided.

b. Allied Member

By specific action of the Committee on Membership, allied membership may be granted to those licensed allied healthcare providers who are currently employed, with an active member of the AOA, contribute to the practice of that member, are not eligible for any other category of membership and who support the goals and objectives of this Association.

Such allied members shall be required to pay dues and assessments as determined by these Bylaws. They shall be eligible for such benefits as may periodically be determined by the Board of Trustees.

Allied members shall not be eligible for membership in the House of Delegates or the Board of Trustees, or to hold any elective offices of this Association. Special listing in the *AOA Yearbook and Directory* will be provided.

By specific action of the Committee on Membership, allied membership may be granted to allopathic physicians holding an MD degree and licensed to practice in the United States who support the AOA mission and subscribe to its Code of Ethics.

Individuals who have received their training and/or degree in osteopathic medicine from a school that is not accredited by the AOA Bureau of Professional Education are not eligible for membership in the AOA.

Section 3-Disciplinary Action

The membership of any member of the Association who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee of the Association, purposely and persistently violates the established policy of the Association or who seeks to undermine the unity of the osteopathic profession or of any of its divisional societies or affiliated organizations may be revoked, suspended, or placed on probation

by action of the Executive Committee of the Association upon the recommendation of the Committee on Membership, after the member has been given notice and an opportunity to be heard before such action is taken. Any individual whose membership has been so revoked, suspended, or placed on probation shall have the right of appeal to the Board of Trustees of the AOA at its next regular meeting, requesting a review of the action of the Executive Committee, and the Board of Trustees, on review, may in its discretion take such action in regard thereto as it deems appropriate.

Article III - Dues and Assessments

Section 1-Payment of Dues

The annual dues of regular members of the Association shall be payable in advance on or before 1 June, the beginning of the fiscal year.

A member whose dues shall remain unpaid for three months shall become suspended. He may be reinstated upon payment of dues and assessments provided such payments are received prior to the end of the current fiscal year, or, if later, by applying as a new member.

Section 2-Dues Rates

a. Members

The annual dues of all members of the Association (except for allied members discussed in section 2c and student members discussed in section 2d, below) shall be determined by the House of Delegates and administered by the Board of Trustees.

b. Hardship Cases

Upon recommendation of the Committee on Membership, the Board of Trustees, or its Executive Committee, may remit a part or all of the annual dues of a member in good standing who, because of physical disability, maintain a limited practice or no practice. For just cause, properly authenticated, similar action may be taken by the Board of Trustees, or its Executive Committee, in regard to regular members not otherwise specifically covered by other provisions of this Article.

c. Allied Members

The annual dues rates for allied members shall be determined and administered by the Board of Trustees.

d. Student Rate

Student members shall not be liable for dues or any assessment.

e. International Physician Members

The annual dues rates for International Physician Members shall be determined and administered by the Board of Trustees.

Section 3-Assessments

To meet emergencies the Board of Trustees may levy such assessments as may be necessary, provided that the total of such assessments in any one-year shall not exceed the amount of the annual dues. Failure to pay such assessments shall incur the same penalty as failure to pay dues. Those dropped from membership for nonpayment of dues during the fiscal year in which an assessment is levied shall be required to pay the assessment prior to reapplying for membership.

Section 4-Refunding Dues

No dues will be refunded if a membership is terminated for cause or because of resignation.

Article IV - Code of Ethics

Section 1

The House of Delegates shall establish a Code of Ethics for the information and guidance of the members. Members of the Association, in their daily conduct, shall comply with the provisions of the Code of Ethics. The Code shall cover duties of physicians to patients, duties of physicians to other physicians and to the profession at large, and responsibilities of physicians to the public. The House of Delegates shall not adopt any provisions of the Code of Ethics, which may be in conflict with the Constitution or Bylaws of the Association.

Section 2

The Code of Ethics may be amended by the House of Delegates at any annual meeting by two-thirds vote of the total number of delegates accredited for voting, provided a copy of the proposed amendment is deposited with the Executive Director at least 90 days before the annual meeting at which it is to be voted upon.

It shall be the duty of the Executive Director to have the proposed amendment distributed by first class mail, postage prepaid, to each divisional and specialty society entitled to send voting representatives to the House of Delegates, posted on the AOA's website, and published in *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* not later than one month before the annual meeting at which the amendment is scheduled for consideration.

The American Osteopathic Association has formulated this Code to guide its member physicians in their professional lives. The standards presented are designed to address the osteopathic physician's ethical and professional responsibilities to patients, to society, to the AOA, to others involved in healthcare and to self.

Further, the American Osteopathic Association has adopted the position that physicians should play a major role in the development and instruction of medical ethics.

Article V - House of Delegates

Section 1-Certification of Delegates and Alternates

a. Divisional Societies

The Executive Director of this Association shall furnish to the secretary of each divisional society, 75 days before the first day of the annual meeting of the House of Delegates, a statement of the number of regular members of this Association located in the area represented by that divisional society or, in the case of the uniformed services divisional society, the number of regular members of this Association currently serving in the uniformed services of the United States.

Based on that statement, each divisional society shall select, in a manner prescribed by its Constitution and Bylaws, the number of delegates (and their alternates) to the House of Delegates of this Association to which it is entitled under the provisions of the Constitution of the American Osteopathic Association. Delegates and alternates must be regular or student members in good standing of this Association and of the divisional societies, which they

represent. Delegates (and their alternates) shall serve during the annual meeting of the House of Delegates and during the interim between annual meetings or until their successors are elected. The secretary of each divisional society shall certify its delegates and alternates to the Executive Director of this Association in writing at least 30 days prior to the first day of the annual meeting of the House of Delegates.

In the event that any state, provincial or foreign osteopathic association does not become a chartered divisional society, the regular members of this Association in that jurisdiction, at a regularly called meeting, may elect or appoint one delegate (and alternate) as their representative in the House, and such delegate (and alternate) shall be accredited in the same manner and have the same privileges as those of a divisional society.

b. Specialty Colleges

Each AOA recognized specialty college shall select one delegate and at least one alternate to the AOA House of Delegates in a manner prescribed in its constitution and Bylaws. No specialty college delegate or alternate shall also be a member of the divisional society's delegation to the AOA's House of Delegates. The Secretary of each specialty college shall certify the name of its delegate and alternate to the executive director of the AOA at least 30 days prior to the first day of the annual meeting of the AOA House of Delegates. Each delegate and alternate must be a member in good standing of this association and his specialty college.

Section 2-Voting

Each delegate shall have one vote in the House, except when one-fourth of the members present shall call for the yeas and nays on any question; the Executive Director shall, before any other motion can be made, call the roll by divisional societies and enter the yeas and nays in the record. In recording such vote each divisional society shall be given one vote for each 20 regular members of the American Osteopathic Association located in the area represented by that divisional society (or in the case of the uniformed services divisional society, one vote for each 20 regular members of the American Osteopathic Association currently serving in the uniformed services of the United States), as certified to 75 days before the annual meeting of the House of Delegates under the requirements of Section 1 of this Article, and such votes may be cast by any one of the delegation then seated or divided among the various members of the delegation as the delegation in caucus shall decide.

Section 3-Committee on Credentials

The Committee on Credentials shall consist of three or more members appointed by the President and it shall be the duty of the Committee to receive and validate the credentials of the delegates to the House and to report all delegates entitled to be seated in the House. The Executive Director shall furnish the Credentials Committee a list showing the number of delegates to which each divisional society is entitled. In case any organization has selected more than its legal representation, the Executive Director shall drop surplus names from the list, beginning at the bottom, and shall notify the divisional society of his action.

Section 4-Seating of Delegates

A delegate having been seated shall remain the accredited delegate throughout the meeting. In the event that an accredited delegate has failed to qualify and assume his seat when the House convenes on the second day of the meeting, his accredited alternate may be seated. If a delegate, having been seated, finds himself unable to be present on account of physical disability or other cause acceptable to the House, his alternate may be seated for that roll call period and shall continue as delegate until the previously seated delegate shall return for duty at a subsequent roll call. In that case the alternate

delegate who has been seated may, by direction of the House, be dropped from the roll and the previously seated delegate shall return to his seat in the House.

Section 5-Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the House of Delegates shall be held during June, July or August, and separate from the annual convention or clinical assembly of the Association, upon call of the President. Special sessions of the House of Delegates may be called by the President. The delegates shall be given at least two weeks notice and the object or objects shall be stated in the call of such special meeting.

Section 6-Presiding Officer

The Speaker of the House of Delegates shall be its presiding officer. The Vice Speaker shall preside over the House of Delegates in the absence of or at the request of the Speaker and assume all duties of the Speaker.

Section 7-New Business

No new business shall be introduced on the last day of the meeting of the House of Delegates except by a two-thirds consent of those members present, provided two-thirds of the seated delegates are in attendance.

Section 8-Quorum

One-half of the accredited delegates of the House shall constitute a quorum.

Section 9-Governing Rules

The meetings of the House of Delegates and of all other bodies of this Association shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, except in such instances as are specifically provided for in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association or in the order of business which may be adopted from time to time. The order of business and any special rules adopted at the beginning of the meeting shall govern the procedure unless unanimously suspended.

Section 10-Representation of Student Councils

The student council of each accredited college of osteopathic medicine and each branch campus may be represented in the House of Delegates by its president (and such president's alternate elected by such student council) as a member of the delegation of the divisional society representing the state in which such college of osteopathic medicine and branch campus is located. Each such student delegate shall be accredited in the same manner and have the same privileges as the other members of the divisional society delegation; however, the chief administrative officer of each accredited college of osteopathic medicine and each branch campus shall certify the student council president and alternate to the Executive Director of this Association in writing or by electronic communication at least 30 days prior to the first day of the annual meeting of the House of Delegates and such Executive Director shall forthwith similarly certify each student council president and alternate to the secretary of the appropriate divisional society.

Section 11-Representation of Interns and Residents

The osteopathic interns and residents may be represented in the House of Delegates by one intern and one resident selected by vote of the AOA's Bureau of Interns and Residents (or such intern's alternate and resident's alternate selected by the AOA's Bureau of Interns and Residents). No intern/resident delegate or alternate shall also be a member of a divisional society or specialty college delegation to the AOA's House of Delegates. The chair of the Bureau of Interns and Residents shall certify the name of its own intern delegate and alternate and resident delegate and

alternate to the executive director of the AOA in writing or by electronic communication at least 30 days prior to the first day of the annual meeting of the AOA House of Delegates. Each delegate and alternate must be a member in good standing of this Association.

Section 12—Representation of Student Osteopathic Medical Association

The Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) may be represented in the House of Delegates by one member of the SOMA Board selected by vote of the SOMA Board (or such SOMA member's alternate, who shall also be a member of the SOMA Board selected by the SOMA Board). No SOMA delegate or alternate shall also be a member of a divisional society's delegation representing the state in which such SOMA Board member's osteopathic college is located. The SOMA delegate shall be accredited in the same manner and have the same privileges as the other members of the divisional society delegation; however, the Chief Administrative Officer of SOMA shall certify the SOMA delegate and alternate to the Executive Director of this Association in writing or by electronic communication at least 30 days prior to the first day of the annual meeting of the House of Delegates

Article VI—Elections

Section 1--Qualifications

Membership in both the AOA and a divisional society shall be a requisite for qualification for any officer or for any member of any department, division, bureau or committee of the Association, however selected, if the incumbent shall be an osteopathic physician.

Section 2--Nominations

Nomination of all officers and trustees of this Association, and nomination of the Speaker and Vice Speaker of the House of Delegates, excepting nomination of those otherwise provided for in the Constitution, shall be a regular order of business in the House of Delegates at the annual meeting of the House. Nominations may be made from the floor immediately preceding the balloting. Nominating speeches shall not exceed two minutes.

Section 3--Method of Election

Election of such officers and trustees as are elected by the House of Delegates shall take place during the last day of the annual meeting. All elections shall be by ballot except as hereinafter provided in this section and a majority of all votes cast shall be necessary to elect. In recording such vote, each divisional society shall be given one vote for each 20 regular members of the American Osteopathic Association located in the area or serving in the uniformed services of the United States represented by that division, and such votes may be cast by any one of the delegation then seated or divided among the various members of the delegation as the delegation in caucus shall decide. If there shall be but one nominee for a given office or trusteeship it shall be the duty of the secretary to cast the elective ballot for that nominee. The Speaker and Vice Speaker of the House shall be elected to serve for one year or until their successors are elected and installed.

Section 4--Installation

The officers who have served throughout that meeting shall complete all business of the annual meeting so far as is practicable. The officers-elect shall be installed as the final order of business and shall assume the authority of their respective offices upon adjournment of the meeting.

Article VII--Board of Trustees

Section 1--Duties

The Board of Trustees shall:

- a. Direct the management of the affairs of the Association between annual meetings. It shall meet coincident with the annual meeting of the House of Delegates and at other times on call of the President, shall make all arrangements for the annual meetings, shall appoint all standing and special committees not otherwise provided for in these Bylaws, and may fill by appointment any vacancy occurring in its own membership or any other elective office until the time of the next meeting of the House of Delegates. A quorum of the Board shall be a majority of the members thereof.
- b. Appoint an Executive Director, a Controller, a General Counsel, and an Editor, and shall fix the amount of their salaries and the length of their terms of office. It shall fix the duties of the Executive Director, Controller, General Counsel, Editor and all other officials, committees, departments and bureaus necessary to the proper execution of the policies of the Association and not fixed by these Bylaws.
- c. Have the responsibility of management of the finances of the Association and shall authorize and supervise, the House of Delegates concurring, all expenditures thereof. It shall appoint a certified public accountant to audit the financial records of the Association and certify to the accuracy of the statement of financial condition of the Association to be reported at the annual meetings.

No appropriation shall be made by the House of Delegates except upon recommendation of the Bureau of Finance approved by the Board of Trustees, and all resolutions, motions or otherwise, having for their purpose the appropriation of funds, shall first be referred without discussion to the Bureau of Finance of the Board of Trustees. An adverse ruling on such motions may be overruled by a three-fourths vote of the House of Delegates.

- d. Provide for the publication of an official journal of the Association and such other publications as are deemed necessary or shall be directed by the House of Delegates
- e. Maintain and revise the Administrative Guide annually. The general purpose of this manual shall be to provide a handy reference book of concise statements of the duties of all officials, committees, departments, bureaus and employees of the Association, to the end that there shall be no conflict of jurisdiction or duplication of effort. Copies of such Guide shall be furnished to each divisional society and affiliated organization as well as officers of the American Osteopathic Association and other groups or individuals as directed by the Board of Trustees of the Association.
- f. Establish such departments, committees, bureaus, councils, and commissions, and authorize the president's creation of such task forces, as shall be necessary to further the policies of the Association and determined by the House of Delegates and shall determine the duties and powers of such departments, committees, bureaus, councils, commissions and task forces.
- g. Approve from its own membership, based on the President's appointment, the chairs of the departments. The department chairs shall direct the activities of their respective

departments. The Board shall also approve, based on the President's appointment, the members of the various committees, bureaus, councils, commissions and task forces under the departments

- h. Decide finally all questions of an ethical or judicial character. It shall have investigated by the Committee on Ethics all charges or complaints of violation of the Constitution, Bylaws, or of grossly unprofessional conduct of any member. The Board shall have the power to censure, place on probation for not exceeding a three-year period, suspend for not exceeding a three-year period or expel a member, as the findings warrant. A member may be cited to appear before it by the Board of Trustees or the Committee on Ethics to answer charges or complaints of unethical or unprofessional conduct. Upon the final conviction of any member of an offense amounting to a felony under the law applicable thereto, or the final revocation of, or suspension of, his license to practice in a state on the grounds of having committed a violation of a disciplinary provision of the licensing law by a duly constituted state licensing agency, or the voluntary surrender of his license while under charges of having committed said violation, such member shall automatically be deemed expelled from membership in this Association; a conviction shall be deemed final for the purposes hereof when affirmed by an appellate tribunal of final jurisdiction or upon expiration of the period allowed for appeal. The Committee on Membership shall be granted the authority to restore to membership a doctor whose license was revoked, and later retroactively reinstated by his licensing board.

If, because of a breach of the Code of Ethics, a member shall have been suspended, or expelled from a divisional society or affiliated organization by proper action of such divisional society or affiliated organization, the Board of Trustees of this Association shall review the record of such decision. The decision may first be referred to the Committee on Ethics for recommendations. If the Board shall concur in the action of the divisional society or affiliated organization, such member shall be suspended for the same period of time or expelled from this Association upon the same basis as in the decision of the divisional society or affiliated organization. The Board is authorized to adopt and amend from time to time, in the manner directed by the Board, a Guide for Administrative Procedure regulating the procedure applicable to matters involving violations of the Code of Ethics.

Section 2--Appeal

A minority of one-third or more members of the Board of Trustees present at any session may appeal to the House of Delegates from the decision of the majority on any question at the current meeting.

Section 3--Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall transact the business of the Board of Trustees between meetings.

Section 4--By-Mail Vote

Between meetings of the Board of Trustees and of the Executive Committee, a by-mail vote, or vote by other means of electronic communications, on any urgent matter may be taken of the members of the Board of Trustees, or Executive Committee, if a consent in writing setting forth the action so taken shall be signed by all of the trustees or members of the Executive Committee entitled to vote with respect to the subject matter thereof, any such vote to be entered into the records at the next meeting of the Board.

Section 5--Indemnification

Each trustee, officer, and employee of this Association now or hereafter in office and his heirs, executors, and administrators, and each trustee, officer, and employee of this Association and his heirs, executors, and administrators who now acts, or shall hereafter act at the request of this Association as employee, trustee, director, or officer of another corporate entity controlled by this Association, shall be indemnified by this Association against all costs, expenses, judgments, fines, and amounts or liability therefore, including counsel fees, reasonably incurred by or imposed upon him in connection with or resulting from any action, suit, proceeding, or claim to which he may be made a party, or in which he may be or become involved by reason of his acts of omission or commission, or alleged acts of omission or commission as such trustee, officer, or employee, or, subject to the subsequent provisions of the section, any settlement thereof, whether or not he continues to be such trustee, officer, or employee at the time of incurring such costs, expenses, judgments, fines or amounts, provided that such indemnification shall not apply with respect to any matters as to which such trustee, officer, or employee shall be finally adjudged in such action, suit, or proceeding to have been individually guilty of misconduct, misfeasance, or malfeasance in the performance of his duty as such trustee, officer, or employee. The indemnification herein provided shall, with respect to any settlement of any such suit, action, proceeding, or claim, include reimbursement of any amounts paid and expenses reasonably incurred in settling any such suit, action, proceeding, or claim, when the Board of Trustees has determined that such settlement and reimbursement appear to be for the best interests of this Association. Such determination shall be made (1) by the Board of Trustees or by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of trustees who were not parties to such action, suit, or proceeding, or (2) if such a quorum is not obtainable (or, even if obtainable, a quorum of disinterested trustees so directs) by independent legal counsel in a written opinion. The foregoing right of indemnification shall be in addition to and not exclusive of any and all other rights as to which any such trustee, officer, or employee may be entitled under any bylaw, agreement, or otherwise.

Expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit, or proceeding may be paid by the Association in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit, or proceeding as authorized by the Board of Trustees or Executive Committee in the manner heretofore provided, upon receipt of a written undertaking by or on behalf of the trustee, officer, or employee to repay such amount unless it shall ultimately be determined that he is entitled to be indemnified by the Association as authorized in this section.

The Board of Trustees may authorize the Association to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a trustee or employee of the Association or is or was serving at the request of the Association as a trustee, director, officer, employee, or agent of another corporate entity controlled by the Association against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity, or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the Association would have the authority or power to indemnify him against such liability under the provisions of this section.

Article VIII--Duties of Officers

Section 1--President

The President shall be the chairman of the Board of Trustees and of the Executive Committee and shall perform the duties usually pertaining to his office. He shall nominate, subject to approval by the Board of Trustees, all appointive officers, unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws and in accordance with the directives contained in the Administrative Guide or as established by the Board of Trustees or the House of Delegates.

Section 2--President-elect

The President-elect shall perform the duties of the office of the President in the absence of or at the request of the President.

Section 3--Vice-Presidents

The Vice-Presidents, in the order of their designation and in the absence or at the request of the President and President-elect, shall perform the duties of the office of the President.

Section 4--Speaker/Vice-Speaker of the House of Delegates

The Speaker or the Vice-Speaker of the House of Delegates shall perform such duties as custom and parliamentary usage require. The Speaker shall appoint reference committees of the House to perform functions for which they are created subject to the approval of the House. He shall have such other privileges and duties as may be assigned to him by the House of Delegates, which privileges and duties shall not be in conflict with the privileges and duties assigned by the Constitution and Bylaws to other officers of the Association. The Vice-Speaker of the House of Delegates shall assume the duties of the Speaker in his absence or at his request.

Section 5--Executive Director

The Executive Director shall:

- a. Be the chief administrative officer of the Association and of the central office. He shall be the executive and recording secretary of the Association. He shall counsel with the other administrative officers and with the heads of departments in the central office to produce the greatest possible cooperation and efficiency in the conduct of the affairs of the Association under the President and the Board of Trustees. He shall cooperate with the chairmen of various agencies of the Association in the execution of the policies of the Association as outlined by the House of Delegates. It shall be his duty to coordinate the work performed by the various departments, bureaus, and committees of the Association.
- b. Direct the joint activities of the Association and the divisional societies as provided by the Bylaws, and may select one or more of the trustees or like officers of the divisional societies, to assist him in this work in their respective areas.
- c. Be responsible for the correspondence of the Association and shall keep accurate record of the proceedings of the House of Delegates and the Board of Trustees. d. Be responsible for the supervision of assistance to the divisional societies in all matters according to the policies laid down by the Association and for the supervision of the execution of plans of the Association with regard to colleges, affiliated organizations and campaigns.
- d. Keep on file an accurate record of all transactions of his office, which shall at any time be subject to examination by the President or the Board of Trustees, shall make an annual report to the House of Delegates and Board, and shall perform such other duties as are prescribed by the Board not in conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws of this Association.
- e. Be the statistical officer of the Association, and shall have charge of the archives, including legal, historical and scientific records of value to the Association.
- f. Be authorized to provide such assistance as is necessary for the proper conduct of the

central office, subject to the directives of the Board of Trustees, and at the expiration of his term shall deliver to his successor all property and papers pertaining to his office. He shall file bond with such surety company and in such amount as the Board of Trustees shall determine.

Section 6--Controller

The Controller shall:

- a. Have charge of the funds and assets of the Association, cooperate with the Executive Director and Editor under the direction of the Board of Trustees, and disburse such funds only in the manner prescribed by the Board of Trustees.
- b. Be responsible for the collection of dues and assessments as provided in these Bylaws; shall cooperate with like officers of the divisional societies and may delegate them to assist him in their respective societies.
- c. Keep on file accurate records of the transactions of his office, which shall at all times be subject to examination by the Board of Trustees. He shall prepare reports quarterly for the Board of Trustees and annually for the House of Delegates and the Board, and at the expiration of his employment, he shall deliver to his successors or to the Board, or their assigned agent, all monies, records and other property of the Association subject to his jurisdiction. He shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association.
- d. Be provided with such assistance as is necessary to the proper conduct of his office, subject to the directives of the Board of Trustees through the Executive Director. He shall file bond with such surety company and in such sum as the Board of Trustees may determine.

Section 7--General Counsel

The General Counsel shall:

- a. Be the chief legal officer of the Association, responsible for oversight and management of all legal services provided to the Association, its trustees, officers and staff to ensure protection of the Association's legal rights and maintenance of its operations consistent with the limits established by law.
- b. Provide legal advice and guidance to the trustees, officers, and staff, bureaus, councils, task forces, commissions and committees of the Association on the legal implications of matters relevant to the Association, including compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations applicable to a tax-exempt, not-for-profit membership organization and adherence to internal organizational policies and procedures.
- c. Draft and review contracts and other legal documents, policies and procedures; research pertinent to legal issues; prepare written and oral opinions and position statements on issues identified by the Association's trustees, officers, staff, bureaus, councils, task forces, commissions and committees;
- d. Represent or coordinate the representation of the Association in judicial and administrative proceedings; and

- e. Select and retain outside counsel, as required, to obtain legal opinions or to handle claims and litigation. Supervises legal work of other Association attorneys and outside counsel.

Section 8--Editor

The Editor shall:

- a. Have the editorial direction, in accordance with the established policies of the Board of Trustees and House of Delegates, of *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, other periodical publications of the Association and of the *AOA Yearbook and Directory*, under the general supervision of the Executive Director, and shall cooperate with all departments of the central office.
- b. Be provided with such assistance as is necessary to the proper conduct of his office, subject to the directives of the Board of Trustees through the Executive Director.

Article IX--Departments, Bureaus, and Committees

The Board of Trustees and House of Delegates, consistent with the powers given to it by these Bylaws, shall establish and determine the duties of departments, bureaus, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces necessary to further the policies of the Association. The Association's departments shall include the Departments of Affiliated Affairs, Business Affairs, Educational Affairs, Governmental Affairs, Professional Affairs, and Research, Quality & Public Health. The activities of all departments, bureaus and committees shall, so far as possible, be executed in close cooperation with the Executive Director. Upon the expiration of the terms of office of chairs and members of the departments, bureaus, or committees, all records of the same shall be delivered by the chairs to the Executive Director. All employed staff of departments, bureaus, and committees in the offices shall be under the jurisdiction of the Executive Director.

Article X--Conventions and Meetings

Whenever referred to in this Constitution and Bylaws, the words annual meeting shall refer to the annual meetings of the Board of Trustees or of the House of Delegates, respectively, and the words annual convention or clinical assembly shall refer to the annual clinical assembly of the Association.

Section 1--Annual Clinical Assembly

The annual clinical assembly shall be held at such time and place as may be determined by the Board of Trustees, provided, however, such action may be changed by the House of Delegates by a two-thirds vote of the total number of delegates accredited for voting.

Section 2--Annual Meetings

The annual meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held at such time and place as may be determined by the Board of Trustees, provided, however, such action may be changed by the House of Delegates by a two-thirds vote of the total number of delegates accredited for voting.

Article XI—Amendments

Section 1--Bylaws

These Bylaws may be amended at any annual or special meeting of the House of Delegates by a two-thirds vote of the total number of delegates accredited for voting, provided that the amendment shall have been filed with the Executive Director at least two months before the meeting at which the amendment is to be voted upon. Upon receiving a copy of the amendment, it shall be the duty of the Executive Director to cause it to be distributed by first class mail, postage paid, to each divisional and specialty society entitled to send voting representatives to the House of Delegates, posted on the AOA's website, and printed published in *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* at least one month before the meeting. The Board of Trustees may revise the proposed amendment if necessary to secure conformity to this Constitution and Bylaws and shall then refer it to the House for final action not later than the day prior to the end of the meeting.

Section 2--Articles of Incorporation

The Articles of Incorporation of this Association may be amended by the adoption of a resolution by the Board of Trustees setting forth the proposed amendment and directing that the amendment be submitted to a vote at a meeting of the House of Delegates, which may be either an annual or a special meeting. Written or printed notice setting forth the proposed amendment or a summary of the changes to be effected thereby shall be posted on the AOA's website and delivered not less than five nor more than 40 days before the date of the meeting, either personally or by mail, by or at the direction of the President, or the Executive Director, or the officers or persons calling the meeting, to each delegate entitled to vote at such meeting.

Written or printed notice shall include the printing of the amendment in the electronic and/or printed issue of *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* published not less than five days or more than 40 days before the date of the meeting. The proposed amendment shall be adopted upon receiving at least two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast by the total number of delegates accredited for voting.

Article XII--Gender Disclaimer

The American Osteopathic Association is open to persons of both sexes and does not discriminate against any person because of sex; therefore, the wording herein importing the masculine or feminine gender includes the other gender and imports no such discrimination.

CODE OF ETHICS (2006)

The American Osteopathic Association has formulated this Code to guide its member physicians in their professional lives. The standards presented are designed to address the osteopathic physician's ethical and professional responsibilities to patients, to society, to the AOA, to others involved in healthcare and to self.

Further, the American Osteopathic Association has adopted the position that physicians should play a major role in the development and instruction of medical ethics.

Section 1

The physician shall keep in confidence whatever she/he may learn about a patient in the discharge of professional duties. Information shall be divulged by the physician when required by law or when authorized by the patient.

Section 2

The physician shall give a candid account of the patient's condition to the patient or to those responsible for the patient's care.

Section 3

A physician-patient relationship must be founded on mutual trust, cooperation, and respect. The patient, therefore, must have complete freedom to choose her/his physician. The physician must have complete freedom to choose patients whom she/he will serve. However, the physician should not refuse to accept patients because of the patient's race, creed, color, sex, national origin or handicap. In emergencies, a physician should make her/his services available.

Section 4

A physician is never justified in abandoning a patient. The physician shall give due notice to a patient or to those responsible for the patient's care when she/he withdraws from the case so that another physician may be engaged.

Section 5

A physician shall practice in accordance with the body of systematized and scientific knowledge related to the healing arts. A physician shall maintain competence in such systematized and scientific knowledge through study and clinical applications.

Section 6

The osteopathic medical profession has an obligation to society to maintain its high standards and, therefore, to continuously regulate itself. A substantial part of such regulation is due to the efforts and influence of the recognized local, state and national associations representing the osteopathic medical profession. A physician should maintain membership in and actively support such associations and abide by their rules and regulations.

Section 7

Under the law a physician may advertise, but no physician shall advertise or solicit patients directly or indirectly through the use of matters or activities which are false or misleading.

Section 8

A physician shall not hold forth or indicate possession of any degree recognized as the basis for licensure to practice the healing arts unless he is actually licensed on the basis of that degree in the state in which she/he practices. A physician shall designate her/his osteopathic school of practice in all professional uses of her/his name. Indications of specialty practice, membership in professional societies, and related matters shall be governed by rules promulgated by the American Osteopathic Association.

Section 9

A physician should not hesitate to seek consultation whenever she/he believes it advisable for the care of the patient.

Section 10

In any dispute between or among physicians involving ethical or organizational matters, the matter in controversy should first be referred to the appropriate arbitrating bodies of the profession.

Section 11

In any dispute between or among physicians regarding the diagnosis and treatment of a patient, the attending physician has the responsibility for final decisions, consistent with any applicable hospital rules or regulations.

Section 12

Any fee charged by a physician shall compensate the physician for services actually rendered. There shall be no division of professional fees for referrals of patients.

Section 13

A physician shall respect the law. When necessary a physician shall attempt to help to formulate the law by all proper means in order to improve patient care and public health.

Section 14

In addition to adhering to the foregoing ethical standards, a physician shall recognize a responsibility to participate in community activities and services.

Section 15

It is considered sexual misconduct for a physician to have sexual contact with any current patient whom the physician has interviewed and/or upon whom a medical or surgical procedure has been performed.

Section 16

Sexual harassment by a physician is considered unethical. Sexual harassment is defined as physical or verbal intimation of a sexual nature involving a colleague or subordinate in the workplace or academic setting, when such conduct creates an unreasonable, intimidating, hostile or offensive workplace or academic setting.

Section 17

From time to time, industry may provide some AOA members with gifts as an inducement to use their products or services. Members who use these products and services as a result of these gifts, rather than simply for the betterment of their patients and the improvement of the care rendered in their practices, shall be considered to have acted in an unethical manner. (Approved July 2003).

Section 18

A physician shall not intentionally misrepresent himself/herself or his/her research work in any way.

Section 19

When participating in research, a physician shall follow the current laws, regulations and standards of the United States or, if the research is conducted outside the United States, the laws, regulations and standards applicable to research in the nation where the research is conducted. This standard shall apply for physician involvement in research at any level and degree of responsibility, including, but not limited to, research, design, funding, participation either as examining and/or treating provider, supervision of other staff in their research, analysis of data and publication of results in any form for any purpose.

AOA INTERPRETS SECTIONS OF CODE OF ETHICS (1996)

Interpretation of Section 7

This section is designed to discourage practices, which would lead to false, misleading or deceptive information being promulgated.

Section 7 does not prohibit advertising, so long as advertising is designed as making proper factual information available to the public. People seeking healthcare are entitled to know the names of osteopathic physicians, the types of practices in which they engage, their office hours, place of their offices, and other pertinent factual information. On the other hand, the public should be protected from subjective advertising material designed to solicit patients, which is essentially misleading. Such material would include attempts to obtain patients by influence or persuasion, employing statements that are self-laudatory and deceptive; the result of which is likely to lead a patient to a misinformed choice and unjustified expectations. (July 1985)

Guide to Section 8

This guide applies to AOA members' professional (as opposed to organizational) stationery, office signs,² telephone directories, and to other listings referred to by the general public. (July 1985)

Part I-Indications of Specialty Practice

1. Osteopathic physicians who are not certified by the AOA or who do not devote their time exclusively to a specialty should not indicate any area of practice specialization. They may designate the nature of their practice in one of the following ways: General Practice, General Practice of Osteopathic Medicine, and Surgery.
2. Osteopathic physicians who are certified by the AOA or who devote themselves exclusively to a specialty may designate such specialty in one of the following ways: Practice Limited to Internal Medicine (or other practice area), or Internal Medicine.

The listing of terms in each of the two categories is illustrative and should act as a guideline.

Part II-Membership in Professional Organizations

The public has little or no knowledge of what membership in various professional organizations entails. Accordingly, use of the names or initials of such organizations tends to indicate unusual professional competence, which is usually not justified. Professional stationery should contain no indication whatever of membership in professional organizations or of any present or past office held in any professional organization.

Designation of membership in various professional organizations is permissible on organizational stationery (AOA, divisional and district society, practice organizations, etc.) provided the organizational stationery is not used in practice correspondence.

The above guidelines apply with respect to written signatures of physicians. For example, a physician should not use FACOI or other appropriate fellowship designation in signing a letter or other communications that will go to a patient. The physician may use such designation in correspondence with other physicians or third parties.

Part III-Osteopathic Identification

The following, in order of preference, are considered proper on practice stationery and office signs:

1. John Doe, DO
2. John Doe, Osteopathic Physician & Surgeon
3. John Doe, Doctor of Osteopathy

The following are not considered proper on practice stationery or office signs:

1. Dr. John Doe (this is considered improper even if the doctor signs his name John Doe, DO). The osteopathic identification should be printed.
2. Dr. John Doe, Specialist in Osteopathic Medicine. The term specialist should be avoided in this circumstance.

Part IV-Degrees (other than DO)

It is strongly recommended that only the degree DO appear on professional stationery. However, the following additional guides are offered: No undergraduate degree (BA, BS, etc.) should be used.

Graduate degrees (MA, MS, PhD, etc.) should not be used unless the degree recognizes work in a scientific field directly related to the healing arts. Therefore, advanced degrees in scientific fields such as public health, physiology, anatomy, and chemistry may be used but their use is not recommended.

Honorary degrees relating to scientific achievement in the healing arts or other achievements within the osteopathic profession (such as administrative excellence or educational achievement) may be used if the honorary nature of the degree is indicated by use after the degree of the abbreviation "Hon."

Law degrees may be used if the physician carries on medical-legal activities.

Part V-Telephone Directory Listings

1. It is desirable for divisional societies to have an established program to implement these guidelines and, where necessary, to meet with representatives of the telephone companies in furtherance of that objective.
2. In classified directories, it is recommended that DOs be listed under the heading "Physicians and Surgeons-(DO)" and that there be a cross-reference to that heading from the heading "Physicians and Surgeons-Osteopathic." This latter heading is also acceptable as the main listing if it has long been the heading customarily used in the community.

3. In telephone directory listings of doctors, it is recommended that the doctor's name be followed by the abbreviation DO.
4. The abbreviation "Dr" is not recommended because it is misleading. "Dr" can refer to dentists, doctors of medicine, etc. "Phys" is also misleading because it can refer to MDs.
5. In telephone directories, no indication of certification or membership in any osteopathic professional organization should appear by initials or abbreviations, because such would generally be confusing.
6. In classified telephone directories it is not improper to indicate "Practice limited to" or simply to name the field of specialty.

Only specialties or practice interests recognized as such by the American Osteopathic Association should be indicated.

Only physicians who are certified in or who limit their practice exclusively to a specialty should list themselves in a particular field.

Interpretation of Section 17

Section 17 relates to the interaction of physicians with pharmaceutical companies.

1. Physicians' responsibility is to provide appropriate care to patients. This includes determining the best pharmaceuticals to treat their condition. This requires that physicians educate themselves as to the available alternatives and their appropriateness so they can determine the most appropriate treatment for an individual patient. Appropriate sources of information may include journal articles, continuing medical education programs, and interactions with pharmaceutical representatives.
2. It is ethical and in the best interest of their patients for osteopathic physicians to meet with pharmaceutical companies and their representatives for the purpose of product education, such as, side effects, clinical effectiveness and ongoing pharmaceutical research.
3. Pharmaceutical companies may offer gifts to physicians from time to time. These gifts should be of limited value and the appropriate to patient care or the practice of medicine. Gifts unrelated to patient care are generally inappropriate. The use of a product or service based solely on the receipt of a gift shall be deemed unethical.
4. When a physician provides services to a pharmaceutical company, it is appropriate to receive compensation. However, it is important that compensation be in proportion to the services rendered. Compensation should not have the substance or appearance of a relationship to the physician's use of the employer's products in patient care.

Position Papers/Ethical Content

Position papers adopted by the AOA House of Delegates define official AOA policy. Many of the position papers further clarify issues with ethical content.

Specific areas and papers related to them are:

A. Responsibilities to the patient:

- Confidentiality of patient records
- Counseling female patients on reproductive issues
- Death: Right to die
- Physician treating minors without parental consent
- Patient confidentiality
- Patient's bill of rights
- Patient-physician relations

B. Responsibilities to society:

- Abused persons
- Ethical and sociological consideration for medical care
- Healthcare institutional responsibilities
- Impaired physician, assistance
- Medicare and Medicaid Abuse
- Medicare and Medicaid - ethical physician arrangements
- Substance abuse

C. Responsibilities to the AOA:

- Active institutional membership--AOHA
- Dual degrees
- Industry gifts to physicians
- Professional association by DOs

D. Responsibilities to others involved in healthcare:

- Acupuncture
- Osteopathic medicine in foreign countries

E. Responsibilities to self:

- Medicare-physician coverage
- Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT) programs
- Physician administered OMT

1. "Stationery" includes letterheads, billheads, professional cards, checks, prescription blanks and any other stationery products used in practice.

2. The guide applies to door signs, listings in building lobbies, and outside signs.

3. DOs with limited licenses may obtain rulings on permissible designations on requests addressed to the AOA Committee on Ethics.