



February 1, 2017

The Honorable Mary Bentley
Representative
Arkansas State House of Representatives
142 Shady Lane
Perryville, Arkansas 72126

Dear Representative Bentley:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Arkansas Osteopathic Medical Association (AOMA) are writing to express our support for HB 1030, and to request amendments. This bill amends the Arkansas Rural Medical Practice Student Loan and Scholarship program. It currently references the allopathic “doctor of medicine” (MD) degree conferred by the College of Medicine of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, but fails to include the equivalent osteopathic “doctor of osteopathic medicine” (DO) degree conferred by the two osteopathic medical schools in the state. The Arkansas Medical Practices Act recognizes MD and DO degrees as equivalent, and the AOA and AOMA respectfully request amendments clarifying the equal rights and privileges of osteopathic medical students and graduates under the Code sections referenced in this bill.¹

The AOA represents nearly 130,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org. AOMA is a professional organization that represents over 300 DOs providing patient care in Arkansas.

The osteopathic medical profession is the largest growing segment of the health care workforce, with one in four medical students training to become an osteopathic physician. While DOs practice in every medical specialty and in every state across the nation, the osteopathic medical profession emphasizes the importance of providing primary care to patients in rural and underserved areas, and more than 50% of DOs practice in primary care. While DOs make up 11% of all US physicians, they are responsible for 16% of patient visits in communities with populations of fewer than 2,500.² Overall, 40% of all physicians that are located in medically underserved areas or treat medically underserved populations are osteopathic physicians.³

This commitment by the osteopathic medical profession to provide health care in rural communities is reflected by the two newly established osteopathic medical schools located in the state. With inaugural classes of 115 and 150 students matriculating at the Jonesboro, Arkansas campus of the New York Institute of Technology College

¹ Arkansas Code § 17-91-103(c). <http://www.armedicalboard.org/professionals/pdf/mpa.pdf>.

² Osteopathic Medicine and Medical Education in Brief, American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine. Available at: <http://www.aacom.org/about/osteomed/Pages/default.aspx>.

³ 2013 National Center for the Analysis of Healthcare Data (NCAHD)'s Enhanced State Licensure

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of Osteopathic Medicine, and the Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2016 and 2017, respectively, the osteopathic medical profession is poised to provide the next generation of physicians able to provide care to Arkansas patients.

The AOA and AOMA respectfully request the following amendments:

Sec. 6-81-708 “(c)(3) Any communication from the College of Medicine of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, **the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine (Jonesboro campus) or the Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine** with any state medical licensing board...”

Sec. 6-81-708 “(c)4(C)(ii) Failure to remain in enrollment status continuously to completion of the degree of Doctor of Medicine **or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine** for any reason...”

Sec. 6-81-708 “(c)(5) If an alternate on the waiting list for acceptance to the College of Medicine of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, **the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine (Jonesboro campus) or the Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine** enters into a rural medical practice program contract...”

Sec. 6-81-708 “(e)(1) A rural medical practice loan recipient may apply to the **Chair of the Arkansas Rural Medical Practice Student Loan and Scholarship Board** ~~Dean of the College of Medicine of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences~~ for a waiver of the contractual provisions set forth in subdivision (c)(2) of this section.

(2)(A) If the ~~dean~~ **Chair** of the Arkansas Rural Medical Practice Student Loan and Scholarship Board determines that exigent circumstances warrant a waiver, the loan recipient shall be notified in writing.

(B) The ~~dean~~ **Chair** shall immediately notify the Arkansas State Medical Board of such determination.”

Sec. 6-81-715 (b) “(1) The applicant is a graduate of the: (A) The College of Medicine of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, **the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine (Jonesboro campus) or the Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine** or any accredited medical school **or osteopathic medical school** in the United States; or...”

The AOA and AOMA appreciate your consideration of our request to amend HB 1030. Should you or your staff have any questions, please contact Nick Schilligo, AOA’s Associate Vice President for State Government Affairs, at nschilligo@osteopathic.org or (312) 202-8185.

Sincerely,



Boyd R. Buser, DO
President, AOA



Gary S. Edwards, DO, FACOFP
President, AOMA

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