



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

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February 10, 2017

The Honorable Eileen Cody  
Chairwoman  
Washington State House Health Care and Wellness Committee  
303 John L. O'Brien Building  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, Washington 98504

Dear Chairwoman Cody:

**The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) is writing in support of House Bill 1431.** This bill increases the number of members on the Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery from seven to eleven. The number of osteopathic physicians (DOs) in Washington State has increased exponentially since the Board was created in 1979. The AOA believes that a commensurate increase in Board membership is vital to accomplishing the Board's mandate of regulating the competency and quality of health care providers under its jurisdiction.

The AOA represents nearly 130,000 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](http://www.osteopathic.org).

The number of DOs in Washington State has increased nearly tenfold since the Board's inception, from just over 200 in 1979<sup>1</sup> to nearly 2,000 today.<sup>2</sup> This was in no doubt facilitated by the opening of the Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine in Yakima, Washington in 2008. Current enrollment stands at over 550 students, many of whom will match into residencies and continue on to practice in the state.<sup>3</sup> With the increase in the number of DO licensees comes an increase in Board responsibilities and workload, and adding additional members is imperative to ensuring timely case management, hearings, rule-making and licensure application processing.

**The AOA thanks you for your leadership in introducing House Bill 1431.** Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Nicholas A. Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, State Government Affairs, at [nschilligo@osteopathic.org](mailto:nschilligo@osteopathic.org) or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8185.

Sincerely,

Boyd R. Buser, DO  
President

<sup>1</sup> No author. "Statistical Tables on the Osteopathic Profession." *American Osteopathic Association 1979-80 Yearbook and Directory of Osteopathic Physicians*, Nov. 1979.

<sup>2</sup> No author. "DO Population Within all 50 States and Washington, D.C." *AOA Physician Masterfile*, May 31, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.pnwu.edu/inside-pnwu/fast-facts/>.

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CC: Mark A. Baker, DO, AOA President-elect  
William J. Burke, DO, Chair, AOA Department of Governmental Affairs  
Richard Thacker, DO, Chair, AOA Bureau of State Government Affairs  
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