



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

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March 6, 2017

The Honorable Ann Rivers
Chairwoman
Washington State Senate Health Care Committee
John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40466
Olympia, Washington 98504

Dear Chairwoman Rivers:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) is writing in support of engrossed substitute House Bill 1431. This bill increases the number of members on the Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery (Board) from seven to eleven. It also provides equivalency in Board compensation with the allopathic licensing board, the Medical Quality Assurance Commission (MQAC). 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. We also support the change in Board compensation to reflect osteopathic-allopathic equality, which is recognized elsewhere in state law.¹

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.

Growth of the osteopathic medical profession in Washington:

- The number of DOs in Washington State has **increased nearly tenfold** since the Board's inception, **from just over 200 in 1979² to nearly 2,000 today.³**
- This growth was 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.⁴
- 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.**

¹ See RCWA 18.100.145, RCWA 48.46.575 and RCWA 70.41.235.

² No author. "Statistical Tables on the Osteopathic Profession." *American Osteopathic Association 1979-80 Yearbook and Directory of Osteopathic Physicians*, Nov. 1979.

³ No author. "DO Population Within all 50 States and Washington, D.C." *AOA Physician Masterfile*, May 31, 2016.

⁴ See <http://www.pnwu.edu/inside-pnwu/fast-facts/>.

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The osteopathic medical profession continues to grow rapidly in Washington State and increasing the number of Board members is vital to ensuring its efficient functioning. Further, physician licensees of the Board and its allopathic counterpart, MQAC, possess the same rights and responsibilities and Board compensation should reflect this similarity.

The AOA urges you to support engrossed substitute House Bill 1431 in Committee. 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 or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8185.

Sincerely,



Boyd R. Buser, DO
President

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