

About osteopathic medicine

The philosophy and science of osteopathic medicine were first described in 1874 by Andrew Taylor Still, MD, DO, a physician who lived from 1828 to 1917. In 1892, Dr Still founded the American School of Osteopathy in Kirksville, Mo.

The members of the osteopathic medical profession are designated as “physicians and surgeons, DO.” They are qualified to render complete healthcare. Osteopathic medicine is a complete system of medical care with a philosophy that combines the needs of the patient with the current practice of medicine, surgery and obstetrics. Osteopathic philosophy also emphasizes the interrelationship of structure and function, as well as the body’s ability to heal itself.

Osteopathic medicine cooperates with all other branches of medical science. It maintains its independence to develop and perpetuate for everyone this unique and inclusive system of medicine.

Objectives of the AOA

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) is organized to advance the philosophy and practice of osteopathic medicine by promoting excellence in education and research and by promoting the delivery of cost-effective healthcare in a distinct, unified profession.

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AOA membership statistics (as of May 31, 2000)

- Number of DOs: 44,918
- AOA physician members: 29,243
- Nonmembers: 15,675
- Associate members: 76
- Allied members: 19
- Students enrolled in colleges of osteopathic medicine for 2000-01: 10,745 (estimated)

Accredited osteopathic medical colleges

The AOA Bureau of Professional Education is recognized by the US Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as the accrediting agency for undergraduate osteopathic medical education in the United States.

Accreditation from the Bureau of Professional Education signifies that a college has met or exceeded the AOA standards for educational quality in organization, administration and finance; faculty and instruction; curriculum; student admissions, performance and evaluation; research and scholarly activity; and facilities.

Admission requirements. Admission to a college of osteopathic medicine requires a minimum of three years of preprofessional education in a college or university accredited by a regional educational association. On the average, 97% of students enrolled in osteopathic medical colleges hold at least bachelor’s degrees. Preprofessional study is almost evenly divided between science and humanities.

In general, an entering student must have minimum credits in English (six semester hours, with 12 recommended); a full year’s work each in physics, biology, organic chemistry and inorganic chemistry; and elective courses reflecting a broad cultural background. For specific requirements, consult the osteopathic medical colleges.

Professional requirements. A doctorate in osteopathic medicine requires four years of study: Usually, the first two years are devoted to didactic instruction in the biomedical sciences and clinical medicine, and the remaining two years are devoted to clinical experience in healthcare settings.

Inherent in all study of osteopathic medicine is the interrelationship of structure and function as a reciprocal factor in health and disease. Structural factors in disease processes are stressed, and students are trained in osteopathic manipulative treatment and in medical, therapeutic and surgical procedures.

The following is a list of the 19 AOA-accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine:

Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine (AZCOM) of Midwestern University, 19555 N 59th Ave, Glendale, AZ 85308, (888) 247-9277 or (623) 572-3215, www.midwestern.edu/Pages/AZCOM.html

Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine (CCOM) of Midwestern University, 555 W 31st St, Downers Grove, IL 60515-1235, (800) 458-6253 or (630) 515-6171, www.midwestern.edu/Pages/CCOM.html

Des Moines University, College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery (DMU/COM), 3200 Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA 50312-4198, (515) 271-1450, www.uomhs.edu/coms/

Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (KCOM), 800 W Jefferson Ave, Kirksville, MO 63501-1443, (620) 626-2237, www.kcom.edu/

Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM), 1858 W Grandview Blvd, Erie, PA 16509-1025, (814) 866-6641, www.lecom.edu/

Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine (MSU-COM), A-309, East Fee Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824-1316, (517) 353-7740, www.com.msu.edu/

New York College of Osteopathic Medicine of New York Institute of Technology (NYCOM), PO Box 8000, Old Westbury, NY 11568-8000, (516) 626-6947, www.nyit.edu/nycom/

Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine (NSUCOM), 3200 S University Drive, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33328, (954) 262-1113, medicine.nova.edu/

Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine (OU-COM), Grosvenor Irvine Hall, Athens, OH 45701, (800) 345-1560, www.oucom.ohiou.edu/

Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine (OSU-COM), 1111 W 17th St, Tulsa, OK 74107-1898, (800) 677-1972, osu.com.okstate.edu/osucom.html

Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM), 4170 City Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19131-1694, (800) 999-6998 or (215) 871-6770, www.pcom.edu/

Pikeville College School of Osteopathic Medicine (PCSOM), 214 Sycamore St, Pikeville, KY 41501-1194, (606) 432-9200, <http://pcsom.pc.edu/>

Touro University College of Osteopathic Medicine (TUCOM), Mare Island, Quarters C, 832 Walnut Ave, Vallejo, CA 94592, (707) 638-5270, www.tucom.edu/

This information is up-to-date as of June 1, 2000.

The “AOA Fact Sheet” is published twice each year by the AOA Publications Division. The information and statistics in the August version of the “AOA Fact Sheet” are targeted at current and future students of osteopathic medicine. The January 2001 version of the “AOA Fact Sheet” will be targeted at osteopathic physicians.

Free copies of the “AOA Fact Sheet” are available by calling (800) 621-1773, Ext 8254, or (312) 202-8254; by writing to the American Osteopathic Association, Order Department, 142 E Ontario St, Chicago, IL 60611-2864; or by sending e-mail to aashford@aoa-net.org.

University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine (UHS-COM), 1750 Independence Blvd, Kansas City, MO 64106-1453, (800) 234-4847, www.uhs.edu/

University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-School of Osteopathic Medicine (UMDNJ-SOM), Academic Center, One Medical Center Drive, Stratford, NJ 08084-1503, (609) 566-7050, www.umdj.edu/~Esom/index.html

University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNECOM), 11 Hills Beach Road, Biddeford, ME 04005-9599, (800) 477-4863, www.une.edu/COM/compage1.html

University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth—Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNTHSC), 3500 Camp Bowie Blvd, Fort Worth, TX 76107-2970, (817) 735-2204, www.hsc.unt.edu/index2.htm

West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM), 400 N Lee St, Lewisburg, WV 24901-1128, (304) 647-6232, www.wvsom.edu/

Western University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific (COMP), 309 E Second St, College Plaza, Pomona, CA 91766-1854, (909) 469-5335, www.westernu.edu/comp.html

Graduate medical education

Approximately 99% of osteopathic medical graduates complete graduate medical education (GME). Osteopathic internships and residencies are administered by AOA-accredited osteopathic postdoctoral training institutions (OPTIs).

Florida, Michigan, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and West Virginia require DOs to complete AOA-approved internships as a condition for licensure.

In addition, GME is part of the educational process leading to board certification in medical specialties.

- Number of AOA-accredited OPTIs for 1999-2000: **16**
- Number of AOA-approved internship training programs for 1999-2000: **165**
- Number of AOA-approved internship positions for 1999-2000: **2,334**
- Number of AOA-approved residency training programs for 1999-2000: **496**
- Number of AOA-approved residency training positions for 1999-2000: **4,304**

Board certification

The AOA and the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) are considered to be the official certifying approval entities for DO and MD specialty training.

The AOA has DO certifying boards in anesthesiology; dermatology; emergency medicine; family medicine; internal medicine; neurology and psychiatry; neuromusculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine; nuclear medicine; obstetrics and gynecology; ophthalmology, otolaryngology, and head and neck surgery; orthopedic surgery; pathology; pediatrics; preventive medicine; proctology; radiology; rehabilitation medicine; and surgery.

In addition to offering general certification in their specialties, some of these boards offer certification in subspecialties, such as cardiology, neonatology and urological surgery. Also, several AOA certifying boards offer certification of added qualifications in such fields as addiction medicine, critical care medicine, geriatric medicine and sports medicine.

For more information on AOA board certification, call (800) 621-1773, Ext 8105, or (312) 202-8105; send e-mail to aramirez@aoa-net.org; or write to the Division of Certification, American Osteopathic Association, 142 E Ontario St, Chicago, IL 60611-2864.

- Number of DOs currently certified by AOA boards: **15,688** (as of July 18, 2000)
- Number of certifications currently issued by AOA boards: **18,309** (as of July 2000)

STATISTICS on osteopathic medical students

- Number of male students in 1997-98: **5,947**
- Number of male students in 1998-99: **6,020**
- Number of female students in 1997-98: **3,677**
- Number of female students in 1998-99: **3,862**
- Number of graduates of osteopathic medical colleges in 2000: **2,300 (estimated)**

Students by ethnic group

Group	1997-98	1998-99
White (non-Hispanic)	7,374	7,528
Asian and Pacific Islander	1,184	1,400
Black	386	417
Hispanic	378	368
American Indian	82	74
Foreign national	53	61
Other	30	61

Total enrollment by college

Osteopathic medical college	1997-98	1998-99
AZCOM	210	327
CCOM	630	634
DMU/COM	798	796
KCOM	578	584
LECOM	417	477
MSU-COM	512	523
NYCOM	940	966
NSUCOM	573	587
OU-COM	420	404
OSU-COM	350	350
PCOM	982	996
PCSOM	60	120
TUCOM	66	141
UHS-COM	791	832
UMDNJ-SOM	304	308
UNECOM	401	436
UNTHSC	454	449
WVSOM	261	264
COMP	687	688
Total	9,434	9,882

Source: American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine 1999 Annual Statistical Report.

Licensure

All 50 states and the District of Columbia license osteopathic physicians for the unlimited practice of medicine and surgery. Licensing boards for DOs vary in makeup: 14 are composed entirely of DOs, eight are composed entirely of MDs, and 29 are composed of both DOs and MDs.

The Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination-USA (COMLEX-USA) of the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME) is accepted for initial licensure in 49 states and the District of Columbia. To date, only Louisiana does not accept COMLEX-USA or the NBOME's earlier examinations.

For more licensing information, call (800) 621-1773, Ext 8184, or (312) 202-8184; send e-mail to Lmascheri@aoa-net.org; or write to the Division of State Government Affairs, American Osteopathic Association, 142 E Ontario St, Chicago, IL 60611-2864.

Role of the AOF

The American Osteopathic Foundation (AOF) is the AOA's premier philanthropic organization. The foundation promotes the distinctive approach

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of osteopathic principles and practice by generating support for initiatives in medical education, research and health.

The AOF strives to ensure the future of osteopathic medicine by providing loans to osteopathic medical students and by initiating and supporting scholarships, lectureships and national awards.

For more information, call (800) 621-1773, Ext 8234, or (312) 202-8234; send e-mail to aof@aoa-net.org; visit the foundation's World Wide Web site at www.osteopathic.org; or write to the American Osteopathic Foundation, 142 E Ontario St, Chicago, IL 60611-2864.

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FACTS about osteopathic physicians

Number of DOs

Category	1990	1999	Percent of total	Percent change (1990-1999)
Active*	27,186	40,669	93%	50%
Inactive	2,198	2,970	7%	35%
Total	29,384	43,639	100%	49%

* Active includes DOs in graduate medical education programs and DOs employed by the federal government.

Active DOs in primary care specialties

Specialty	1990	1999	Percent of total	Percent change (1990-1999)
Family medicine	13,132	19,383	48%	48%
Internal medicine	1,811	3,244	8%	79%
Pediatrics	610	1,062	3%	74%
Obstetrics and gynecology	814	1,455	4%	79%
Osteopathic manipulative treatment	443	407	1%	-8%
Nonprimary care	8,719	13,799	34%	58%
Unknown	1,657	1,319	3%	-17%
Total	27,186	40,669	100%	50%

Active DOs by gender

Gender	1990	1999	Percent of total	Percent change (1990-1999)
Male	23,352	31,678	78%	36%
Female	3,834	8,991	22%	135%
Total	27,186	40,669	100%	50%

Active DOs by age group

Age group	1990	1999	Percent of total	Percent change (1990-1999)
Younger than 35	7,604	8,688	21%	14%
35 to 44	10,519	14,711	36%	40%
45 to 54	4,220	10,752	26%	155%
55 to 64	2,765	3,723	9%	35%
65 to 74	1,385	1,848	5%	33%
Unknown	693	947	2%	37%
Total	27,186	40,669	100%	50%

ACTIVE DOS by state

State	1990	1999	Percent of total DOs	Percent change (1990-1999)
Alabama	106	271	1%	156%
Alaska	49	77	0%	57%
Arizona	695	1,059	3%	52%
Arkansas	66	164	0%	148%
California	1,138	1,996	5%	75%
Colorado	443	667	2%	51%
Connecticut	80	196	0%	145%
Delaware	121	167	0%	38%
District of Columbia	38	31	0%	-18%
Florida	1,653	2,648	7%	60%
Georgia	294	539	1%	83%
Hawaii	73	121	0%	66%
Idaho	49	99	0%	102%
Illinois	1,036	1,678	4%	62%
Indiana	321	599	1%	87%
Iowa	649	895	2%	38%
Kansas	366	532	1%	45%
Kentucky	104	216	1%	108%
Louisiana	54	100	0%	85%
Maine	312	419	1%	34%
Maryland	182	354	1%	95%
Massachusetts	177	344	1%	94%
Michigan	3,650	4,684	12%	28%
Minnesota	110	220	1%	100%
Mississippi	81	205	1%	153%
Missouri	1,370	1,630	4%	19%
Montana	40	77	0%	93%
Nebraska	37	67	0%	81%
Nevada	113	257	1%	127%
New Hampshire	33	96	0%	191%
New Jersey	1,634	2,425	6%	48%
New Mexico	147	181	0%	23%
New York	1,149	2,370	6%	106%
North Carolina	102	307	1%	201%
North Dakota	22	57	0%	159%
Ohio	2,392	3,148	8%	32%
Oklahoma	881	1,177	3%	34%
Oregon	257	366	1%	42%
Pennsylvania	3,497	4,694	12%	34%
Rhode Island	127	170	0%	34%
South Carolina	77	181	0%	135%
South Dakota	33	64	0%	94%
Tennessee	138	312	1%	126%
Texas	1,823	2,557	6%	40%
Utah	38	110	0%	189%
Vermont	30	44	0%	47%
Virginia	227	445	1%	96%
Washington	382	536	1%	40%
West Virginia	268	457	1%	71%
Wisconsin	286	435	1%	52%
Wyoming	16	33	0%	106%
Foreign countries	220	192	0%	-13%
Total	27,186	40,669	100%	50%

Boldfaced type indicates states with osteopathic medical schools.

Source: Population data are from Woods & Poole Economics Inc in Washington, DC. The 1990 data are based on the US census, and the 1999 data are based on population estimates.

Source: Physician data are from the AOA's history files for 1990 and 1999.

GROWTH of the profession from 1935 to 1998

Year	Total DOs*	Percent increase	DOs per 100,000
1935	8,724	—	6.83
1940	9,950	14%	7.51
1945	11,067	11%	8.29
1950	11,250	2%	7.39
1955	12,371	10%	7.49
1960	13,708	11%	7.62
1965**	12,441	-9%	6.43
1970	13,454	8%	6.60
1975	14,929	11%	6.93
1980	18,820	26%	8.28
1985	24,014	28%	10.09
1990	29,384	22%	12.40
1995	36,508	24%	13.89
1996	38,144	4%	14.38
1997	39,787	4%	14.87
1998	41,324	4%	14.94

* DO totals include retired and disabled physicians.

** After the osteopathic medical college in Los Angeles converted to an allopathic medical college in 1962, it granted unearned MD degrees to approximately 2,500 DOs, most of whom practiced in California.

Source: Population data is from Woods & Poole Economics Inc in Washington, DC.

GROWTH FORECAST for the profession from 2000 to 2020

Year	Total DOs*	Percent increase	DOs per 100,000
2000	45,800	—	16.71
2001	48,000	5%	17.35
2002	50,300	5%	18.02
2003	52,600	5%	18.69
2004	54,900	4%	19.35
2005	57,200	4%	20.02
2006	59,700	4%	20.73
2007	62,200	4%	21.44
2008	64,800	4%	22.15
2009	67,500	4%	22.85
2010	70,000	4%	23.53
2011	72,600	4%	24.20
2012	75,100	3%	24.85
2013	77,700	3%	25.47
2014	80,300	3%	26.11
2015	82,800	3%	26.72
2016	85,300	3%	27.32
2017	87,900	3%	27.90
2018	90,400	3%	28.46
2019	92,900	3%	29.03
2020	95,400	3%	29.58

Source: Lanis Hicks, PhD, of the University of Missouri (second part of series titled "Forecast of Osteopathic Manpower").