



October 1, 2020

Greetings!!!

Since my last letter to you, we've transitioned to Fall and everyone is planning for a new season with school starting in a new way for many of us, football and other sports beginning and continued social and political unrest. These are indeed complicated and, as I've said before, disturbing and unprecedented times, but through it all, TOMA continues to advocate on behalf of the osteopathic profession in Tennessee and beyond.

TOMA remains an active member of the **Coalition for Collaborative Care**, made up of TMA and many state special societies. This coalition continues to be a unified voice for the entire House of Medicine in Tennessee, opposing attempts to allow independent practice by advanced practice nurses and physician assistants and advocating for physicians on numerous other scope-of-practice related issues.

TOMA has co-signed with the AOA a document in favor of increasing the use of telecommunication technology to address clinical workforce shortages due to COVID-19 via the **Equal Access to Care Act**. We have also signed with the AOA in opposition to concerning efforts to move to nationalization of non-physician clinician licensure and scope of practice, thereby bypassing and pre-empting state licensing laws such as those in Tennessee, which do not permit non-physicians to practice independently. This would also potentially worsen silos and prevent the U.S. healthcare system from mounting an effective, coordinated response to future public health emergencies, such as what we are currently facing.

TOMA and the AOA support a **team approach** to medical care with physician leadership ensuring that professionals with the most education and training are adequately involved in patient care decisions and policy, while recognizing the important role of non-physician clinicians in physician-supervised and led healthcare teams. I *urge* you to remain vigilant about these issues and to **contact** (personal visit, if possible) **your elected officials to educate them** about these critical issues which threaten patient safety in our state.

AOA held its **Advocacy Day** virtually this year, and TOMA was well-represented by Dr. Gina DeFranco and LMU-DCOM student Anantha Singarajah. They met via Zoom with Rep. Chuck

Fleischman and staff for Rep. Phil Roe, Sen. Lamar Alexander and Sen. Marsha Blackburn, presenting information regarding three issues before Congress.

TOMA's committees remain active and we are pleased to have excellent participation and contributions by students from LMU-DCOM, your osteopathic medical school in Tennessee. Convention planning is well underway – a theme has been identified and the program is essentially full. We look forward to our next annual convention, April 7-11, 2021, at the Hilton Cool Springs in the Nashville area.

TOMA's Education Committee is developing a series of one-hour programs that will be offered online called **TOMA Talks**. The first features Dr. Jeffrey Chesnut presenting "Radiology: What to Order and When" on Saturday, Oct. 24, at 10 am EDT/9 am CDT. TOMA Talks are free to TOMA members, with a small charge for members wanting CME credit. [Click here to register.](#)

TOMA's delegation will represent your interests at upcoming meetings to consider important resolutions at the upcoming AOA House of Delegates. TOMA members, including myself and Drs. Gina DeFranco and Tim Bell (our president-elect) represented TOMA at Resolution Committee meetings just last week.

The AOA continues to work hard on behalf of all DOs in many ways, some of which I've listed here:


- 1) There is a new CME portal on the AOA website open to all DOs (free to AOA members) for tracking CME in a more efficient manner, serving as an approved primary verification source.
- 2) A system of joint providership is now available whereby AOA can accredit CME programs as always and now, through ACCME, award AMA-PRA Category 1 credit for DOs who might want it and for our MD and other health professional colleagues.
- 3) The AOA Specialty Certification boards are using innovative technology that makes possible remotely delivered and proctored written and clinical exams (practical and oral exam processes are also being explored). A streamlined exam and standardized scaled scoring system provide faster feedback to initial applicants and diplomats. Mechanisms for reciprocity with DOs holding ABMS certification (without fees for AOA members) are being developed to allow DOs to obtain and maintain AOA specialty and subspecialty certification and to "return home".
- 4) The Memorandum of Understanding (which is a nongovernmental operational partnership) with the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME), about

which I told you before, is poised to assist AOA certification boards with logistical aspects of delivering certification exams.

I encourage you to consider **registering for OMED** this year. Despite the program being delivered in an unprecedented virtual format, there will be 12 specialty colleges participating to deliver 12 mini-CME conferences within a large meeting which will allow attendees to obtain up to 30 Category 1-A and 20 Category 1-B CME credits selected from over 100 hours of didactic programming in specialties across osteopathic medicine. OMED will also include seven inspirational keynote speakers on relevant topics. More than 1000 physicians have already registered for the conference, which will be held October 15-18, 2020. Other OMED 2020 events will include E-posters and presentations, live Q&A with speakers, a virtual gala, tracks for students and post-doctoral trainees, programs for COM alumni groups and more.

We continue to navigate uncharted waters with the COVID-19 pandemic. I hope you and your family are and remain safe and healthy and that you have a chance to notice and enjoy the beauty that autumn brings. Please know that TOMA is working on your behalf, and that of all DOs daily.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Wieting, DO". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Michael Wieting, DO
President