



GEORGIA OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
— 1902 —

GOMA News & Updates

Volume 46, December 2024

ANNUAL MEETING

2024 Annual Membership Meeting Highlights

A quorum was present virtually for the GOMA Annual Membership Meeting on Monday, Nov. 18.

Gregory Harris, DO was installed as President of GOMA, and William Lagaly, DO is President-elect. The new GOMA Executive Board was sworn in.

Georgia Osteopathic Medical Association's 2024 membership income numbers were essentially stable as from the prior year though it was encouraging that many more osteopathic residents and students have joined GOMA now that students can do so without membership fees. The stable paid membership numbers helped mitigate the financial impact to two poorly attended education programs this year (down 28%). The financials for 2024 showed GOMA to increase \$20,000 its assets this year (down 42% from 2023), and the checking account has a balance of \$97,525 and the investment account currently has \$36,170. The February 2024 VOC attracted 44 Georgia physicians, and the GOMA 2024 Fall Conference attracted 41 registrants. The current membership numbers are as follows (with last year's numbers in parenthesis):

163 (On 11/12/23: 155) Paying Members

112 (113) Active Physician Members

12 (14) Retired Members

8 (9) Out of State Members

21 (13) Resident/Intern Members

1 (1) Associate Members

4 (5) Military or Public Health Members

5 Life Members

90 Students

In summary, the finances for GOMA are stable from a year ago.

The leadership of the organization is energized to increase the membership and feels that the new GOMA strategic plan will be a key factor in that happening

2024-2025 Officers to the Executive Board and Districts

President:

Gregory E. Harris, DO, FACOI

President-Elect:

William Lagaly, DO

Vice President:	L. Michael Waters, DO
Secretary-Treasurer:	Bridgett Bailey, DO
Immediate Past President:	Sonbol Shahid-Salles, DO, MPH
District I President:	Lucie Mitchell, DO
District I Secretary/Treasurer:	Naveen Raj, DO
District II President:	Michael Mangonon, DO
District II Secretary/Treasurer:	William Bostock, DO
District III President:	Kristy Petree, DO
District III Secretary/Treasurer:	Matthew Shelnut, DO
District IV President:	Karen Turner, DO
District IV Secretary/Treasurer:	Melissa Broadman, DO
New Physician in Practice:	Brittany Woods, DO
Resident:	Jordan Bradshaw, DO
PCOM South Georgia:	Destiny Sciuva, OMS-IV
PCOM Georgia:	Madison Cohen, OMS-IV

2025 Georgia Delegation Nominees To The AOA House of Delegates

Christian Geltz, DO, Sr. Delegate
Karen Turner, DO
Sonbol Shahid-Salles, DO, MPH
Gregory Harris, DO, FACOI
William Bostock, DO
L. Michael Waters, DO

Renew Your GOMA Membership Now



Gregory Harris, DO, FACOI is the new President of Georgia Osteopathic Medical Association

Gregory Harris, DO has used his skills at listening to guide him into the Osteopathic profession, to guide him into love and marriage and to guide him in the care of his patients with cancer.

Dr. Harris was born in Battle Creek, Michigan, and raised in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, the son of a teacher mother and a zoo keeper father. He did his pre-med studies at Mississippi State University. He had not contemplated becoming a DO because he had never had any knowledge or exposure to DOs. It was an advisor at Mississippi State that suggested Osteopathic Medicine to Dr. Harris due to his people skills and how it seemed to mesh with the philosophy of our profession. Mississippi had a mutual agreement with the state of Kentucky to take up to five students to learn Osteopathic medicine each year. So, in 2006 Dr. Harris started his training in Pikeville, Kentucky. He met Sonbol Shahid-Salles his first day of medical school, and after three months they began to date. Looking back on his budding relationship with her and their path through medical school and residency, Dr. Harris summarizes that “we did the whole thing as a couple”. Gregory and Sonbol married between their second and third year just prior to starting third year rotations.

Dr. Harris and Dr. Shahid-Salles did their residencies in Grand Blanc, Michigan. Dr. Harris completed his Internal Medicine residency, and continued on in Grand Blanc for a 3 year fellowship in Hematology/Oncology. Six years ago, Dr. Harris started a job at the Harbin Clinic in Rome, GA (which has now merged with Atrium Health Floyd).

Being in a community based oncology clinic has been very rewarding. He feels that his Osteopathic training has helped him by working towards “physical wellness.”

“I can listen to the patient, and while talking to them, do lymphatic drainage or myofascial release.” He has a special interest in Palliative Oncology, CNS tumors, Prostate, and Head and Neck cancer cases.

Dr. Harris enjoys spending time with his 8-year-old son Graham. He also enjoys golfing, cooking (self-taught), traveling and socializing with friends.

The American Osteopathic Foundation’s (AOF) Board of Directors recognized Gregory Harris, DO as a 2020 AOF State Emerging Leader. AOF’s State Emerging Leader Award recipients are honored in their first six years of practice within the osteopathic profession. These exceptional individuals provide service to others through osteopathic tenants and principles, advocacy efforts, community service, and philanthropic spirit. Dr. Harris has served on multiple task forces for the AOA including having served on the AOA Board of Trustees, and has served as an advisor for new physicians in practice as well as having served on the Bureau of Emerging Leaders of the AOA.

During the President’s Address to the attendees of the GOMA Annual Meeting, Gregory Harris, DO said:

“I think one of the big things I would like to focus on is our events: these in-person events. I think they are meaningful. I think it’s something that we’ve heard for years. I’ve been in the state for about seven years. I have been involved with GOMA since the beginning, and every year in-person events keep coming up. So, I think this is one of the biggest priorities for me is getting our members back

together, face-to-face. We can do district events. We should do some sort of state wide event. I think our legislative event is probably the most cohesive one. I will task each district to do at least one in person event each year. Hopefully, many more. If we can get one going, momentum will build and it will get us back together. If you can do an event, you can bring non-members to the event and show them what we can offer and get them to join. That's going to be a great way to spur membership, but also bring that collegiality back to GOMA."

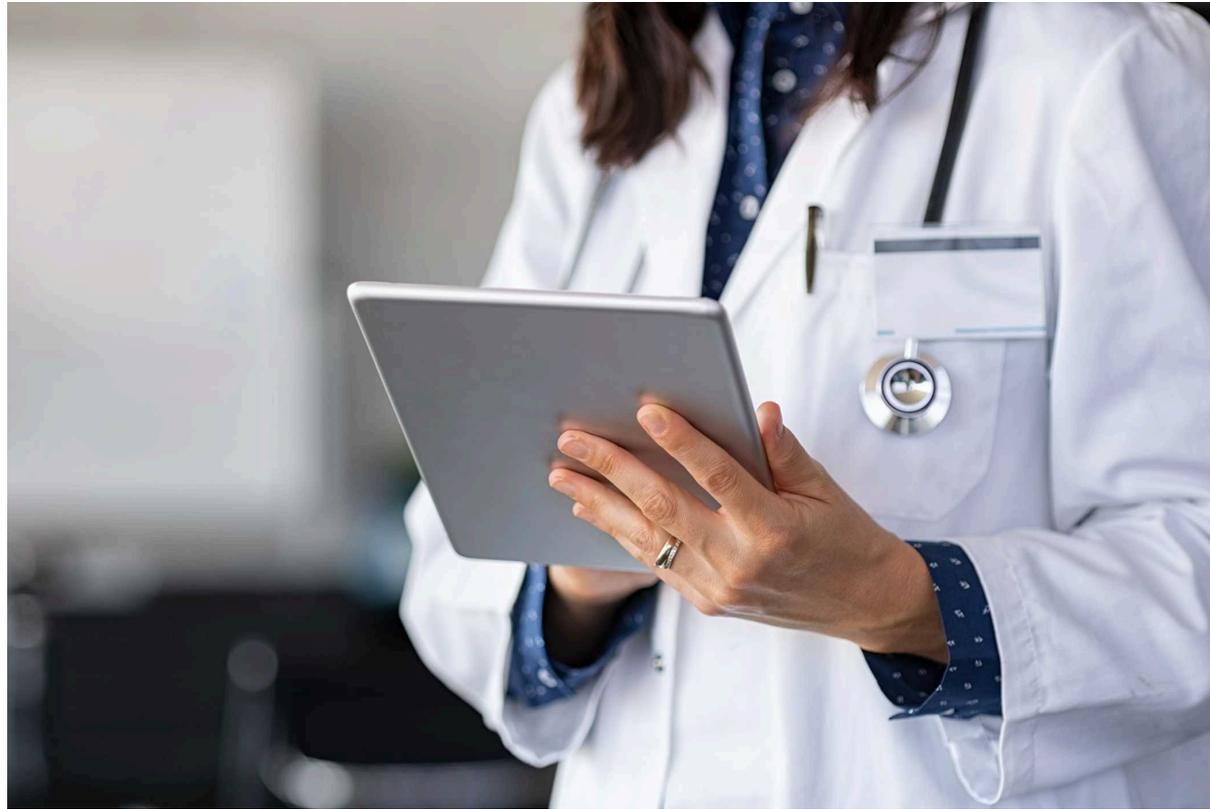
Dr. Harris continued: "Advocacy. To me, it is always the low hanging fruit. Everyone agrees that we need to be there – to be at the table. It is a major priority, and it's something that we are all very passionate about. We can speak eloquently about our priorities. We can make changes in Georgia. We need to be at the table. And so, it is something that we will continue to push. Continue to bring everyone up from students to residents to practicing physicians and into retiring physicians just to know what is happening in the state. It is an important role that GOMA can provide."

"My favorite part is getting the students involved, and getting the COMs involved. We have finally gotten some momentum with the students, and the students now understand who we are and where we are and what we can do. I think we can leverage this into fostering some great relationships with our students and our student leaders. And bringing us back into their confidence. Bringing us back to face-to-face in the meetings, bringing us back to all the big events – white coat ceremonies and graduations. This is going to be an important priority for us. We will be there as much as we can."

"Residencies: We will continue to speak with local residency groups in Rome. We already have a presentation that has been vetted; it's been practiced. It works. It's pretty effective. That will be a big step to gaining their trust, and to know what our value is to them, and getting them to be lifelong members of GOMA."

"So, these are all things I am looking forward to this year. Building on the hard work that Dr. Sonbol Shahid-Salles did this past year to make our organization as strong as it can possibly be. We will move forward with the new strategic plan and bylaws that align with the

AOA and our strategic plan, and to continue to grow GOMA. Hopefully, I will leave it in a better place for the next year. I'm gratefully looking forward to working with all of you. We can all give our time and our talents and maybe some of our treasures to some PACs. I think it's going to be a great year."



December is for Deadlines

December 31 is the end of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) three-year cycle for CME.

Online entry of CME only takes a few moments, and eliminates the hassle of faxing, and emailing certificates and reporting forms! Using the AOA's new online Continuing Medical Education (CME) tracking services, you can now easily self-report AOA Category 1 and 2 CME activities hosted by non-AOA-accredited CME sponsors.

You can now self-report your CME activity, through the [AOA CME Self-Reporting Tool](#).

GOMA is happy to report GOMA CME hours to the AOA for you. So, you can get up to 16 hours from the 2024 GOMA Fall Conference

and watch at your own pace (as long as it is completed by 12/30/2024). [Click this link to see great GOMA lectures.](#)

One of those lectures was William Bostock, DO's update of the Georgia Composite Board of Medical Examiners. He pointed out that license renewals occur every two years at the end of the doctor's birth month. It is necessary to renew licenses online, and one can start that process 60 days prior to expiration. It costs \$230 to renew your medical license, but late renewals cost \$455 and can be done up to 90 days after expiration. After 90 days of medical license expiration, the doctor may be criminally indicted.

While a majority of Georgia doctors already have two hours of CME regarding professional boundaries and physician sexual misconduct, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has increased the requirement to a one-time 8-hours total on controlled substance prescribing CME. This needs to be completed prior to DEA renewal and the doctor will have swear to completion. The Composite Board has [approved CME for the DEA renewal](#) on its website at the bottom of its page describing state requirements for CME.



GOMA Legislative Day Thursday, Feb. 13

GOMA will once again be part of the Patient Centered Physicians' Coalition of Georgia (PCPC) is having a legislative event on Thursday February 13, 2025, from 8:30 AM to 2:30PM. Registration can be found on the GOMA website.

All osteopathic physicians are encouraged to attend. We will be joined by MDs & DOs from Georgia OB/Gyn Society, Georgia Chapter – American College of Physicians, Georgia Academy of Family Physicians and Georgia Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics. Five Georgia health associations comprise PCPC and meet eight times a year to discuss legislative issues on the State and National level. Make plans to attend on Thursday Feb. 13, 2025, and [click on this link to register](#).



AOA President Teresa Hubka, DO Urges Advocacy on Critical Legislative Issues

In mid-November, AOA President Teresa Hubka, DO, represented you in Washington, DC, to address key issues impacting the osteopathic profession, including preventing cuts to Medicare

physician payment and reauthorizing the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program.

The 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule includes a 2.83% cut to Medicare physician payment; however, due to sustained advocacy engagement, Congress introduced the bipartisan Medicare Patient Access and Practice Stabilization Act (H.R. 10073), which eliminates the cut and provides a 1.8% payment update. THCGME program is also in dire need of multi-year funding to protect patient access to care and help address physician shortages in rural and underserved areas. Dr. Hubka is calling on all osteopathic physicians to take action using the AOA Advocacy Action Center to urge Congress to support these essential efforts for patients and the profession.

If you have not done so already, take action by sending your members of Congress a letter today urging them to help protect physician practices and patient access to care today.

With few days left to legislate, physicians must ask lawmakers to make these a priority during the lame-duck session. Read more at these links:

[THCGME](#)

[Medicare Cuts](#)



**AOA's 2025 DO Day on Capitol Hill
set for March 22-23 (virtual) and**



[apply today!](#)

DOs vs MDs:

Do Patient Outcomes Favor a Side?

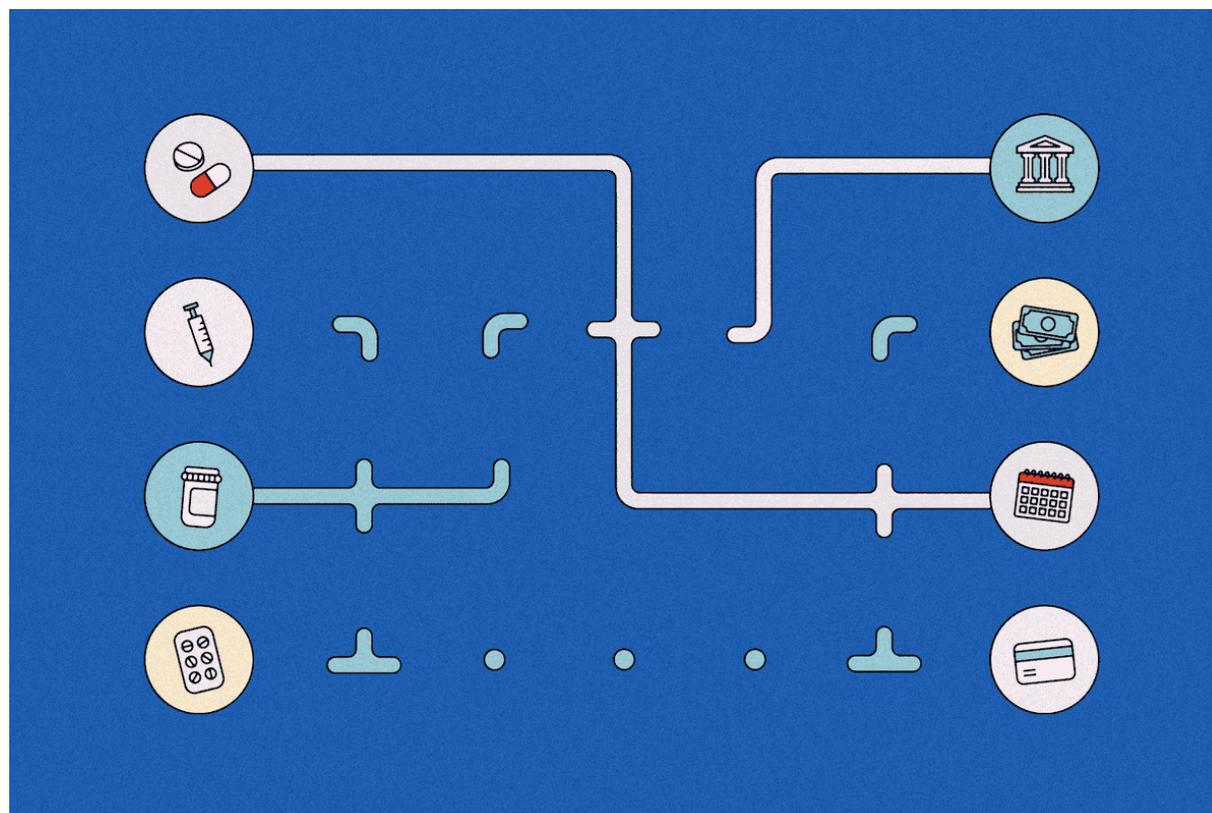
A recent JAMA study explored patient outcomes following surgical procedures provided by DO and MD surgeons. The study examined patients' health and wellbeing after surgery performed by DO and

MD surgeons. It used Medicare claims data from 2016 to 2019, and found no statistically significant differences in mortality, readmissions or length of stay between patients who underwent common surgical operations with DO vs. MD surgeons.

“These findings are consistent with prior work, which demonstrated no detectable difference in mortality among hospitalists by medical school training,” the study’s authors wrote. “Taken together, this work should reinforce to policymakers, hospital leadership, physicians and patients that any differences between the two U.S. medical school degree programs do not translate to quantifiable differences in the quality of in-patient care delivered by MD and DO physicians and surgeons.”

That study on hospitalists was published in the Annals of Internal Medicine in May 2023. It found no differences between DO and MD hospitalists in the quality of care provided.

[Read more about these studies here.](#)



Medicare’s Expanded Drug Benefit in 2025

From Washington Post article by Kerry Dooley Young

Medicare's drug benefit, known as Part D, will see major changes next year as part of a broader push to help the 50 million-plus Americans enrolled in the program manage the cost of medicines.

It's one result of the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, which granted new authority for the government to directly negotiate with pharmaceutical companies over the prices of some drugs. The law also included two other big changes set to kick in next year: an option to "smooth" out co-payments for drugs on a monthly basis and a \$2,000 cap on out-of-pocket spending for all people enrolled in Part D.

This new prescription payment plan, also known as the M3P option, is meant to help people who can't immediately cover a large co-pay at the pharmacy and have to forgo picking up needed medicines

Now, one has the option to spread co-pays for drugs covered by Part D over a single calendar year. While a patient can opt in at any time, this is likely to be especially helpful early in the year — before the new \$2,000 limit on out-of-pocket costs is met — if one expects high prescription drug costs, according to Juliette Cubanski, deputy director of the Medicare policy program at the nonprofit KFF.

"This plan doesn't save you money over the course of the entire year," she added. "It just helps you spread your out-of-pocket costs out over time."

That said, for people with inexpensive prescriptions, the smoothing option might not be worth it. Instead of just letting you pay at the pharmacy, it adds an extra monthly bill to manage covering the spread-out costs of co-pays.

Other changes to Medicare already enacted under the Inflation Reduction Act include a \$35 monthly cap on insulin costs for diabetes patients and more financial assistance on Part D costs for low-income seniors.

The first set of negotiated Part D agreements is due to take effect in 2026, with reductions set for 10 widely used drugs, including diabetes, psoriasis and blood clot treatments: Novolog insulin;

Januvia; Farxiga; Jardiance; Enbrel; Stelara; Xarelto; Eliquis; Entresto & Imbruvica.

[Read full article by Kerry Dooley Young.](#)



DEA and HHS Extend Telemedicine Flexibilities through 2025

DEA addressed the status of telemedicine prescribing flexibilities including state reciprocity (DEA-DC-018 EO-DEA067) and medications for opioid use disorder prescribed by telephone (DEA-DC-022 EO-DEA068) in the temporary rule titled "Temporary Extension of COVID-19 Telemedicine Flexibilities for Prescription of Controlled Medications" which published in the Federal Register on May 10, 2023. 88 FR 30042. With respect to practitioner patient relationships formed after the May 11, 2023, expiration of the COVID-19 PHE, a third temporary rule will extend these exceptions until December 31, 2025, or until DEA publishes a Final Rule on Telemedicine.



Black Osteopathic Students Recognized by Colquitt County NAACP

Congratulations to the PCOM South Georgia and the members of Sisters in Medicine and The Colquitt County Branch of the NAACP for presenting the Freedom Award to Sisters in Medicine during their 51st Annual Freedom Festival on Friday, December 7. The award recognizes the exceptional student physicians this year who have served the community by the



Osteopathic Gift Ideas

It's holiday gift-giving time! What do you get for DOs and osteopathic medical students (including yourself) who have worked so hard all

year long? DOs and medical students are so much more than just their profession—we have other interests, inspirations and hobbies as well. So instead of new scrubs, a stethoscope or the latest and greatest in medical gadgets (all legitimate, of course), most of the ideas below will help your DO or student nourish their other passions. [Read the rest of this article from *The DO* by Jeanne Sandella, DO.](#)

Other ideas include checking out the [swag at the Georgia osteopathic medical schools](#).

Or support the American Osteopathic Association by [shopping at their website](#).

Or supporting the [Lucie Mitchell DO's website](#). She is a pain specialist in Rome, GA, who serves on the GOMA Executive Board as District 1 President. Her art has become her second career.

*"Some cause happiness wherever they go;
others whenever they go"*

– Oscar Wilde