



GEORGIA OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
— 1902 —

GOMA News & Updates

Volume 46, March 2024

Georgia Legislative Update



February 29 only comes once every fourth year, but this year it was the 28th work day of the 40-day legislative session at the Georgia Capital meaning it was Crossover Day. Crossover Day is when one

bill has to pass a chamber in order to have a chance to become law. Bills that fail to pass before the deadline have less chance of becoming law, but they could later be revived and their language is inserted into legislation that earlier passed the House or Senate. No bill is truly dead until lawmakers leave the Georgia Capital on March 29, 2024 known as Sine Die.

This is a good time to help physicians focus on which bills to contact their legislators to advocate for their profession and for their patients. No one is more qualified to speak about healthcare legislation than physicians. And no one is going to lobby on behalf of physicians or the health of our state besides us.

In regards of scope of practice, HB 1175 on physical therapists' direct access did not make it through the House. Portions of HB 1046 which would have allowed APRNs and PAs to write care plans for home healthcare services were removed. Unfortunately, scope expansion battles continue as language expanding CRNA's scope of practice to allow independent practice in 52 rural communities was added to **Senate Bill 460** which passed through the Senate and now sits in a House committee. Originally, SB 460 increased from 4 to 8 the number of Advanced Practitioners that physicians can supervise.

HB 557 allows non-physicians to prescribe opioids and the bill has been bouncing between the House and the Senate since last year. Currently, it sits in the Senate.

HB 470 Georgia CANDOR Act (Communication and Optimal Resolution) which ensures a physician-friendly environment in Georgia in relation to tort reform is now sitting in the Judiciary Committee of the Georgia Senate. It was proposed by Rep. Sharon Cooper, RN (R-Marietta) and its co-sponsors included Rep. Tremaine "Teddy" Reese (D-Columbus) who is the husband of Chasity Reese, DO.

HB 343 "Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for Patients Act" fixes the Pharmacy Benefit Managers so that patients save money. It

passed out of the House and now sits in the Health and Human Services Committee of the Senate.

HB 1339 is a bipartisan bill that will hopefully improve healthcare outcomes across the state, and update the State Health Plan. It addresses mental health, behavioral health, maternal and prenatal care, and in rural areas, will expand healthcare and provide economic development by eliminating the CON regulations. Georgia has the 2nd highest uninsured rate in the nation; hopefully, this bill will help. It passed out of the House and now sits in the Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee of the Senate.

Gun storage safety has been a focus of several bills this year. While Rep. Michelle Au, MD's HB 161 Pediatric Health Safe Storage Act did not make it out of committee, a tax credit for firearm safe storage in the form of **HB 971** did move out of the House and now sits in the Senate Finance Committee. It would give a tax credit for purchasing gun safes, and for taking gun safety classes.

HB 1409 would limit liability of mental health providers in lawsuits, except in cases of "gross negligence". It would also limit punitive damages against mental health care workers unless the claimant proves the provider showed "willful and wanton misconduct, reckless infliction of harm, or intentional infliction of harm." The House voted unanimously to pass this bill. It moves to the Senate.

In an effort to have the state to take over local Boards of Health, SB 293 lessens the qualifications for local board of health directors from a medical degree to a master's degree and shifts the responsibility of appointing these directors from the local board to the state. The bill passed the Senate and now sits in the Public Health Committee of the House.

SB 402 allows those with a Class D Drivers License held by 16 and 17 year olds to drive between the hours of midnight and 5 AM. It also allows them to drive with an unrelated passenger, but limits that number to only one passenger under the age of 21. It passed

the Senate and now sits in the Motor Vehicles Committee of the House.

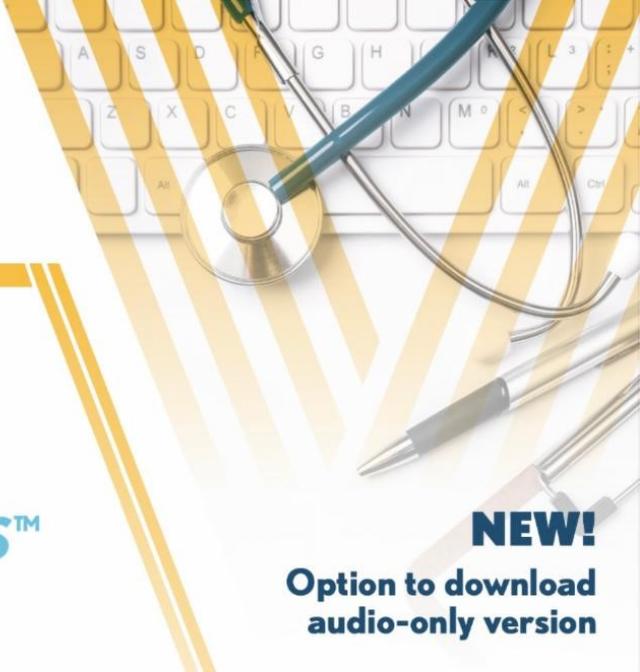
SB 307 requires health insurers to have a program that allows for the selective application of reduction in prior authorization requirements. This bill passed the Senate and now will be assigned to a House committee.

SB 395 was unanimously approved in the Senate. The bill allows anyone in a school to possess and administer Naloxone, making



The logo for the Virtual Osteopathic Conference (VOC) features the letters 'VOC' in a stylized, blue, multi-lined font. To the left of 'VOC' is a vertical bar with horizontal lines, resembling a ladder or a scale. Below the logo, the text 'FOURTH ANNUAL' is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

FOURTH ANNUAL



The background of the promotional graphic shows a close-up of a white computer keyboard with a blue stethoscope resting on it. Several pens and pencils are scattered in the foreground. The overall color scheme is white and light blue, with yellow diagonal stripes.

**UP TO 48 AOA
CATEGORY 1-A
AND AMA PRA
CATEGORY 1 CREDITS™**

Purchase in 8-credit increments

NEW!
**Option to download
audio-only version**

It's Not Too Late to Take Advantage of VOC offering of 48 hours of CME

Your GOMA membership can save you between \$70 and \$350 depending on how many CME credits you select from the 2024 Virtual Osteopathic Conference (VOC).

This conference offers up to 48 CME credits of AOA Category 1-A Credit and AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™ in a flexible format. One can attend on-demand anytime between now and June 30, 2024. This offers you the maximum flexibility in what CME you take and when you take it.

The end of this year is the end of the AOA's three year cycle, so [check out the schedule and register](#).

DO Day 

**Distinctive in Healthcare
Advocacy and Leadership**

AOA Holds DO Day Virtually and/or In-Person in Washington, DC

Grow your leadership skills at [DO Day](#)! Join GOMA leadership this April as they advocate for osteopathic medicine to members of Congress.

Participate in person or join the virtual conference to earn CME, build leadership skills and represent the voice of your profession. Join us for the osteopathic profession's largest public policy and advocacy event of the year, hosted in conjunction with National Osteopathic Medicine (NOM) Week. DO Day offers unmatched opportunities to hone your leadership skills and raise your voice to educate members of Congress on the issues that matter most to you and your patients. Participate in-person alongside your osteopathic colleagues in Washington, D.C., or join the virtual leadership and professional development conference from the comfort of your home or office! Participants may earn dually-accredited CME.

Virtual Only: The virtual leadership and professional development conference, set for Saturday, April 13 and Sunday, April 14, will offer specialized learning tracks for physicians, medical students and affiliate leaders focused on advocacy leadership, federal and state legislative priorities, regulatory and payment policy, state grassroots advocacy and more.

In-Person: Registration for this option includes both participation in the virtual conference as well as the in-person briefings and congressional meetings in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, April 17 and Thursday, April 18. Please note: Space is limited for in-

person congressional meetings. Registration for this option closes on March 29, 2024.

On-demand content will be available to all DO Day registrants via the conference platform through June 14, 2024.

GOMA District 2 Networking Event was Great Success



Dr. Mangonon greets the crowd



Dr. Waters lectures



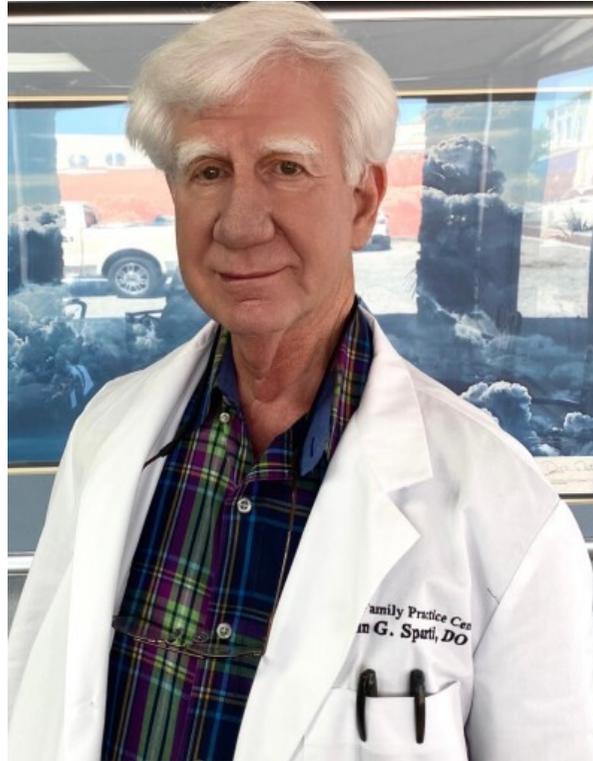
On February 25 there was a great turnout to the first GOMA social event since the pandemic.

The District 2 event featured a welcome from District 2 President Michael Mangonon, DO and a 1 hour CME discussion about medical ethics by L. Michael Waters, DO in the home of Michael Baron, DO.

We honored Northside Gwinnett Medical Center residents Ashley Turek, DO; Vini Patel, DO & Anuj Saluja, DO for National Thank-a-Resident Day. Physician guests included Diara Gross, DO; Neil Nickelson, DO; Shaan Patel, DO; Nidhip Patel, DO; Judy Volcy, DO; Shaila Day, DO; David David S. Adelstein, DO; William Bostock, DO; Anu Kumar Whisenhunt, DO; Dianna Hannigan Glessner, DO; Marc Greenstein, DO; Darren Dillard, DO; Deon Miller, DO, Murray Berkowitz, DO and Elizabeth Reuter Kobe, DO.

[Join GOMA or Renew Your Membership Today!](#)

GOMA Past President John G. Sparti, DO Died on February 16



John G. Sparti, DO who along with his father Frank Sparti, DO served the Dallas, Georgia community for decades died on February 16th at Kennestone Hospital surrounded by his family. He was 79 years old.

Dr. Sparti was born to Pauline G. Sparti and Dr. Frank J. Sparti on June 24, 1944 in Laconia, New Hampshire. Dr. Sparti spent most of his youth in Miami, Florida. He attended Miami Dade Community College and Florida Atlantic University, graduating in 1967. He earned his osteopathic medical degree through the College of Osteopathic Medicine in Kansas City, MO in 1972. He moved to Georgia in 1974 and began a 50-year distinguished career as a physician. He worked at the former Medical Arts Hospital, the former Paulding Memorial Hospital and was eventually on staff at Wellstar Paulding Hospital. In the beginning of his career he delivered over 300 babies, worked multiple emergency rooms, while building his own practice, Dallas Family Practice Center, which he opened in 1975. He served in all positions of the Georgia Osteopathic Medical Association and was President in 1981, and was a member of several other boards and committees. He serviced as medical

examiner for Paulding County for approximately 10 years. During that time, he helped care for the injuries from the Southern Airways plane crash in New Hope, GA. As recently as a year ago he met with residents affected by the plane crash and recalled the horrific events with emotion.

Through Dallas Family Practice Center, Dr. Sparti has been serving generations of families in Paulding County and surrounding areas for 50 years. He cared deeply for all of his patients regardless of their social status or ability to pay, and they were as loyal to him. Dallas Family Practice Center employed long time employees who became an extension of his family and remained dedicated to him to his very last day in practice.

For 40 years, he has enjoyed a longtime professional relationship with local pharmacists. His interests outside the office included spending time with friends at Tri City Pawn shop, coin collecting, and involvement with other numismatics.

John's father, Dr. Frank Sparti, helped open the first 10 bed hospital in Dallas, Georgia, and worked with him for a short time as did his brother, Dr. Michael Sparti, who have both preceded him in death. [For more information about his personal life, read his obituary here.](#)

PCOM Georgia “Simbulance” Demonstrating Emergency Care



PCOM Georgia faculty members L. Michael Waters, DO & Andrea Mann, DO were in the community with the Sim Center team in tow for demonstrations in the “Simbulance,” PCOM Georgia medical students were onsite to offer blood pressure checks for participants of the recent Run the Reagan half marathon, 10k, 5k, & fun run! Nice work promoting wellness as part of the #PCOMCWI!

Black History Month at PCOM Georgia and PCOM South Georgia



Student Doctor Nahimie Louissaint's Educational Journey to PCOM South Georgia

February was a significant part of the year at PCOM South Georgia. The school had a variety of events, including three student-led events in the College of Medicine and Health Sciences. These events presented the ECHO program, featured records from the school's history, and focused on the lives of Black physicians. The events also included poetry by Black authors.

On the PCOM South Georgia campus, the Brothers and Sisters Association (BSA) celebrated Black History Month and the accomplishments of Black leaders in science and medicine.

A significant part of the year at PCOM South Georgia has been dedicated to community service. She is eager to integrate this spirit of volunteerism into her future profession, drawing inspiration from a valuable lesson, drawing inspiration from a valuable lesson imparted by her mother. "I realize [lifestyle] is important because the things we go through on a day-to-day basis influence our health. If we focus on that, I think we could make a bigger change through preventative medicine instead of just hiding the symptoms," Louissaint said. [Read more about student doctor Louissaint's path and influences.](#)



mpuses of South Georgia, the Brothers and Sisters Association (BSA) together to celebrate Black History Month. The school also dedicated vinyl records to notable Black physicians and scientists.

Members from the National Medical Association (NMA) will recognize Black History Month.

PCOM South Georgia Student Doctor Emeka Ikeakanam is Service Oriented in Moultrie



Emeka Ikeakanam's (DO '26) parents taught him that giving back to others is just as important as succeeding in life. Growing up, student physician Ikeakanam witnessed his parents give back to others in immeasurable ways. His father, Bosco, and mother, Roseline, continue to sponsor children back in their home country of Nigeria so they can go to school, eat well and thrive. As a future pediatrician, he's been doing that through his volunteer efforts through SNMA with the Boys & Girls Club of Moultrie-Colquitt County, Brothers in Medicine and Nutrition in Medicine Club. Volunteering with the Moultrie-Colquitt County Boys & Girls Club, Ikeakanam hopes to spread that mindset to the younger generations by working with them in their community garden. He isn't interested in giving just a few hours of his time and moving on to the next thing. His goal is to make a lasting impact on each child he interacts with. [Read more about student physician Ikeakanam.](#)

Student Doctor Saron Aroya Selected as Research Scholar for Myeloma Health Equity Program



Saron Araya (DO '27) was recently selected to be part of the Medical Student Scholars for Health Equity in Myeloma program. PCOM South Georgia student physician Araya will spend six months working with myeloma experts conducting research on health disparities. This opportunity combines her passion for helping minority groups and her interest in blood disorders.

[Read more about student doctor Araya and watch an interview.](#)

In Other Words

“I prayed for freedom for twenty years, but received no answer until I prayed with my legs.”

-- Frederick Douglas