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GEORGIA OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
— 1902 —

GOMA News & Updates
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2025 Georgia Legislative Summary

Friday, April 4, marked the end of the Georgia Legislative Session, known as "Sine Die," at the Georgia Capitol. Sine Die is the deadline for bills to pass this year to move forward to the Governor's desk. Since this is the first year of a two-year legislative session, the remaining bills that didn't pass can advance in 2026.

Two of the bills that are of the most interest to doctors are Gov. Kemp's attempt to reform tort laws. They are **SB 68** and **SB 69**. Both have [passed out of the Georgia Senate and House and are awaiting signature by Gov. Brian Kemp.](#) **SB 68** - provides for substantive and comprehensive revision of provisions regarding civil practice, evidentiary matters, damages, and liability in tort actions; **SB 69** - Georgia Courts Access and Consumer Protection Act. Hopefully, these two bills will help with malpractice premiums in Georgia. The two bills were signed by Governor Kemp on Monday April 21st. (pictured above)

SB 130 - Senate Bill 130 expands medical education funding and Georgia's service cancelable loan program to help increase the number of doctors, dentists, physician assistants, and advanced practice nurses in underserved rural areas. The bill broadens eligibility for state-funded medical education payments and adds medical residents and fellows to Georgia's service cancelable loan program. SB 130 passed out of the Georgia Senate and House and is awaiting signature by Gov. Brian Kemp.

SB 5 - health insurers to implement and maintain a program that allows for the selective application of reductions in prior authorization requirements. It means that if practices are getting most of their Prior Authorizations approved that they would get a "gold card" that reduces their need to work on future prior authorizations. SB 5 [passed out of the Georgia Senate and House and is awaiting signature by Gov. Brian Kemp.](#)

SB 6 - authorizes the use of testing equipment to determine whether a controlled substance has been adulterated. Expands test strips from just testing for Fentanyl to newer problematic drugs. SB 6 passed out of the Georgia Senate and House and is awaiting signature by Gov. Brian Kemp.

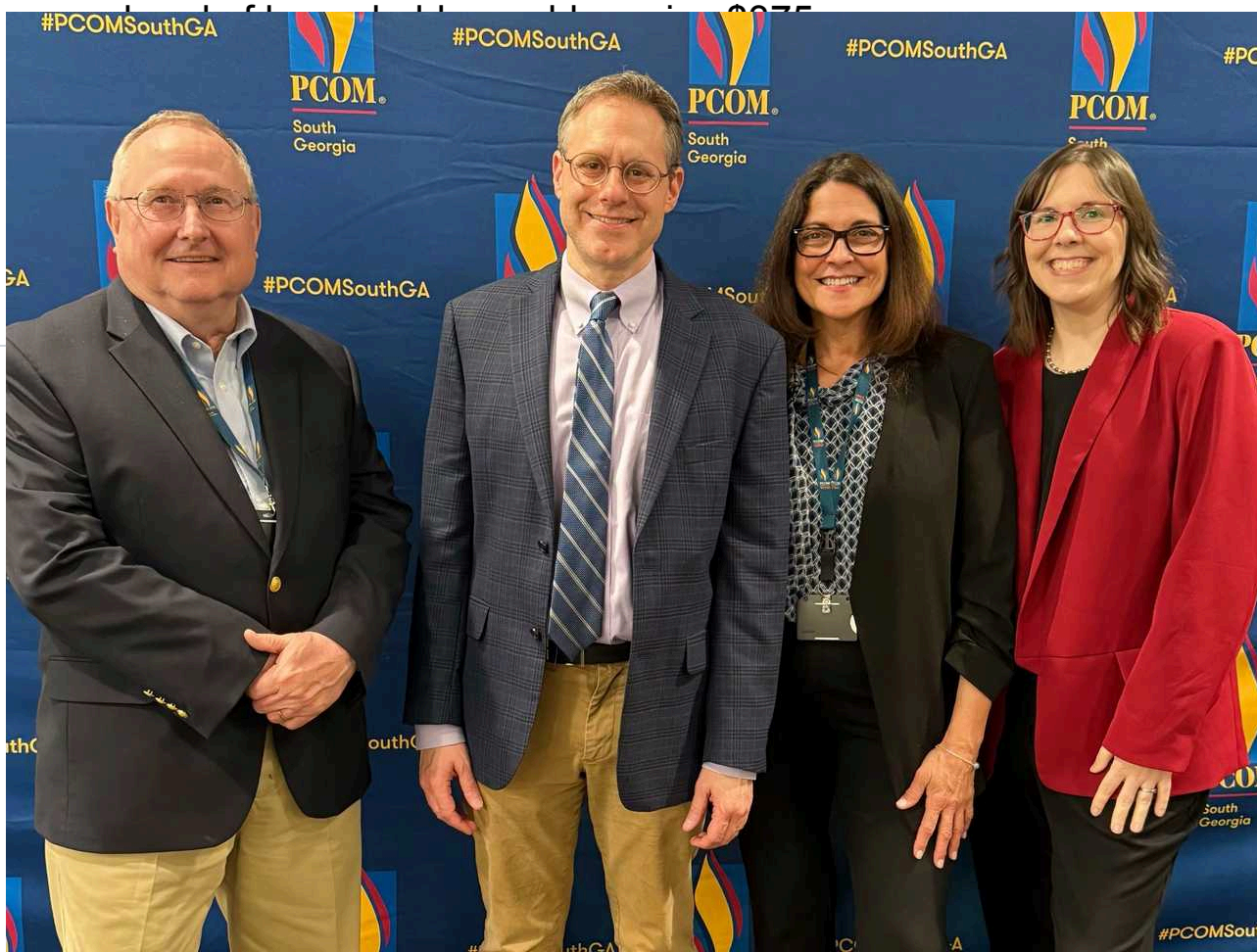
HB 89 - aims to improve how the state of Georgia collects information on maternal deaths and provides care for mothers and babies. It gives the Maternal Mortality Review Committee more access to patient records, including mental health and pharmacy

records, to better understand why mothers pass away during pregnancy or childbirth. The bill also creates a Regional Perinatal Center Advisory Committee, which will help make sure hospitals and doctors have the right resources to care for high-risk pregnancies and births. Lastly, the bill simplifies the process for investigating the deaths of pregnant women, so medical examiners don't always have to go through a regional perinatal center unless special circumstances require it. HB 89 passed out of the Georgia Senate and House and is awaiting signature by Gov. Brian Kemp.

HB 94 - would require state-regulated health plans to cover fertility preservation services for people undergoing medical treatments for cancer, sickle cell disease, or lupus that could lead to infertility. These services include procedures like freezing eggs, sperm, or embryos to help individuals have children in the future. The bill also sets guidelines and limits for what insurance must cover, such as evaluation costs, medications, and one year of storage for reproductive cells. Limits include restrictions based on age and the number of procedures covered. HB 94 passed out of the Georgia Senate and House and is awaiting signature by Gov. Brian Kemp.

Lastly, **HB 111 & HB 112** were signed into law by Gov. Brian Kemp on Tuesday April 15th. "I'm also looking forward to seeing the impact of the two bills that I'll sign today, putting money back where it belongs — in the pockets of you all, hard-working Georgians," Kemp said. Both bills target Georgia residents' income tax burdens. House Bill 111 reduces the income tax rate from 5.39% to 5.19% for 2025, but the bill also would reduce the tax rate each year by 0.10% until the income tax rate in Georgia is 4.9%. While there are some caveats, Kemp argued the bill represents Georgia lawmakers' intention to reduce income tax for residents. Kemp said that would save taxpayers \$880 million during next year's taxes. "Today we're doubling down," Kemp said. However, House Bill 112 provides direct tax rebates to Georgia taxpayers, essentially putting money in taxpayers' pockets. To qualify, the taxpayer must be a Georgia resident who filed tax returns in Georgia for both 2023 and 2024.

- a single taxpayer would receive \$250



District 3 Social Event and CME was a Success in Moultrie, GA ... No Foolin’

On Tuesday April 1, Kristie Petree, DO, president of Georgia Osteopathic Medical Association District III, hosted the annual district meeting at PCOM South Georgia’s beautiful campus! Attendees enjoyed an evening of great food, networking, and insightful discussions. The event featured a special meet & greet and an inspiring talk from guest speaker Dr. Michael Srulevich, who shared his expertise on healthcare for older adults. Thank you to everyone who joined us for this amazing evening!!! Pictured above are (left to right) Robert Lloyd, DO; Michael Srulevich, DO; Marla Golden, DO; and Kristee Petree, DO.



Ravi David Yarid, DO is Helping Students at PCOM Georgia Use Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence is making waves in medical education—but at PCOM Georgia, it’s being integrated with intention and care. Ravi David Yarid, DO, assistant professor of osteopathic manipulative medicine, is leading the way in helping students embrace AI as a supportive tool, not a replacement for clinical intuition or hands-on care.

“AI isn’t a passing trend—it’s fundamentally changing how we approach medicine,” Dr. Yarid says. He explains that while AI can quickly analyze massive amounts of medical data, it still can’t replicate what makes osteopathic medicine unique. “AI can streamline diagnostics and support decision-making, but palpation—our ability to assess patients through touch—remains irreplaceable.”

With its emphasis on treating the whole person, osteopathic medicine is uniquely positioned to lead the way in the evolving healthcare landscape. [Learn how PCOM is preparing students to](#)



Sonny Achtchi, DO Moves his Practice to North Georgia

Dr. Sonny Achtchi is an interventional cardiologist who recently moved his practice from Roswell, Georgia. He is now practicing at Hamilton Physician Group - Cardiology in Dalton, GA after moving north.

Dr. Achtchi is a 2008 graduate of Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. He completed an internal medicine residency at the Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia. He completed fellowships in cardiovascular disease and interventional cardiology at Emory University while serving as both chief resident and chief fellow. He is certified by the American College of Cardiology, Board of Nuclear Cardiology, National Board of Echocardiography, and a Registered Physician in Vascular Interpretation. Dr. Achtchi is a Castle Connolly Top Doctor representing the highest standard in patient care.

“When I think about what makes a physician great, it’s not about the diplomas on my wall—those are things most people don’t even notice when they walk into my office. What truly matters to patients is

whether I listen to them, how I treat them, and how safe they feel in my care. For me, being a great physician starts with having the knowledge and skills necessary to provide high-quality care. But beyond that, it's about showing genuine concern, making sure they understand their treatment in a way that's clear and relatable, and building that trust. Those, I believe, are the most important aspects of being a great physician.”

For more information, please call 706-226-3434 or visit www.vitruvianhealth.com/cardiology.



Chris Bovinet, DO is Lead Author of Article about SI Joint Fusion Technique

Chris Bovinet, DO of The Spine Center of Southeast Georgia in Brunswick, Georgia recently had his article published in *Interventional Pain Medicine*. The article entitled “Posterior Allograft Sacroiliac Joint Fusion with Pre-Operative Mapping” documented

208 patients showing significant reduction in pain and opioid consumption. [The article can be read here.](#)



How Osteopathic Medicine is Treating a Boy's Hearing Loss by Victoria Truncoso, DO

Faced with the prospect of a cochlear implant for their 3-year-old son Tristen's hearing loss, Daniel and Daphne Crawford searched for options. Though not opposed to an implant, the North Carolina couple wanted to exhaust other avenues first. A family member suggested the Georgia Osteopathic Care Center – the OMM clinic at PCOM Georgia – might help Tristen.

In June 2024, Daphne and Daniel loaded Tristen into their car and drove four hours to Suwanee, Georgia, arriving on a Sunday night for their Monday morning appointment. Victoria A. Truncoso, DO, Chair of Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine at PCOM Georgia and medical director for the Georgia Osteopathic Care Center, started

monthly treatments. Nearly a year later, the family continues to see progress on a number of fronts.

Dr. Truncoso speaking about the craniosacral techniques used said, “When we do that in a child, the forces of growth and development go, ‘this avenue is now open to me,’ and they go and they grow. In children, the inherent capacity to heal is so huge, and those restricted tissues will create an unwinding based on their elasticity and how they’re supposed to go. They will soften, expand, breathe, and start to respond to the nervous and circulatory systems, and then he can advance. His body does the healing.”

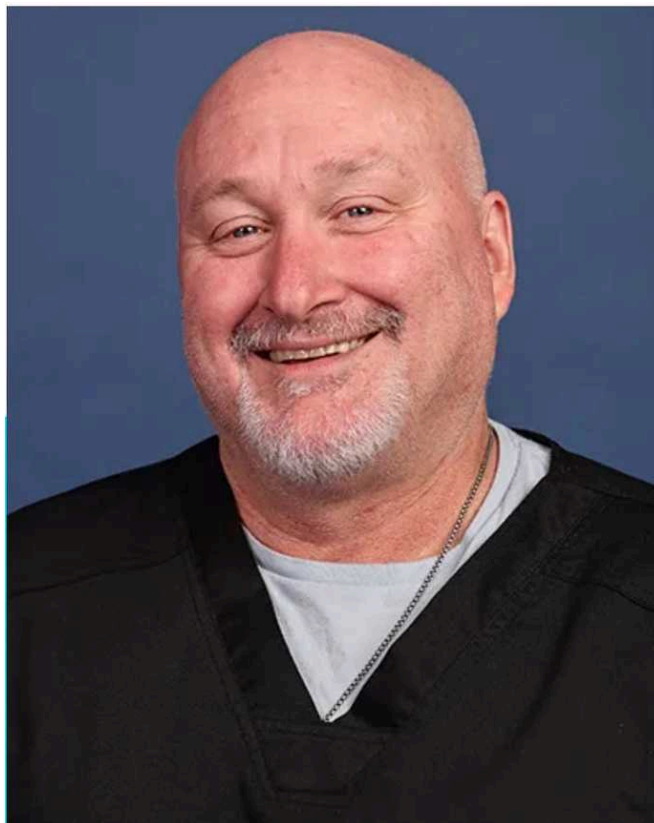
[Read the full story.](#)



Kristie Petree, DO Demonstrates Unconventional HVLA Manipulation

In late March, PCOM South Georgia Professor of OMM Kristie Petree, DO, presented a hands-on interactive session for students at the American Academy of Osteopathy Convocation in Orlando titled “Let’s Get Crackin’: Unconventional HVLA.” PCOM South Georgia OMM scholars — Anthony Sciuva (DO ’25), Sarah Amaris (DO ’26), Sadie Daugereaux (DO ’25) and Jacob Winchester (DO ’26) — also

attended the AAO Convocation. Student Doctor Daugereaux has been a member of the SAAO EC board, which plans the Convocation, for the past two years.



How Accurate is BMI as a Health Indicator? Randall Sisam, DO Weighs Pros & Cons

Randall Sisam, DO, assistant professor of clinical medicine and director of primary care skills at PCOM South Georgia, regularly teaches medical students about the uses—and limitations—of BMI. At most medical checkups, patients step on a scale to measure their current weight. Physicians then often use this number to calculate the patient's body mass index (BMI), a commonly used indicator of overall health. This measurement is especially relevant when considering eligibility for GLP-1 weight loss drugs such as Ozempic or Wegovy. But how accurate is BMI as a health indicator? [Read more on this issue here.](#)

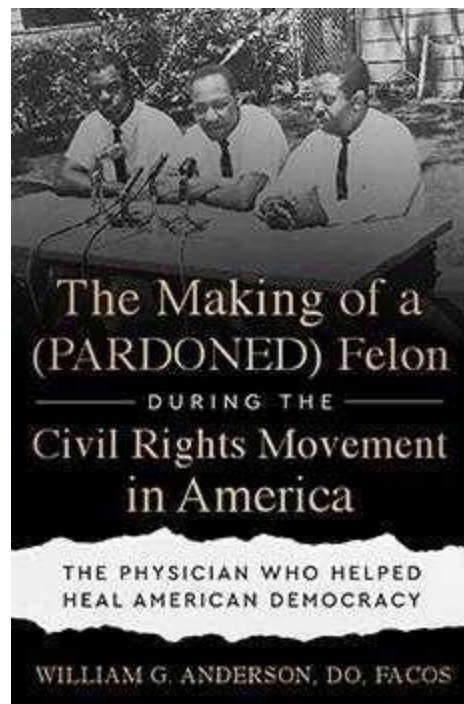


PCOM Georgia Hosted AOA Trustee Richard Thacker, DO & CEO Kathleen S. Creason, MBA

Recently, PCOM Georgia was proud to host representatives from the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), who met with campus leaders and student organizations to discuss the benefits of networking in medicine and provide tips and resources for further career development for students.

Thank you to the AOA's Richard Thacker, DO, MACOI, member of the board of trustees, and Kathleen S. Creason, MBA, chief executive officer, for visiting and sharing your valuable advice and insight!

[Read all about the day's events here.](#)



William Anderson, DO's NEW BOOK: *The Making of a (PARDONED) Felon During the Civil Rights Movement in America* Now Available

Civil rights leader, Dr. William Anderson, past president of the AOA, has been leading by example for over 70 years. He is still inspiring colleagues in the medical profession with his insights, perspective, and philanthropy through his newly launched book, *The Making of a (PARDONED) Felon During the Civil Rights Movement in America*. Much of the book features Dr. Anderson's work for civil rights in Albany, Georgia. His work with Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ralph David Abernathy thrust him into national roles of leadership. [It is now available for purchase on Amazon.](#)

Through his memories, he shares personal stories of growth, defiance, and unyielding perseverance with readers.

At 97 years young, he is still planning for the future. He wants to leave a legacy of philanthropy and you can help.

Per Dr. Anderson's request, 100% of all proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to the William G. Anderson, DO,

Scholarship Fund at the AOF. This year marks the Fund's 25th Anniversary!



**PCOM Georgia Student Doctors
Mustafa Ansari & Mutasem Shopon
Put Compassion into Action**

Community service has always been a passion for Mustafa Ansari (DO '27) and Elizabeth Jones Flail (DO '27). The Department of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) students at South Georgia College of Osteopathic Medicine (SGCOM) Georgia and instantly become involved in projects serving their local communities.



Seeing how their local community in Georgia, the students at the college level and decided to address basic necessities, such as clean water in Pakistan to rejuvenate and

Through networking and a social media fundraising campaign with the FAANI Project, Student Doctors Ansari and Sharon raised \$3,000 to fund the construction of eleven water wells in Pakistan, providing clean drinking water to over 1,000 individuals in some of the country's most deserving areas.

[Read the full story and see pictures of both students here.](#)

Elizabeth Jones Flail, DO was appointed as the 2025 – 2026 Chief of Staff of Southwest Georgia Medical Center (SGMC) Health System in Valdosta. Dr. Flail is an emergency medicine physician and has taken on this position after two years as chief of staff elect.

A Valdosta native, Dr. Flail developed her passion for medicine early, shadowing her father, who also served as an emergency physician. Over the past decade, she has practiced in the emergency departments at SGMC Health Main and SGMC Health Smith Northview, serving as the Co-Director of both as well as the health system's two urgent cares.

As Chief of Staff, Dr. Flail will provide leadership and guidance to the medical staff of over 700 providers, ensuring effective communication between the medical team, administration and the Hospital Authority Board of Trustees. Her extensive experience and deep roots in the community make her uniquely qualified to lead SGMC Health into a new era of excellence.

After graduating from PCOM Georgia in Suwanee in 2011, Dr. Flail completed her residency training in emergency medicine at the University of Florida Shands.

2025 AOA-OMED Call for Research Abstracts (Virtual Research Poster Session and Student Poster Competition)

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Research Abstract & Student Poster Competition and the Bureau of International Osteopathic Medicine (BIOM) Abstract Competition are a single, combined competition. Please review the abstract instructions carefully for detailed information regarding submitting your abstract.

Please note that the criteria for the international component will vary slightly, so please consult the “Review Criteria” section of the Abstract Instructions document for more details.

The virtual poster session and student competition will be held on Friday, September 26, 2025.

Submission Deadline: Monday, June 16, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. CST
[For more information and to submit your abstract, visit the AOA website.](#)

If you have any questions, please [email Gloria Dillard, MPH](#), or call her at (312) 202-8006.

The AOA's virtual poster session/competition allows new and experienced researchers to share their research with a broad audience. As part of the competition, the AOA Bureau of International Osteopathic Medicine (BIOM) allows osteopathic medical students to share their research experiences as they relate specifically to osteopathic healthcare internationally.

The virtual Poster Session is integral to the Osteopathic Medical Education Conference (OMED) experience. Investigators interested in participating will submit an abstract of their research project.

Approved abstracts are published online in the Journal of Osteopathic Medicine (JOM).

The virtual Poster Session will include a virtual student poster competition (international & non-international). Students must enter the competition when they submit their abstracts.

Guidelines:

Abstracts must be clinical, basic science, health services, public health, or international health studies and fall within one of the AOA research topic areas:

Research Topic Areas:

- Chronic Diseases & Conditions
- Acute and Chronic Pain Management
- Impact of Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM) & Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT)
- Musculoskeletal Injuries and Prevention
- Osteopathic Philosophy
- Health Disparities/Social Determinants of Health
- International Health

[Download the Abstracts Eligibility and Instructions Document](#)



Medical Journals Get Letters From DOJ Attorney Asking About "Competing Viewpoints"

A federal prosecutor sent a letter to a medical journal editor, probing whether the publication is "partisan" when it comes to "various scientific debates."

Edward R. Martin Jr., U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, sent a list of questions to CHEST Editor-in-Chief Peter Mazzone, MD, MPH, of the Cleveland Clinic, asking how the journal handles "misinformation" and "competing viewpoints," among other things.

MedPage Today has learned that at least two other journals have received similar letters. [Read more here.](#)

If all of earth's sands were powders,
If all the pebbles were pills,
If all of the rivers were tonics,
If drug heaps replaced the hills;
I'd do as I now am doing,
I'd whistle or sing or laugh –
No need have I for concoctions
For I am an osteopath!

--G.V. Webster DO & Museum of Osteopathic Medicine in Kirksville, MO

Dr. Webster was considered an authority on spinal mechanics and served as president of the AOA and the New York State Osteopathic Society. Dr. Webster not only authored many scientific articles but also wrote and edited educational literature.