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GEORGIA OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
— 1902 —

GOMA News & Updates

Volume 47, August 2025



Robert Piccinini, DO is the 2025-2026 AOA President

Robert G. G. Piccinini, DO, D.FACN is the 129th President of the American Osteopathic Association. He has been a dedicated osteopathic leader having served the profession in many ways dating back to serving as a Student Osteopathic Medical Association leader when he was in medical school at Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine (class of 1992). Dr. Piccinini is bringing a refreshingly personal and purpose-driven approach to leadership. As the first psychiatrist to ever lead the AOA, during his inauguration, he delivered a clear message: the path to a stronger osteopathic medical profession begins with stronger communication and deeply supporting members, first-generation DOs and those silently suffering under the weight of mental health struggles.

Prior to his appointment as president-elect of AOA, Dr. Piccinini has served as a trustee for the American Osteopathic Association, as well as in AOA roles from task forces to vice presidencies. Outside of his involvement with the AOA, Dr. Piccinini is the current director of the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME), and has served in various roles in other professional organizations, including the American Osteopathic Examining Board of Neurology and Psychiatry. His past presidencies include the Michigan Osteopathic Association (MOA), the American College of Osteopathic Neurologists and Psychiatrists (ACONP), the Macomb County Osteopathic Medical Association and the Michigan Osteopathic Service Corporation.

Since the early '90s, Dr. Piccinini has served as an adjunct instructor of Community Health Services with the MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine, a clinical instructor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, faculty for Reproductive System Biology and an assistant clinical professor of Psychiatry. In addition to being a Distinguished Fellow of the American College of Osteopathic Neurologists and Psychiatrists, he received a Fellow Award and a

Sydney Kanev Resident Paper Award from the American College of Osteopathic Neurologists and Psychiatrists, as well as the MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine's Dean's Award for Meritorious Contribution.

In his closing remarks at the recent AOA House of Delegates meeting, Dr. Piccinini returned to his central theme: this year must be about attention, clarity, and connection. He promised to measure his success not by accolades or status, but by one simple question: Do our members feel more connected to the AOA than they did before? The AOA, he insisted, must become the trusted, transparent and transformational force it is meant to be. "If we want to grow stronger as a profession," he said, "we must build stronger pathways to membership, board certification and advocacy."

Above all, he asked members for a chance—not just to lead, but also to serve with transparency, humility and conviction.

Read more about Dr. Piccinini [here](#) and [here](#).



AOA House of Delegates 2025 Report

By Christian Geltz, DO, Senior Delegate

The American Osteopathic Association House of Delegates convened in Chicago, Illinois July 18 – 20, 2025. The delegates representing Georgia this year were: Sonbol Shahid-Salles, DO, Michael Waters, DO, and Christian Geltz, DO. Student delegates from PCOM Georgia (Suwanee) were J’Nae Taylor, MSII and Geon Jeong, MSII. Student delegates from PCOM South Georgia (Moultrie) were Mark Shearer, MSII and Sydney Williams, MSII.

On the evening prior to the HOD the Georgia delegates attended a meeting of the United Federation of Osteopathic Societies (UFOS). This organization allows states with a smaller number of AOA members to join forces and vote as a bloc. By voting as a bloc, the “small” states can advance members from their organizations onto the AOA Board of Trustees to represent our interests. In the past, the UFOS has been able to control about 44% of the votes on the floor of the HOD.

Friday began with a rousing march of bagpipers from the Chicago Police Department, the national anthem, and the reciting of the Osteopathic oath. Many committee reports were given to the delegates. We now have 39,942 DO students representing 43 schools with 70 campuses. Dr. Teresa Hubka, AOA President, then gave a review of the accomplishments of the past year. She stated that the AOA had received an invitation to meet with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services. The Secretary called Osteopathic Medicine the “type of medical care the country needs”. The AOA was the only medical group invited to meet with RFK, Jr. so that was quite an honor for our organization to be singled out.

The remainder of Friday was spent in committee meetings where the resolutions are discussed and amended for presentation to the HOD floor on Saturday and Sunday. Our delegate, Dr. Michael Waters, served on the Public Affairs Committee. Thank you, Dr. Waters.

The bulk of Saturday was spent on Reference Committee reports. Various resolutions are presented to the HOD for passage or for amending prior to passage. If interested, these resolutions can be reviewed on the AOA website.

Saturday's highlight was the A.T. Still Memorial Lecture by Dr. Ronnie Martin. This is the 150th anniversary of Osteopathic Medicine and Dr. Martin traced the Osteopathic DNA from 1875 when A.T. Still, M.D. started the first Osteopathic Medical School in Kirksville, Missouri up to the present day. Dr. Martin reminded us of our struggles such as when the AMA labeled Osteopathic Medicine as a "cult", the JCOH restricting our hospital privileges and the AMA blocking DOs from serving in the military. Most observers thought the profession was dead when in 1962 California passed Proposition 22 which prevented new DOs from being licensed in that state. The state offered DOs an MD degree for \$65 and attendance at a weekend course. 86% converted to MD status leaving just 280 Osteopathic physicians. In 1974, the California Supreme Court overturned Proposition 22 and now there are four Osteopathic Medical Schools and over 11,000 DO physicians there. Dr. Martin concluded with a warning for us to not become complacent and realize the danger of our profession becoming too "comfortable" from the inside out. He stated that "being an MD equal is NOT the same."

Saturday afternoon concluded with the inauguration of Robert Piccinini, DO from Michigan as the 129th President of the American Osteopathic Association.

Dr. Piccinini is the first psychiatrist to hold the position. Following Dr. Piccinini's inauguration a reception was held in his honor Saturday evening.

Sunday morning began with the nomination of AOA officers:

President Elect – Richard Thrasher, DO

First Vice President – Joshua Lenchus, DO

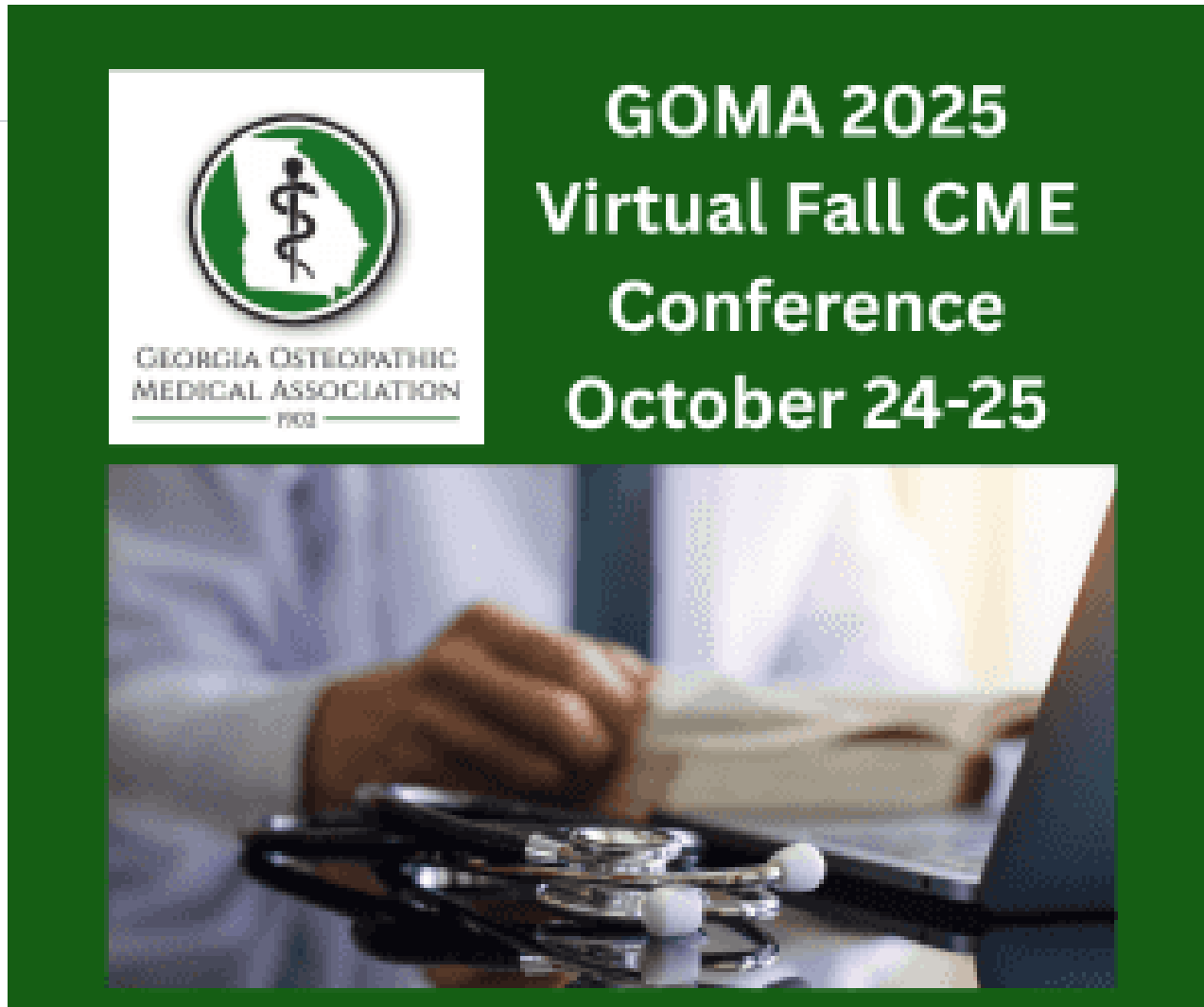
Second Vice President – John Kalata, DO

Third Vice President – Teresa Hardesty, DO

The remainder of the resolutions were discussed and amended and then a report was given by the Osteopathic Political Action Committee. Funds collected at this year's HOD exceeded the goal.

The last Reference Committee report was from the resolutions. It recapped the proceedings and gave us a sense of the meeting as a whole.

The 2025 AOA House of Delegates was adjourned at 10 am and the next meeting is scheduled for July 17 – 19, 2026.



GOMA Virtual Fall CME Conference October 24-25

Live Stream Friday, Oct. 24 and Saturday, Oct. 25

Available On-Demand through December 31, 2025

You can earn up to 16 CME credits from the comfort of your own home! Below are half of the agenda & faculty. Next month, we will feature the others.

Modern Treatment Approaches for the Arthritic Hip and Knee by **Brandon Naylor, DO**. Dr. Naylor is an orthopedic surgeon who works at Total Joint Specialists in Alpharetta, GA. He did his adult reconstruction fellowship at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. Dr. Naylor is a faculty member for the national DisasterPlasty Conference.

Introduction to Cryoneurolysis for Primary Care Practitioners by **Clay Guynn, DO**. Dr. Guynn loves spreading the word out about cryoneurolysis and its wide array of utility ranging from chronic pain of the joints and nerves as well as neuro rehab patients. Dr. Guynn is a triple board certified physician working in PM&R/non-operative sports medicine practicing in Lawrenceville, GA. He authored five chapters of a board review book for PM&R residents, *Principles of Rehabilitation Medicine*.

Neuroplasticity as an Approach to Pain Management by **Marla Golden, DO**. Dr. Golden is the former dean of PCOM South Georgia osteopathic medical school, and currently the dean of the proposed Benedictine College School of Osteopathic Medicine (Atchison, KS). Dr. Golden is the author of “Neuroplastic Transformation Workbook” to help patients with persistent pain by harnessing the brain’s amazing neuroplastic ability to heal the body.

The Not-So-Scary Facts About HVLA by **Kristie Petree, DO**. Dr. Petree is the former assistant professor of neuromusculoskeletal and osteopathic manipulative medicine at PCOM South Georgia. Dr. Petree has published articles in the Journal of the American Osteopathic Association, American Academy of Osteopathy Journal and the International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine.

Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (CIRS), also known as biotoxin illness by **Christine Daecher, DO**. Dr. Daecher is a board certified internal medicine physician who has received certification from the Institute for Functional Medicine. After 14 years of solo

practice in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, she has moved to Savannah to set up Savannah Functional Medicine, a virtual practice serving patients in Georgia, South Carolina and Florida.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy -- Appropriate Indications by **Bill Lagaly, DO**. Dr. Lagaly is triple board certified in family medicine, hyperbaric medicine and wound care. He has been practicing wound care and hyperbaric medicine full time for the past twenty years. Dr. Lagaly currently serves as the medical director of Piedmont Athens Regional Wound/Hyperbaric Center.

Substance Use Disorder Update by **Joseph Skrajewski, MA, MFTI**. Mr. Skrajewski is the national director of business development – healthcare solutions at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. Mr. Skrajewski holds faculty positions at three different medical schools. Mr. Skrajewski was instrumental in developing the first-ever online addiction education program for medical students, CARE: Course on Addiction and Recovery Education, which was created in collaboration with MedU, the American Society of Addiction Medicine, and the Treatment Research Institute. A national thought leader on addiction education for professionals, he has collaborated on many successful initiatives involving the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), and the American College of Academic Addiction Medicine (ACAAM).

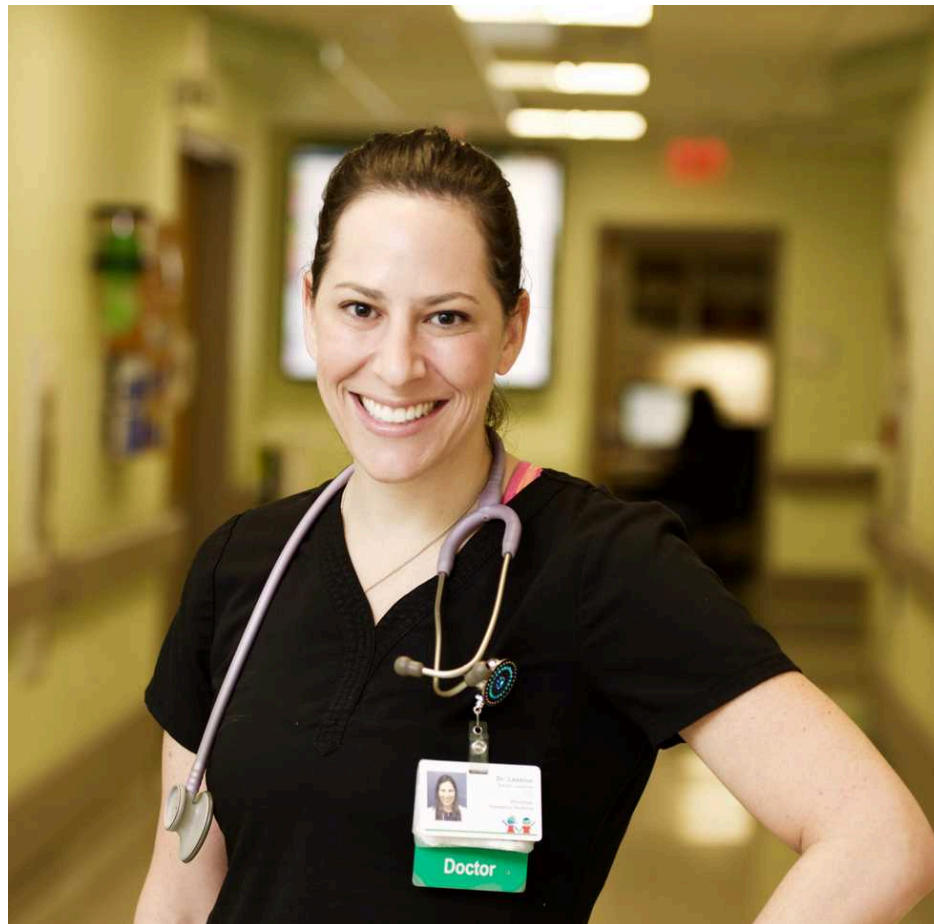
Preceptor Training for Medical Students by **L. Michael Waters, DO**. Dr. Waters is associate professor of family medicine & chair of primary care at PCOM Georgia in Suwanee, Georgia. He has received multiple awards for his teaching style.

Neonatology/Pediatrics Update by **Gary Freed, DO**. Dr. Freed served as a professor of pediatrics at Emory University School of Medicine for 26 years. He also served as the pediatric clerkship director at Emory University School of Medicine for 15 years and as a participant in Emory's “Problem Based Learning Curriculum” for a

decade. Before his retirement from clinical medicine, Dr. Freed was considered one of the leading “experts” on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Safe Sleep in Georgia by the Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics due to his 30 years of work in this area. After retiring from Emory, Dr. Freed has worked as a professor of pediatrics at PCOM Georgia for the past eight years.

Whether you're looking to fulfill your CME requirements or expand your professional network, this conference offers an unparalleled opportunity.

Don't miss out—[REGISTER TODAY](#) and secure your spot in this essential learning experience!



Drownings in the News – Sarah Gard Lazarus, DO Prefers to Prevent Rather than Treat

July was a month that drownings dominated the news. The biggest story was from Kerrville, Texas where the Guadalupe River overran

its banks on the Fourth of July, killing 136 people, including at least 37 children (including 27 youths & counselors at an all-girls camp). A second news story this past month is 5 million aboveground pools being recalled. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission cited a design flaw that has been connected to the drowning deaths of at least nine children since 2007.

Sara Gard Lazarus, DO, FAAP works in multiple pediatric emergency rooms around the metro Atlanta area. She became interested in drowning early in her training because they were so dramatic. “It’s so preventable,” she said.

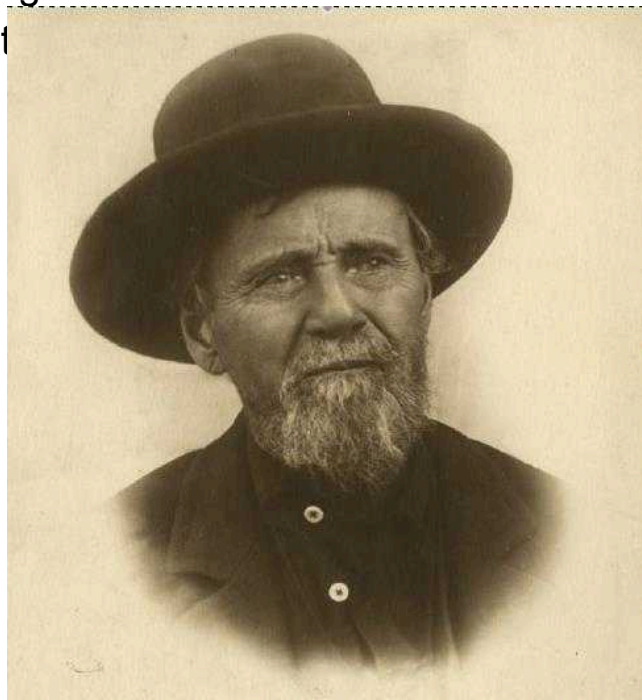
The three main actions that we can prevent drownings for children is to keep the children within arm’s reach, utilizing life jackets in the water and making sure adults caring for children have CPR training. Dr. Lazarus states there are multiple options for low-cost CPR training along with parenting lessons including at the CHOA (Children’s Hospital of Atlanta) and YMCA.

Each year in the United States, an average of 4,000 people — or about 11 each day — die by drowning, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That death toll includes two children younger than 14 every day, the American Red Cross says, making drowning the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 4 and the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths (after motor vehicle crashes) for kids 1 to 14.

Not everyone who drowns dies, however. The CDC says that about 8,000 people each year (22 per day) experience what is called nonfatal drowning, meaning the person survives but may sustain serious injury, such as brain damage or long-term disability. Drownings of people 15 and older are more apt to occur in natural waters (lakes, rivers or oceans), while swimming pools are the site of most drownings of children under 5.

The CDC notes that factors that make drowning more likely include the use of alcohol (involved in 25 percent of emergency room visits for drowning) and not wearing a life jacket when boating (with 81

percent of boating-related deaths attributed to drowning, and the vast majority of t t).



Birthday of A.T. Still

As the profession celebrated its 150th anniversary this past year, *The DO* published several articles exploring aspects of Dr. Still's life, including his Civil War service and actions he took to support the abolitionist movement in the US. [Celebrate the founder of osteopathic medicine by learning more about his life.](#)

‘One Big Beautiful Bill’ Signed into Law by President Trump on July 4th

On Thursday, July 4th, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA), a sweeping budget reconciliation measure that includes provisions affecting Medicare physician payment, Medicaid, student loans, was signed by President Donald Trump. Key provisions impacting the osteopathic profession include:

Medicare Physician Payment:

A one-year, 2.5% increase to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) for services furnished between January 1, 2026, and December 31, 2026. This is intended to account for "exceptional circumstances" impacting physician practices. While helpful in the

short term, this increase is temporary and does not address the long-term instability of the Medicare payment system.

Medicaid Reforms:

Multiple changes to Medicaid eligibility and payment, including: enhanced eligibility redetermination efforts; a revised home equity limit that could restrict eligibility for long-term care; cuts to state Medicaid costs and incentive FMAP funding; tighter rules on provider taxes and state-directed payments, potentially limiting how states support safety-net providers; requires community engagement (i.e., work requirements) for certain Medicaid enrollees.

Pass-Through Entity Taxes (PTET):

The OBBB eliminates the federal deduction for state-level PTETs, a move strongly opposed by the AOA. This change increases the tax burden on small, physician-owned practices, many of which operate as S corporations or partnerships, jeopardizing their financial viability and potentially reducing access to care.

Medical Student Loan Provisions:

Imposes a cap on graduate federal loans and eliminates Graduate PLUS loans, which are critical for financing medical education. These restrictions could severely limit access to necessary funding for osteopathic medical students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Limits and restructures loan forgiveness and deferment options (Subtitle C), with no enhancements to public service loan forgiveness or training-specific repayment options.

There remains deep concern that several provisions in this legislation, especially those impacting student loans, small practices, and Medicaid, could negatively affect the physician workforce pipeline and patient access to care.

Read more [here](#) and [here](#).



New Scam Letters and Calls Target Medical Practitioners

The Drug Enforcement Administration is warning DEA-registered medical practitioners of new fraud schemes in which scammers impersonate DEA personnel and notify registrants that they are under investigation, presumably in an attempt to obtain personal information.

DEA has recently received reports of false letters and phone calls being used to contact both DEA registrants and non-registrants. It is not the DEA's practice to call registrants regarding investigative matters.

[Learn more about this recent scam and where to report it.](#)



Help Make Every Day Take Back Day

Missed Take Back Day? Help DEA prevent drug misuse before it starts and rid medicine cabinets of unused, unwanted medications year-round at one of the nearly 17,000 collection sites around the country.

[Find a collection site near you.](#)

[Learn more about the Every Day is Take Back Day campaign.](#)



***Atlanta Magazine* Top Docs issue features Three Dozen DOs & Frazier Keitt, DO on Cover**

Annually, *Atlanta Magazine* features the doctors nominated by their peers as best in the metropolitan area. We think of all the osteopathic physicians in Georgia as the best for Georgia patients, and here's the list that *Atlanta Magazine* compiled. The July issue was exciting to see one of our colleagues featured on the front cover. Frazier Keitt, DO is a sports medicine specialist at Emory and serves as a team physician for the Atlanta Dream, Atlanta's WNBA team.

Congratulations to the 36 osteopathic physicians below:

Byol Shin, DO (Allergist) – Gwinnett Clinic; 1740 Lawrenceville Hwy; Lawrenceville 770-995-5695

Karen Buhariwalla, DO (Breast Surgeon) – Georgia Breast Care; 900 Town Lake Pkwy #312; Woodstock 678-370-0370

Yasmeen Fareeduddin, DO (Child Psychiatry) – Kaiser; 750 Townpark Ln NW; Kennesaw 404-365-0966

Carrie Poline, DO (Child Psychiatry) – solo practice; 6100 Lake Forrest Dr #330; Atlanta 404-220-8022

Nathan Cleaver, DO (Dermatology) – solo practice; 105 Professional Park Dr; Cumming 770-800-3455

Marcus Goodman, DO (Dermatology) – Goodman Derm; 1357 Hembree Rd #250; Roswell 770-754-0787

Jean Kunjummen, DO (Radiology) – Emory Midtown; 550 Peachtree St NE; Atlanta 404-778-9729

Daquesha Chever, DO (Family Med) – Vera Whole Health; 3625 Dallas Hwy; Marietta 770-800-6842

Angela Evans, DO (Family Med) – Premier Fam; 7444 Hannover Pkwy S.#215; Stockbridge 404-981-3376

Barbara Joy Jones, DO (Family Med) – Healthy Woman; 1130 Hurricane Shoals Rd NE#800; Lawrenceville 770-809-1100

Leah Macklin, DO (Family Med) – Fam Prac Ctr; 2860 Ron Reagan Blvd #200; Cumming 470-215-1920

Benjamin Morrison, DO (Family Med) – Pandya Med Ctr; 11315 Johns Creek Pkwy #340; Johns Creek 770-709-6922

Gweneth Francis, DO (Infect Dz) – Atlanta ID Group; 1265 Hwy 54 #500C; Fayetteville 678-435-3040

Salvatore Mannino, DO (Intervent Cardio) – Wellstar; 55 Witcher St NE #350; Marietta 770-424-6893

Michael Press, DO (Nephrology) – GA Nephrology; 595 Hurricane Shoals Rd NW#100; Lawrenceville 404-645-7150

Doug Kasow, DO (Ortho/Spine) – OrthoAtlanta; 3929 Peachtree Rd NE #250; Brookhaven 404-352-1053

Mathew Levine, DO (Orthopedic) – Resurgens; 4150 Dep. Bill Cantrell Rd#300; Cumming 770-886-8111

Travis Weinsheim, DO (ENT) – Northeast Atlanta ENT; 2089 Teron Trace#215; Dacula 770-237-3000

Scott Masson, DO (Pain) – Alliance Spine & Pain; 1295 Hembree Rd#101; Roswell 770-929-9033

Jose Mathew, DO (Pain) – Summit Spine&Joint; 830 Eagles Landing Pkwy#204; Stockbridge 770-962-3642

Nathan Neufeld, DO (Pain) – City of Hope; 600 Celebrate Life Pkwy; Newnan 888-926-2965

Erik Shaw, DO (Pain) – Shepherd Center; 2020 Peachtree Rd NW; Atlanta 404-352-2020

Michael Briones, DO (Ped Hem/Onc) – AFLAC Cancer; 2220 N. Druid Hills Rd NE; Atlanta 404-785-1200

Harriet Crockett-Woods, DO (Peds) – CHOA Forsyth Urgent; 410 Peachtree Pkwy#300; Cumming 404-785-5437

Angela Beninga, DO (PM&R) – Shepherd Center; 2020 Peachtree Rd NW; Atlanta 404-352-2020

Adrienne Jordan, DO (PM&R) – Wellstar Rehab; 3950 Austell Rd; Austell 770-793-7635

Wesley H. Miller, DO (PM&R) – Piedmont Ortho; 3672 Marathon Circle#200; Austell 770-944-3303

Yogita Taylor, DO (PM&R) – Pelvic Rehab; 371 East Paces Ferry Rd#730; Atlanta 470-322-4113

Omar T. Khan, DO (Rheum) – Arthritis&Rheum Ctr; 102 Mary Alice Prk Rd#805; Cumming 770-284-3150

Katina Tsagaris, DO (Rheum) – Emory Clinic; 1365 Clifton Rd NE; Bldg 3; Floor 3; Atlanta 404-778-4366

Robert Bowers, DO (Sports Medicine) – Emory Orthopedics; 21 Ortho Lane, Atlanta 404-778-3350

Frazier Kielt, DO (Sports Medicine) – Emory Orthopedics; 21 Ortho Lane, Atlanta 404-778-3350

Marc Greenstein, DO (Urology) – Advanced Urology; 1450 South Johnson Ferry Rd; Sandy Springs 678-344-8900

Roger Williams, DO (Vascular Radiology) – Quantum Radio; 790 Church St #400; Marietta 678-581-3830

Anu Kumar Whisenhunt, DO (Vascular Surgery) – Northside Vascular; 980 Johnson Ferry Rd NE#1040; Atlanta 770-292-3490



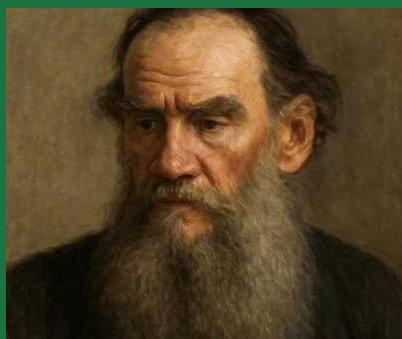
White Coat Season is Upon Us

PCOM Georgia & PCOM South Georgia will be recognizing the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) students in the class of 2029 this month. They will be presented with their white coats signifying the beginning of their medical journey.

Tune in LIVE on YouTube:

[PCOM Georgia event happens on Friday, Aug. 8 at 4:30 PM](#)

[PCOM South Georgia event happens on Friday, Aug. 8 at 4:30 PM](#)



*If you feel pain, you are alive.
If you feel other people's pain, you are
a human being.*

Leo Tolstoy