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GEORGIA OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
— 1902 —

GOMA News & Updates

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PCOM South Georgia Appoints Robert Lloyd, DO, as Interim Dean

On May 19, Robert Lloyd, DO '91, stepped into the role of interim dean of the Osteopathic Medicine program at PCOM South Georgia after Marla Golden, DO '88, departed to accept a position as founding dean of the proposed school of osteopathic medicine at Benedictine College in Kansas. He previously served in the position in 2023.

“PCOM South Georgia is at a pivotal moment in its history,” Dr. Lloyd said. “With the recent approval from the American Osteopathic Association’s Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation to increase our annual DO class size to 90, we’ll have more opportunities to recruit and educate the physicians so desperately needed in rural, underserved communities. We also have the responsibility to ensure that we have the most qualified faculty, the best curriculum and the ideal clinical learning experiences for every student who walks through our doors.”

[Read about Dr. Lloyd’s career path.](#)



Trimble Award Winner: Madison Cohen, DO – Inspired by Movement, but Removing in Future

Madison Cohen, DO was awarded the Lucien Trimble Award by GOMA and PCOM Georgia days prior to her graduation from the Suwanee osteopathic medical school. She is known to many on the GOMA Board since she served as an Ex-Officio Advisors to the GOMA Executive Board for the past two years. Her leadership of the DO Class of 2025 includes serving as class president and being instrumental in helping the students and faculty as PCOM Georgia was changing the curriculum. She is proud of setting up a mentorship “round robin” program for the medical students. In

addition to its “match style” helping the students work with clinical faculty early in the training program, it inspired friendly competition between teams created for the program.

Dr. Cohen was born at an osteopathic training hospital in Wellington, Florida, and moved in her early teens to Wilmington, North Carolina. Her father’s career in sports and her mother’s career as a high school teacher may have influenced her motivation to learn more about movement disorders. After graduating from the University of North Carolina in Wilmington with a biology major and a double minor in chemistry and neuroscience, Dr. Cohen taught high school AP Biology and SAT/ACT test prep at Peak Learning Solutions in Wilmington.

Dr. Cohen writes, “I received my master’s degree from PCOM Georgia and completed my thesis under the mentorship of Dr. Huo Lu (Professor of Anatomy and Neuroscience at PCOM Georgia). Dr. Lu took me under his wing and brought me to Emory to assist with his collaborative research project with Dr. Jaeger in the Jaeger Lab. That was my introduction to Dr. Jaeger, his lab, and neuroscience. After completing my master’s, Dr. Jaeger offered me a PRN position working on Parkinson’s disease research in awake, behaving mice—and I said yes and never left. Both Dr. Lu and Dr. Jaeger have been fundamental in my development as a scientist and clinician, and I am truly grateful for their continuous guidance and support.”

Osteopathic physicians’ use of touch to comfort patients and their “unmatched empathy ... understanding how illness will affect a patient” has greatly impressed Dr. Cohen and she vows to continue that history as she starts her training. Dr. Cohen “loves surgery” and while she had hoped to match into a neurosurgery residency, she starts her surgery path in a General Surgery residency at Brookdale Hospital in Brooklyn, New York.

In her spare time, she has been playing with her 3-D printer. She has a goal of advancing prosthesis technology as well as making prosthesis more accessible and affordable to people around the world.

In the last of the emails in the creation of this profile of Dr. Cohen, she writes, “I know that I would not have been able to do any of the things that I have done without the help and support of my family. I am grateful for my family’s endless love, support and encouragement throughout this process.”

[Read more about Dr. Madison Cohen.](#)

We are certain that Trimble Award Winner Madison Cohen DO will go on to great accomplishments!



Trimble Award Winner:
Destiny Muccigrossi, DO – Service to the
Patients; Service to the Profession

Destiny Muccigrossi, DO grew up in Central Texas, in a small town that taught her how to be resourceful and outspoken. She is a first-generation high school graduate, first-generation college student, and first-generation doctor. Dr. Muccigrossi went to PCOM South Georgia for medical school, where she served as class president all

four years and leaned into leadership, advocacy, and teaching. She said, “I’ve always been drawn to environments where I can build things from the ground up and PCOM gave me the space to do just that. That campus shaped me; it gave me room to grow, to lead, and to turn vision into action.”

Dr. Muccigrossi was selected as the GOMA Trimble Award Winner because she excelled in leadership. It was helping other students by teaching in study groups in the cafeteria or in the parking lot. Besides her class president role, Dr. Muccigrossi helped create PCOM South Georgia’s chapter of medical student section of Medical Association of Georgia. She said, “I went on to become the State Chair, representing every medical student in Georgia and being the very first DO student to hold that position. I helped modify curriculums, showed up for meetings no one wanted to lead, and made it my mission to lift others up with me. I didn’t do it for recognition; I did it because someone has to and I recognized that change can start with one person.” Additionally, Dr. Muccigrossi served as an Ex-Officio Advisors to the GOMA Executive Board for the past two years.

Dr. Muccigrossi became interested in osteopathic medicine after witnessing compassionate care by DOs when she was working as an ER and ICU scribe. As she starts her emergency medicine residency, she feels confident that osteopathic philosophy will influence her practice. Dr. Muccigrossi reflects, “Osteopathic medicine gave language to instincts I already had. Listening deeply. Putting your hands on the problem, literally and figuratively. Recognizing that illness doesn’t exist in a vacuum. In emergency medicine, that translates to seeing the person behind the trauma, the story behind the labs. It’s about honoring complexity in a system that often demands simplicity. That will always influence how I practice.”

“I’m heading into Emergency Medicine, which feels like coming home. There’s something sacred about being one of the first to respond, the one people turn to in their worst moments, and the one who knows how to stay calm when everything else isn’t. I’ve started residency at Prisma Health in Columbia, SC, and while I’m focused

on becoming the best physician I can be, I'm also thinking bigger. I see myself teaching, advocating, and eventually leading, both inside the hospital and far beyond it. I'm committed to serving the South (because let's be honest, it needs the most work), especially rural and overlooked communities, and I plan to stay loud in the health policy space. My long-term goals? They include leadership in medicine, and one day, public office. I've never been interested in just watching the system, I want to change it. Medicine is a calling, but for me, so is service, on and off the floor," she said.

[Read more about Dr. Destiny Muccigrossi.](#)

We are certain that Trimble Award Winner Destiny Muccigrossi, DO will go on to great accomplishments!



From Caregiver to DO: Mailyn Cruz's Journey to Psychiatry

Mailyn Cruz, DO, MS was the eldest of six children of her Marine father who assumed major roles in her home. She believes that her caregiver role inspired her towards medicine. After completing her final semester in college in Pensacola, Florida, her family had moved

to Georgia. “PCOM South Georgia was offering a master’s degree in biomedical sciences,” Cruz said. “My family had also recently settled down in Leesburg, Georgia, after my dad retired from the Marine Corps. The desire to move closer to my family and improve my general biomedical sciences knowledge is what initially led me to choose PCOM South Georgia.”

Dr. Cruz was accepted into the inaugural class of PCOM South Georgia’s Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences program in the fall of 2020.

“The MS program was incredible,” she said. “It gave us exposure to medical school lectures, the anatomy lab and academic mentors who wanted to see us succeed. I was able to strengthen my academic record to be competitive enough to apply to PCOM South Georgia’s DO program the following year, and I was accepted in Fall 2021.”

During her time as a student, Cruz has been involved in several projects, but her involvement with the mentorship program with students at a local school, organized by the Office of Campus and Community Partnerships, was especially memorable.

“I partnered with a junior high school girl who was in need of a mentor,” she explained. “We met on a weekly basis, and I was able to help her work through social issues, gain confidence in herself and in her academic abilities, and lend a listening ear when she was feeling overwhelmed. It was an extremely meaningful experience for me as I was able to see how being present can make such a change in someone’s life.”

In March 2025, Cruz learned about the next phase of her career after graduation.

“I matched into the Georgia South Psychiatry Residency Program in Moultrie, where I will be training for the next four years,” she said. “I am incredibly grateful to be able to stay in the region and provide health care to communities with limited access. I aspire to contribute

meaningful research in the field of psychiatry and reduce the stigma associated with mental healthcare.”

Always a caregiver, Mailyn Cruz is proof that persistence and hard work pay off. [Read her full story here.](#)



PCOM Graduates Tomorrow's Healthcare Heroes at 2025 Commencement

This May, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) proudly celebrated the accomplishments of over 800 graduates across its three campuses. Commencement ceremonies honored students from all doctoral and graduate programs within the College of Osteopathic Medicine, the School of Professional and Applied Psychology, the School of Health Professions and Sciences and the School of Pharmacy, marking a meaningful milestone as they prepare to enter the next chapter of their careers.

The celebrations began on May 15 at PCOM South Georgia, where graduates gathered at the John Hunt Auditorium. Joseph Anthony Giaimo, DO '87, FCCP, MACOI, a Navy veteran and former president of the American Osteopathic Association, delivered the keynote address. He reflected on decades of experience in health care and leadership, inspiring graduates from the College of Osteopathic Medicine and the School of Health Professions and Sciences.

PCOM Georgia followed on May 20 at the Gas South Convention Center in Duluth. Carol H. Burrell, retired president and CEO of Northeast Georgia Health System, addressed the crowd, drawing on more than 40 years of healthcare leadership. Graduates from the College of Osteopathic Medicine, the School of Pharmacy, and the School of Health Professions and Sciences were recognized. The ceremony also honored longtime faculty member William Delp, DO, with the title of professor emeritus.

[Read other](#)



Making the Future Clear: Saad Rahman (DO '28) Works of Using AI to Detect Eye Disease

Every year, more than 65,000 Americans lose their sight due to delayed diagnosis of eye diseases, even though up to 95% of these cases could be prevented with early detection. The shortage of

ophthalmologists and long wait times—particularly in rural and underserved communities—only exacerbate this public health crisis. PCOM Georgia osteopathic medicine student Saad Rahman (DO '28) has always been drawn to the interconnectedness of medicine, technology and social justice. When he is not studying, he's working with 360 Intelligent Diagnostics, a health technology company in Atlanta that leverages assistive AI to detect retinal diseases.

“Numerous people lose their vision every year, and not because we lack the tools to help them, but because they are rarely diagnosed in time. This is a gap we are trying to close,” said student doctor Rahman.

In the spring, student doctor Rahman had the opportunity to present his work with 360 Intelligent Diagnostics to his largest audience yet at the Center for Telehealth and eHealth Law Innovation conference at the US Capitol in Washington, D.C. With his team, Student Doctor Rahman demonstrated to legislators and lobbyists how individuals can screen for serious eye diseases without expensive equipment or specialized training. He explained that the application works with nearly any retinal camera; after uploading images, AI assesses the quality of the image and screens for diabetic retinopathy and other conditions, generating diagnostic reports within seconds. He shared how their tools can expand diagnostic capabilities, allowing for earlier detection and increased access to care, which has long been a challenge in the field.

“We showed how AI can be a force for good, especially in communities hit hardest by chronic diseases like diabetic retinopathy,” he said.

[Read more about student doctor Rahman's tech-driven mission to prevent vision loss.](#)

Is the ‘Meaningful’ Job Worth the Physical and Mental Consequences?

[The stress symptoms are piling up, but quitting is hard to imagine with a job that's part of the letter writer's identity.](#) By Carolyn Hax,

Veterans' VA Referrals to Private Medical Care Will No Longer Require Additional Doctor Review

The Department of Veterans Affairs has changed its process for veterans to get medical care from non-VA providers, removing the requirement that a referral to community care be reviewed by another VA doctor. The VA announced Monday May 19 that it is enacting a provision of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act that will help ease veterans' access to medical services from private providers.

[Read more about this change here.](#)

New Scam Letters and Calls Target Medical Practitioners

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is warning registrants 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.

If you are contacted by a person purporting to work for DEA and stating that you are under investigation, please report the incident to the FBI at www.ic3.gov. You may also wish to submit the incident to the Federal Trade Commission, which takes reports at ReportFraud.ftc.gov and shares information with more than 3,000 law enforcement agencies. For any victims who have given

personally identifiable information like a Social Security number or DEA registration number to a scammer, go to www.identitytheft.gov to learn how to protect against identity theft. Reporting these scams will help authorities find, arrest, and stop the criminals engaged in this fraud.

As a reminder, DEA personnel will never contact registrants or members of the public to demand money or any other form of payment, will never request personal or sensitive information, and will only notify people of a legitimate investigation or legal action in person or by official letter. In fact, federal law enforcement officers are prohibited from demanding cash or gift cards from a member of the public.

The best deterrence against these bad actors is awareness and caution.



‘Gas station heroin’: Illegal yet widely available

Health officials want you to think twice before buying one of those brightly colored little bottles often sold at gas stations, convenience stores and smoke shops.

Sometimes called “gas station heroin,” the products usually are marketed as energy shots or cognitive supplements; they actually

contain tianeptine, an unapproved drug that can be addictive and carries risks of serious side effects.

U.S. poison control centers have reported a steady rise in calls linked to the drug for more than a decade. Last month, the Food and Drug Administration sent a warning to health professionals about “the magnitude of the underlying danger of these products.”

Many tianeptine products claim — without evidence or FDA approval — to help users treat medical conditions, including addiction, pain and depression.

In 2018, the FDA issued a warning letter to the maker of a product called Tianna, which claimed to provide “an unparalleled solution to cravings for opiates.”

While tianeptine is not an opioid, the drug binds to some of the same receptors in the brain, which temporarily can produce effects akin to oxycodone and other opioids. Tianeptine also carries some of the s“That’s what tends to get people into trouble,” said Dr. Hannah Hays of Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. “They use it for opioid-like effects or to self-treat opioid withdrawal, and that can lead to slow breathing and problems like that.”

People dealing with opioid addiction, pain, depression, anxiety and other conditions should see a health professional to get a prescription for FDA-approved treatments, Hays said.

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

"Youth is such a wonderful thing, it's a shame it's wasted on the young!" – George Bernard Shaw