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GEORGIA OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
— 1902 —

GOMA News & Updates
Volume 47, March 2025

A photograph of a large, modern building with a stone facade and large glass windows, illuminated from within. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting dusk or dawn. The building has a central entrance with a covered walkway.

+ PLEASE JOIN US!

GOMA DISTRICT III MIXER AND ANNUAL MEETING
APRIL 1, 2025 | 6 - 8 PM
PCOM SOUTH GEORGIA
2050 TALLOKAS ROAD, MOULTRIE, GA

**District 3 Social Event with 1 hour of CME on
April 1st at PCOM South Georgia**

GOMA will hold a District 3 Social Mixer with dinner, networking and 1 hour of CME by Michael Srulevich, DO, MPH on Tuesday, April 1, from 6 to 8 pm. His talk, entitled “Essentials for the Care of Older Adults,” will provide an overview of Aging in America, best practices and key clinical skills. It will be held at PCOM South Georgia located at 2050 Tallokas Road, Moultrie, GA. Dr. Sulevich will be onsite to answer questions and brag about how great the Philadelphia Eagles are.

Michael Srulevich, DO, MPH, is an associate professor in the Department of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in Philadelphia. He is also the program director for the PCOM Hospice and Palliative Medicine Fellowship Program, an ACGME accredited program.

Dr. Srulevich is board certified in family medicine with added qualifications in geriatric, hospice and palliative medicine. He serves as an associate medical director at VNA Hospice of Philadelphia. Additionally, he is the lead physician for palliative medicine at Roxborough Memorial Hospital, has a clinical practice in PCOM’s Specialty Care clinic on City Avenue and provides long term care to residents at four Philadelphia nursing homes.

Dr. Srulevich is particularly interested in the continuum of care in working with frail and seriously ill patients to seek treatments that most appropriately ensure a maximum quality of life.

[Sign up for this free program, good food and a great networking event here.](#)

GOMA District 3 consists of the following counties:

Baker; Baldwin; Ben Hill; Berrien; Bibb; Bleckley; Brook; Butts;
Calhoun; Chattahoochee; Clay; Colquitt; Cook; Crawford; Crisp;
Decatur; Dodge; Dooly; Dougherty; Early; Echols; Grady; Harris;
Houston; Irwin; Jasper; Jones; Lamar; Laurens; Lawler; Lee;
Lowdnes; Macon; Marion; Meriwether; Miller; Mitchell; Monroe;
Muscgee; Peach; Pike; Pulanski; Putnam; Quitman; Randolph;
Schley; Seminole; Spalding; Stewart; Sumter; Talbot; Taylor; Telfax;
Terrell; Thomas; Tift

Renew Your GOMA Membership Now



OMT Refresher Course: Advanced Application of Myofascial Technique for the Axial Spine

The Northeast Georgia Health System's Family Medicine Residency Program is offering a Free Osteopathic Hands-On Refresher Course on March 22 from 8 am - Noon at its Gainesville campus located at 1439 Jesse Jewel Pkwy, Suite 102 (Residency Classroom), Gainesville, GA 30501.

All Osteopathic Physicians are invited to register by [emailing Monica Newton, DO](#).

The course is being Co-Sponsored by the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine – Georgia.

Agenda:

8 - 9 AM Review of the approach in diagnosing somatic dysfunction

9 - 9:45 AM Hands-on practice lab

9:45 - 10 AM Break

10 - 11 AM Myofascial technique from surface to segmental application

11 - 12 PM Hands-on application of MFR technique to treat previously diagnosed somatic dysfunctions

Speaker: William Delp, DO, Professor Emeritus, Department of Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine, PCOM Georgia.

Cost of this CME program is free and is underwritten by PCOM and the NGMC FM Residency.

The Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine designated this program for a maximum of 4 hrs AOA Category 1-A credits and will report CME and specialty credits commensurate with the extent of the physician's participation in this activity.



Navy Capt. Sean Barbabella, DO is Named Physician to the President

Capt. Sean Barbabella, DO, a decorated Navy physician, is the new Physician to the President. Dr. Barbabella will serve in the White House Medical Unit as President Donald Trump's personal physician.

Dr. Barbabella attended A.T. Still University Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (ATSU-KCOM). He completed his residency training at Portsmouth Naval Medical Center in Virginia. Dr. Barbabella specializes in emergency and tactical medicine and has completed several tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. In his military career, he has received a Purple Heart and a Legion of Merit award, two of the military's most respected decorations. Before he

became Physician to the President, Dr. Barbabella was running the Naval Health Clinic Cherry Point in Havelock, North Carolina.

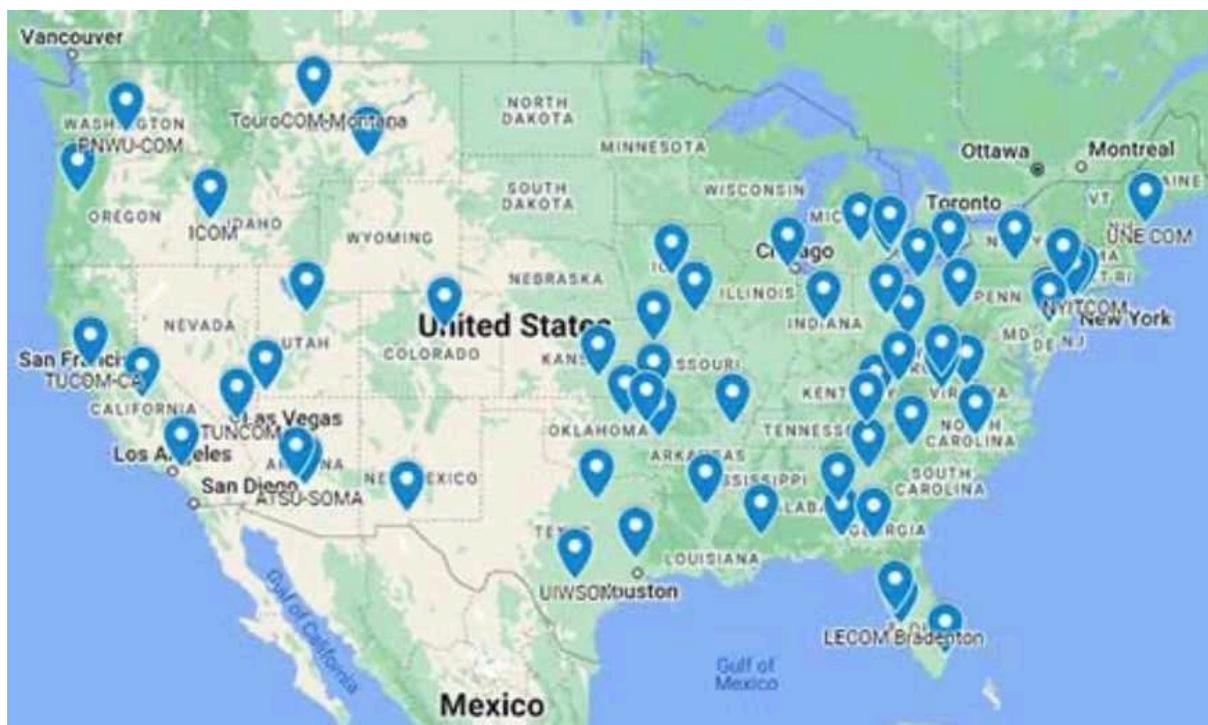
Capt. Sean Barbabella, DO, is the third consecutive osteopathic physician to serve in the role. [Read about his predecessors and AOA President Teresa Hubka, DO's response to the appointment here](#)



Congress Leaves Physicians and Patients Behind

The Continuing Resolution (CR) just passed by Congress fails the nation's physicians and their patients. By allowing the 2.8% Medicare payment cut to proceed, lawmakers are putting immense financial strain on physician practices — especially those in rural and underserved areas. This failure to act jeopardizes independent practices and patients access to care. Physicians cannot continue to bear the burden of payment cuts year after year. Our patients deserve better.

[Please use the Osteopathic Advocacy Network to advocate for H.R. 879 which provides a 6.62% increase in Medicare Physician Fee schedule.](#)



Osteopathic Medicine's Era of Expansion – 2020's Illustrate Growth into the Future

Partially from the AOA's 2024 Osteopathic Medical Profession Report

This year, we celebrate 150 years of osteopathic medicine, commemorating the date in 1874 when frontier physician A.T. Still, MD, DO, first established the founding principles of the profession. What began as a revolutionary concept introduced by a Civil War surgeon has transformed into an expansive and thriving community of physicians and medical students dedicated to caring for the body, mind and spirit of their patients.

The osteopathic medical profession continues to expand each year, bolstered by the growing number of medical students pursuing careers as DOs. This past spring, the profession welcomed nearly 8,200 new DO graduates. In addition, approximately 40,000 osteopathic medical students are enrolled for the 2024-25 academic year, bringing the total number of DOs and osteopathic medical students across the nation to 197,398.

The profession is poised to surpass 200,000 DOs and osteopathic medical students in the year ahead, further contributing to the expansion of osteopathic philosophy across the full spectrum of specialties. During the past three decades the number of DOs in the U.S. has more than quadrupled, increasing by 70% in the past 10 years.

DOs bring a distinctive approach to caring for patients across the full spectrum of medicine, with a significant number choosing to pursue careers as frontline physicians in primary care specialties such as family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics. Reflecting the profession's ongoing commitment to primary care, 53% of osteopathic candidates matched into primary care residency programs in 2024. These physicians—and those who will join the workforce in coming years—will play a critical role in helping to alleviate a shortage of up to 86,000 U.S. physicians by 2036, as projected by the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Approximately 43% of DOs currently practice in non-primary care specialties, a 16% increase over the past decade. As the demand for well-rounded physicians continues to grow, DOs are playing an increasingly critical role in both primary care and specialized fields. Their ability to provide a whole-person approach, combined with their rigorous medical training, positions them well to meet the complex needs of patients in today's health care landscape. Top non-primary care specialties for DOs in 2024 include emergency medicine, anesthesiology, OB-GYN, general surgery and psychiatry. In 2019, PCOM South Georgia admitted its inaugural class. To many of us, it seems that it still is brand new, but the osteopathic profession continues to grow around the country.

Here are the 20 osteopathic medical schools (**bold ones** are in the Southeast) that started in the 2020's:

- **Baptist Health Sciences U. COM, Memphis, TN** matriculated its first class in 2024. <https://www.baptistu.edu/medicine>
- **Burrell COM, Melbourne, FL** matriculated its first class in 2024. It is many miles from its New Mexico campus but shares a website. <https://burrell.edu/florida/overview/>

- California Health Sciences U. COM, Clovis, CA matriculated its first class in 2020. <https://osteopathic.chsu.edu/about/>
- Duquesne U. COM, Pittsburgh, PA matriculated its first class in 2024. <https://www.duq.edu/academics/colleges-and-schools/college-of-osteopathic-medicine/do-program/doctor-osteopathic-medicine.php>
- D'Youville University COM, Buffalo, NY will matriculate its first class in 2025. <https://www.dyu.edu/academics/schools-and-departments/proposed-college-osteopathic-medicine>
- **Edward Via COM Louisiana Campus, Monroe, LA** matriculated its first class in 2020. <https://www.vcom.edu/locations/louisiana>
- Illinois COM, Chicago, IL will probably be matriculating its first class in 2026. <https://www.thechicagoschool.edu/insight/news/the-chicago-schools-proposed-illinois-college-of-osteopathic-medicine-joins-a-pilot-program-from-the-american-association-of-colleges-of-osteopathic-medicine/>
- Indiana U. of Pennsylvania COM, Indiana, PA will probably be matriculating its first class in 2027. <https://www.iup.edu/news-events/news/2024/01/sen-pittman-announces-2-million-budget-designation-for-iup-proposed-college-of-osteopathic.html>
- Kansas Health Science Center Kansas COM, Wichita, KS matriculated its first class in 2022. <https://kansascom.kansashsu.org/academics/>
- Lake Erie COM, Elmira College, Elmira, NY matriculated its first class in 2020. <https://lecom.edu/college-of-osteopathic-medicine/elmira-ny/>
- **Lake Erie COM; Jacksonville Univ, Jacksonville, FL** anticipates to matriculate its first class in 2026. <https://lecom.edu/lecom-announces-plans-to-open-a-new-campus-at-jacksonville-university/>
- **Lincoln Memorial U-DeBusk COM, Orange Park, FL** anticipates to matriculate its first class in 2026. https://www.lmunet.edu/news/2024/02/dcom_orangepark

- Meritus SOM, Hagerstown, MD whose Dean during formation was GOMA Past President Paula Gregory, DO. The current Interim Dean of the osteopathic medical school is another familiar name, Murray Berkowitz, DO, former Associate Dean of Clerkships and Core Site Development for PCOM Georgia. The program admits its first class in the fall 2025. <https://msom.org/>
- Montana COM, Billings, MT is a branch campus of Rocky Vista University that matriculated its first class in 2022. <https://www.rvu.edu/montana/>
- Noorda COM, Provo, UT matriculated its first class in 2020. <https://www.noordacom.org/>
- Oklahoma State U. Ctr. for Health Sciences COM, Tahlequah, OK is in the Cherokee Nation and matriculated its first class in 2020. <https://medicine.okstate.edu/cherokee/>
- **Orlando COM, Orlando, FL** matriculated its first class in 2024. <https://ocom.org/>
- Touro COM, Great Falls, MT matriculated its first class in 2023. <https://www.touro.edu/news--events/stories/new-touro-medical-school-in-montana-opens-application-cycle-for-fall-2023.php>
- U. of Northern Colorado COM, Greeley, CO anticipates matriculating its first class in 2025. <https://www.unco.edu/college-of-osteopathic-medicine/>
- Xavier U. COM, Cincinnati, OH anticipates matriculating its first class in 2027. <https://www.xavier.edu/college-of-medicine/index>

GOMA Past President Paula Gregory, DO said, “I believe by 2030 there will be 30% of the medical students will be DO. Even with the growth of the profession there is still a projected deficit of physicians.”



2025 Georgia Legislative Update

March 6 marked Legislative Day 28, known as "Crossover Day," at the Georgia Capitol. Crossover Day is the deadline for bills to pass their originating legislative chamber to have a chance of becoming a law this year. 46 bills were heard in the Senate before they adjourned at 10:11PM, and 78 bills were heard in the House before they adjourned at 10:56PM. It is projected that the Georgia legislature will end on Friday April 4, the 40th day of work.

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. They have passed out of the Georgia Senate and currently are being heard in the Georgia House Rules Subcommittee. **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.

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. It is being heard in the Georgia House Committee of Health.

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. It is being heard in the Georgia House Committee of Insurance.

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. It is being heard in the Georgia House Committee of Health.

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. It is being heard in the Georgia Senate Committee of Health & Human Services.

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. It is being heard in the Georgia Senate Committee of Insurance & Labor.

Bills that didn't crossover that are "dead" this year, but can move forward in 2026 since that is the second year of this legislature.

SB 50 - PeachCare Plus Act of 2025 expands Medicaid in Georgia

HB 1 - Pediatric Health Safe Storage Act is a bipartisan bill to help prevent children from having access to guns.

HB 64 - requires an owner of an assault weapon to procure and maintain sufficient liability insurance

HB 326 - mandates that the state health benefit plan provide coverage for qualifying nonopioid pain management drugs that is in parity with its coverage for opioid pain management drugs



VOC Available Through June 30

[Virtual Osteopathic Conference \(VOC\)](#) offers up to 48 AOA Category 1-A and AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™, available for purchase in 8-credit increments.

VOC is fully on-demand, so attendees can complete credits when and where they want.

The 2025 VOC launched February 14, 2025, with on-demand programs available until June 30.

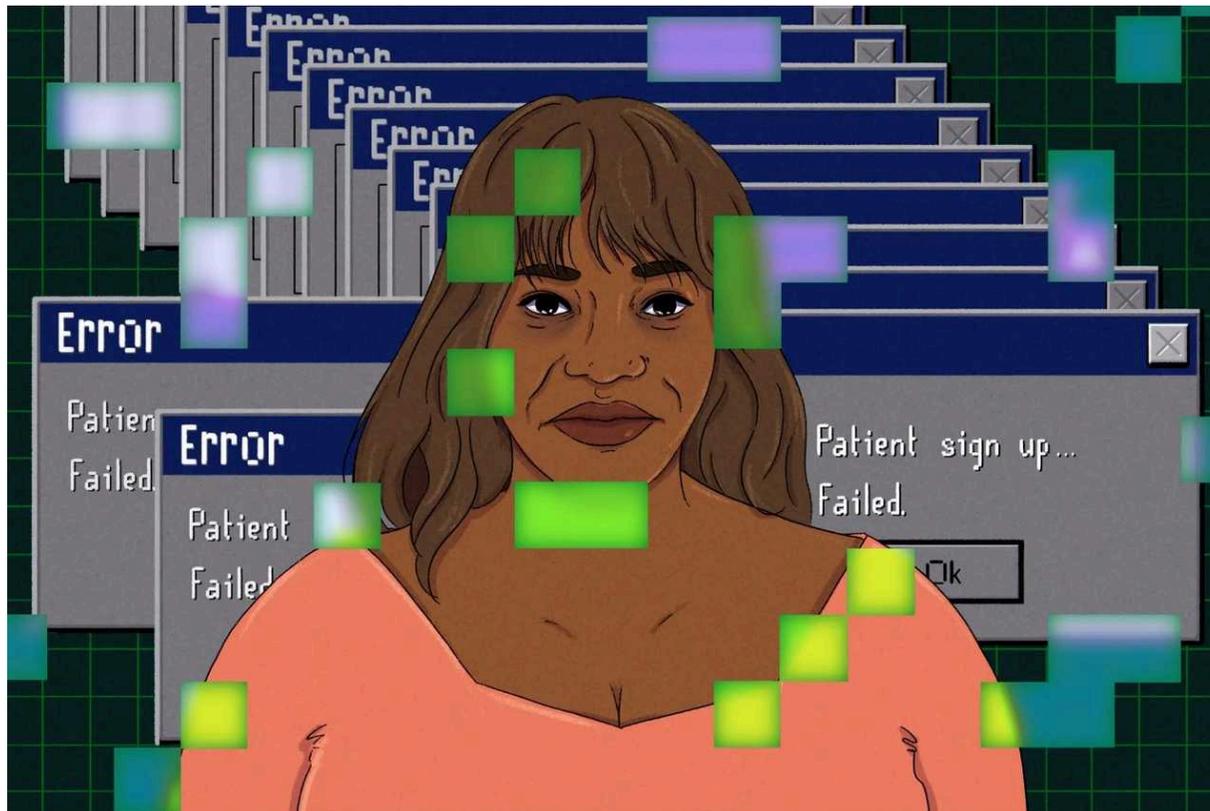
The VOCcme is all about flexibility! You have the flexibility to choose:

- When to attend: All programs are available on-demand from now through June 30, 2025. Take in a presentation before you

go to the office, and another in the middle of the night - it is your choice!

- Where to attend: You can view from anywhere you have internet access – at your home, at the lake, at a ski resort, at your office, or all of the above.
- What to attend: You can customize the program for your needs by selecting any of the 48 presentations in the VOCcme.
- How much to attend: You select the credit category that works for you...but when you see more presentations you want to take (and we know you will!), you can increase it to another level and we will honor the increased credit discount.
- Credit type: The VOCcme presentations are accredited for both AOA and AMA category 1 credit. It will work for you, no matter how you are boarded.

[Register Here](#)



Georgia Touts Its Medicaid Experiment as a Success. The Numbers Tell a Different Story

by Margaret Coker, *The Current*

In January, standing before a cluster of television cameras on the steps of the state Capitol, Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp promoted his experiment in Medicaid reform as a showcase for fellow conservatives seeking to overhaul safety net benefits around the country.

“What we are doing is working,” Kemp boasted about Georgia Pathways to Coverage. The federally subsidized health insurance program is supposed to cover nearly a quarter-million low-income Georgians who can prove they are working, studying or volunteering. What the governor did not disclose, however, was that his program is not achieving two primary goals: enrolling people in health care and getting them to work, according to an examination by *The Current* and *ProPublica*. The findings were confirmed recently by an independent evaluation commissioned by the state that has yet to be publicly released.

As of the end of 2024, the Pathways program has cost federal and state taxpayers more than \$86.9 million, three-quarters of which has gone to consultants, *The Current* and *ProPublica* found. The state asserted that costs increased because of a two-year delay to the program’s launch.

A mere 6,500 participants have enrolled 18 months into the program, approximately 75% fewer than the state had estimated for Pathways’ first year. Thousands of others never finished applying, according to the state’s data, as reports of technical glitches mounted. [Read the entire ProPublica report here.](#)



Thermometer Says 98.6? You Might Actually Have a Fever

By Avery Newmark, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

For seemingly forever, we've been told 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit is the standard for a normal body temperature. However, recent studies suggest that the number may be outdated.

According to research, the average body temperature has dropped to around 97.9 degrees, with variations based on age, health conditions and even race and gender. The discussion gained traction recently when a viral TikTok video questioned whether 99.1 should count as a fever.

The idea that 98.6 is “normal” comes from 19th-century German physician Carl Reinhold August Wunderlich, who took more than a million temperature readings and set the standard. But that was nearly 200 years ago, and our bodies and the world have changed.

“We are not the same people that we were in the middle of the 19th century,” Dr. Julie Parsonnet, the George DeForest Barnett Professor of Medicine and a public health researcher at Stanford Medicine, told USA Today. A 2017 Harvard Medical School study analyzed data from more than 35,000 patients and found the average body temperature is 97.9 degrees, ranging from 97.2 to 98.4.

The study also found that body temperature varies by age, gender and medical conditions. Older adults tend to run cooler, African American women the warmest and older white men the coolest. People with hypothyroidism often have lower temperatures, while those with cancer or higher BMIs tend to run warmer.

The decline in body temperature is most likely linked to improvements in health and lifestyle, according to a 2020 study in the open-access journal *eLife*. In the 19th century, people faced more infections, harsh living conditions and limited medical care, which kept their immune systems constantly active — raising their internal temperatures. Thanks to modern medicine, our bodies no longer have to work as hard to fight off disease, allowing temperatures to drop slightly.

“Physiologically, we’re just different from what we were in the past,” Parsonnet said in a press release, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* previously reported. “The environment that we’re living in has changed, including the temperature in our homes, our contact with microorganisms and the food that we have access to.”

Doctors traditionally define a fever as 100.4 degrees or higher. But if your normal temperature is lower, even 99.1 might make you feel unwell. Instead of focusing on one number, experts recommend tuning into your body’s norm.



SGMC Launching Family Medicine Residency in Valdosta

South Georgia Medical Center (SGMC) is launching a Family Medicine residency, set to begin in July 2026. The health system recently received accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), marking another milestone in its commitment to training the next generation of physicians.

The extensive accreditation process was led by SGMC Health Designated Institutional Official Joseph Hayes, MD, and Family Medicine Program Director Madison Hill, DO (in red). Core faculty members include: Family Medicine Specialists Erin Parker, DO (in floral), Vadley Fague, MD, Anthony Johnson, MD, and Austin Sorchik, DO (furthest to the right), Pediatrician Jennifer Carbone, MD and Emergency Medicine Specialist Adam Jones, MD.

“Family Medicine is a vital specialty, serving as a cornerstone of primary care and improving access to critical services such as OB/GYN and pediatric care,” said Dr. Hill. “We will begin interviewing candidates to fill the 8 slots for the three-year residency in late 2025, then we look forward to welcoming our inaugural class in July 2026.”

The new program will help bridge the gap in physician shortages, particularly in rural communities, while training the next generation of doctors in South Georgia. [Learn about this exciting announcement here.](#)

A 1903 osteopathic text decreed,

“The world is becoming too intelligent to be drugged and hacked in a search for health when more agreeable methods can be obtained at the same price.”