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GEORGIA OSTEOPATHIC  
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
1902

## GOMA News & Updates

### Volume 48, February/March 2026



## **2026 GOMA'S Day at the Capitol Highlights**

GOMA's Day at the Capitol occurred on Thursday February 19th with the other Patient-Centered Physician's Coalition (PCPC) organizations. It was a huge success!

Hundreds of us gathered in the Floyd Room located 20 floors up from the street in the Floyd Veterans Building overlooking the beautiful Georgia Capitol.

The moderator of the day was GOMA Legislative Committee Chair Karen Turner DO. After a welcome and introductions, we heard a

history of the Patient-Centered Physician's Coalition (PCPC) from Ms. Angela Flanigan, Executive Director of Georgia Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics. Then we heard a review of the legislative priorities from GOMA's Karen Turner DO; GA FP's family physician Tom Fausett MD; GA ACP's internist Clyde Watkins MD, FACP; GOGS's obstetrician Winnie Soufi MD and GA AAP's pediatrician Melinda Wilingham MD.

GOMA's legislative priorities this year focused on five subjects:

- Physician Workforce Sustainability (more support of osteopathic physician medical schools and residency training programs will help to attract and retain physicians to continue providing quality patient care in the state of Georgia);
- Health Insurance (eliminate downcoding by insurance companies; reducing administrative burden, including by streamlining prior authorization, ensuring the adequacy and transparency of health insurance networks, and improving patient access to medication by advancing pharmacy benefit manage reform);
- Medicaid (continuing to ensure coverage of the uninsured, support higher payments for Medicaid codes to mirror current Medicare rates more closely, which will ensure physicians are able to participate in the program);
- Public Health (reduce smoking and improve funding for public health through an increase in Georgia's tobacco tax to improve public health, protecting the physician-patient relationship);
- Scope of Practice (addressing inappropriate scope expansion attempts by non-physician clinicians, which undermines patient safety, protecting against title misappropriation by non-physician clinicians and ensuring proper oversight by physicians).

The morning session was completed with presentations on "Georgia Composite Medical Board Update" by Kathryn Cheek MD (Board Chair); "Lobbying 101" by Betsy Bates of Bates Associates

and Kate Boyenga, Executive Director of the Georgia OB GYN Society; and “Review of Proposed 2026 Legislation” by Brent Walker, general counsel of Medical Association of Georgia.

We crossed the street to visit with legislators at the Capitol and then returned to the Floyd Room to get lunch and get updates from key legislators and state officials.

Pictures from the day (above)

*State Senator Sam Watson from Moultrie is passionate about PCOM South Georgia and farming. He spent a great deal of time with Sonbol Shahid Salles, DO, Sarah Perlow DO; L. Michael Waters DO; Mark Shearer OMS-2, Peter Jeong OMS-2, Sydney Williams OMS-2 and Michael Baron DO (not pictured).*

*Karen Turner DO, Legislative Committee Chair of GOMA, did a great job emceeding the meeting. Here she addresses the room about GOMA’s legislative priorities as the other four group leaders wait their turn to speak.*

*A tremendous number of attendees representing the Georgia osteopathic community. Numerous residents in white coats, above listed individuals, Betsy Hilt (Executive Director of GOMA) and Monica Newton, DO (Family Practice Director of NGMC Residency and President of Georgia Academy of Family Physicians)*

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## **Get your Fix of Georgia Politics**

The 2026 Georgia legislature is winding down to its last day, April 2nd. The day is known as Sine Die. March 6th, Crossover Day, was the last day that bills could crossover from one chamber of the legislature to the other this year. Since this is the second year of this legislative session, those bills that didn’t crossover are most likely dead (unless amended to another piece of a bill).

**Bills of interest that did not crossover include:**

**HB 1150** which proposed expanding certain advanced practice registered nurse and physician assistant prescriptive authorizations to include stimulant medications;

**HB 981** which proposed to expand certain advanced practice registered nurse and physician assistant prescriptive authorizations to increase certain prescriptive authorizations from five-day to 30 day supplies for opioids;

**HB 1088** which proposed to replace the term "chiropractor" with "chiropractic physician";

**HB 1163** which proposed to provide for an exemption in medical malpractice actions for the primary residences of health care providers.

The first three (HB 1150; HB 981 & HB 1088) were actively opposed by GOMA representatives on Legislative Day.

Bills of interest that still have life are:

**HB 1138** which proposes to authorize pharmacists in certain circumstances to dispense self-administered hormonal contraceptives or administer injectable hormonal contraceptives (now in the GA Senate Health & Human Services committee);

**SB 427** which proposes to provide for limited provisional licenses and a pathway to licensure for certain internationally trained physicians (now in the GA House Health committee);

**HB 717** proposes to establish a regulatory framework for psychedelic-assisted therapy clinics, including ketamine infusion clinics, which have rapidly expanded across Georgia. The legislation would place these facilities under the Georgia Composite Medical Board's oversight, creating standards for clinic licensure, physician supervision, and clinical competency requirements. It also includes safeguards such as Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) reporting and enforcement mechanisms for unlicensed administration, helping ensure these treatments are delivered safely and appropriately (now in the GA Senate Health & Human Services committee).

Bill awaiting action by the Governor:



## Replay of VOC 2026 is More Convenient CME

GOMA joins with multiple state osteopathic societies to provide up to 48 hours on demand until June 30th. GOMA membership provides a discount for your registration. Registration must be done by May 31st. This format has been a popular one over the past 6 years.

### **Two lectures were presented by Georgia physicians:**

Debra Spears DO spoke on “Breaking Barriers: The Future of Weight Loss Medications”. Dr. Spears is an internal medicine physician who is on the Core Faculty at Northside Hospital Academic Internal Medicine Partners in Lawrenceville, Georgia.

Past President of GOMA Craig Kubik DO, FACG, FACP is a regular favorite lecturer who spoke on “Complications of GERD and PUD: Prevention and Clinical Intervention”. Dr. Kubik is a gastroenterologist in Waycross, Georgia and is on the volunteer faculty of PCOM Georgia and Medical College of Georgia.

[Register up for high quality convenient CME at VOCcme.org](https://VOCcme.org)

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## Getting Rid of Expired Medications Has Never Been Easier

DEA and its federal law enforcement partners proudly collect unwanted, unneeded medications nationwide bi-annually. Yet you do not need to wait until the next DEA National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

The agency launched the “Every Day is Take Back Day” campaign to remind communities of the nearly 16,500 year-round collection sites. Law enforcement and hospitals also have drop-off locations. More comfortable turning in expired medications at an event? Mark your calendars for the next [Take Back Day on April 25, 2026](#).

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## **New Web Page Dedicated to Strengthening Partnerships, Providing Critical Information to Patients**

DEA recently launched a new pharmacy news and resource web page as part of the agency's ongoing commitment to support pharmacists, medical practitioners, and patients nationwide. This site reflects the critical role pharmacists play in protecting public health and ensuring the safe and lawful distribution of controlled substances.

By centralizing timely information, regulatory updates, and diversion prevention resources, DEA aims to make information more accessible, transparent, and useful in day-to-day practice. This effort represents another step in strengthening collaboration and ensuring DEA's partners have the tools needed to serve our communities.

[Read the latest on identifying prescription fraud, how to best protect yourself, and the latest pharmacy enforcement news.](#) Currently there

are articles about Operation Meltdown shutting down hundreds of illegal online pharmacies; DEA warns of electronic prescription fraud & how to buy medicines safely from an online pharmacy.

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## **David Rearick, DO Looks Back to the Days of Vaccine Preventable Diseases**

David Rearick, DO is a Georgia family physician who is retired from clinical practice but in a video posted on [GrandParentsforVaccines.com](https://www.GrandParentsforVaccines.com), he discusses growing up when polio, measles, and mumps were common and the advent of the vaccines at the time.

Dr. Rearick is a father of four, and a grandfather of nine. He was motivated to make this video because he worries that children will suffer irreversible complications from diseases that have become rare over the past sixty years. This movement is due to national policies that have gone against national medical societies' guidelines in the importance of vaccinations.

[Watch his video, and join him in working to keep children vaccinated.](#)

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## **Georgia's Honorary Consul to Zambia: Anna N. Katema Banda, DO**

*Abridged from article by Charles Tembo, first secretary for press & public relations at the Embassy of Zambia, Washington, DC, USA*

Anna Ndashe Katema Banda, DO is a Zambian-American osteopathic physician and diaspora development leader whose work connects Zambia to strategic partnerships in the United States while delivering real impact to communities in Zambia. Dr. Katema is the last-born child of late freedom fighter and veteran politician Mary Chilubi Fulano – a heritage that anchors her lifelong commitment to national progress and service.

Dr. Katema serves as Honorary Consul of Zambia to the State of Georgia. Her diplomatic work in this position is offered in a volunteer capacity, driven by a commitment to strengthening Zambia-US ties through practical partnerships and cultural exchange. Dr. Katema's consular service blends official representation with hands-on community engagement. Her work focuses on:

- Promoting Zambia's investment, trade, and tourism opportunities to Georgia's private sector, universities, and civic leaders.
- Building institutional partnerships with universities in the state, creating pathways for collaboration in research, innovation, training, and exchange programs that benefit both Zambia and Georgia.
- Promoting Zambian culture in Georgia, strengthening people-to-people ties through cultural events, heritage showcases, and diaspora platforms that keep Zambia visible, understood, and ensure that the country is visible and competitive in Georgia's partnership spaces.

A defining milestone of her tenure has been hosting the Zambia Investment and Innovation Roadshow in Atlanta from September 10 to 13, 2025, a multi-day program that featured several engagements with Georgia partners and diaspora stakeholders.

The roadshow was led by Zambia's Ambassador to the USA, Chibamba Kanyama and unfolded as a series of strategic dialogues, networking sessions and partnership meetings designed to deepen Zambia-Georgia cooperation. The Atlanta program reflected the combined effort of multiple partners and networks including: JW Woodward Partners, LLC; Kennesaw State University; Global Atlanta and Zambian diaspora business sponsors. Together, these partners ensured the Atlanta stop was both high-level and practical, connecting national objectives to real institutional and business pathways in Georgia.

Closing the roadshow week – and in keeping with her wider mission of promoting Zambian culture in Georgia, Dr. Katema hosted a Zambian Cultural Night on September 13, 2025. The event drew a wide mix of diplomatic and diaspora communities, attended by representatives from many African countries as well as Caribbean

diplomats. The evening showcased Zambian culture through performance, music, food, and celebration – strengthening people-to-people ties and affirming Zambia’s cultural identity within a broader global fellowship.

Dr. Katema is the founder of Alpha O1 Medical Consultants, a virtual-care and specialist-access platform created to support families in Zambia and other developing settings through diaspora-aligned medical expertise. Alpha O1 works to: connect diaspora families to vetted specialist clinics for loved ones in Zambia and Uganda; provide monthly virtual stroke clinics in Zambia; offer metabolic syndrome and chronic-care management consults, emphasizing prevention and continuity of care; operate a patient-led family-supported model, allowing relatives abroad to participate meaningfully in care decisions with consent. Through Alpha O1, Dr. Katema is helping families overcome distance barriers and strengthening access to trusted specialist for chronic and neurological conditions.

Dr. Katema is the co-founder and chair of Atlanta Zambian Women With Influence (AZWWI), a diaspora non-profit dedicated to empowering women and children in Zambia through tangible, locally grounded interventions. A flagship example of this work is AZWWI’s sustained commitment to the Lukomba community in Kapiri Mposhi. In 2024, ASWWI donated a solar –powered water reticulation system and borehole to the Lukomba area at a cost of Kwacha 278,190 (approx. US\$12,000), delivering reliable clean-water access for households and institutions. Alongside the water project, AZWWI also donated microscopes to the local school and clinic, strengthening both science learning and basic health services. In 2025, AZWWI expanded its education support by donating 20 desktop computers and 20 computer disks, boosting digital literacy and helping prepare students for a modern, technology-driven economy.

Dr. Katema earned her osteopathic medical degree in 2012 from Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (Blacksburg, VA) and did all of her post-graduate training at Emory University. She is a

practicing vascular neurologist whose career centers on stroke prevention, rapid response, and system-wide improvement. Her leadership roles have included: stroke medical director and co-chair of a System Stroke Committee. Additionally, Dr. Katema is the author of "The Greatest Physician Keeps Us: A Prayer Book for Physicians". In this work, she shares reflections and prayers shaped by life at the bedside, offering encouragement to physicians who carry the weight of caring for others. For her, faith is not separate from her public and professional service. It is the foundation that sustains her compassion, steadies her in difficult decisions, and keeps her committed to healing and nation-building. She often speaks of medicine as both rigorous science and sacred responsibility, and of service to Z purpose.



*"We are told that the seeds  
Of rainbows are not unlike  
A blackman's tears."*

**- Raymond R. Patterson 1969**