



*North Carolina Osteopathic Medical Association*  
**E-NEWSLETTER**  
*Pre-convention edition!*

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**2008 NCOMA Convention Preview** by *Anthony Elkins, D.O., Program chair*



This year's NCOMA convention, to be held July 31 – August 3, promises to continue the excellent tradition of CME offered to North Carolina D.O.'s. 29 Category 1-A AOA credits are available and AAFP Prescribed credits have been applied for. Speakers from across North Carolina and the Southeast have been assembled with a diverse range of topics designed to appeal to the primary care physician, resident, and medical student.

*Selected topics include:*

- **Chronic pain management**, featuring pain management specialists and a NC DEA agent
- **Three Osteopathic Medicine lectures and workshops:** Heart failure in the hospitalized patient, Management of the postoperative patient, Evaluation of injuries of the throwing athlete.
- **Oral health topics for the PCP**, presented by a D.O./D.M.D.
- **Osteopathic medical education symposium**, featuring the Deans of our surrounding medical schools.
- **The first annual North Carolina Osteopathic Heritage Lecture**
- **AOA President Carlo DiMarco, D.O.** scheduled to appear.
- **North Carolina Medical Board members** will discuss important regulatory issues.



Some of our favorite speakers are again scheduled to present this year: internist Anthony Geraci, D.O., will discuss the new preoperative evaluation guidelines; Sam Fillingane, D.O., from Jackson, MS, will discuss cardiovascular primary prevention strategies; Don Jablonski, D.O., member of the NC Medical Board, will discuss dementia.



The conference will again be held at the beautiful *Courtyard by Marriott* in Carolina Beach, NC. This venue has been a favorite for years due to its beachfront location and multitude of family activities available in the area. A special room rate of \$205 per night has been negotiated by NCOMA. All rooms have an ocean view and balcony. Room reservations may be made by calling 800-321-2211, and mentioning group code "NOM."

Several social events are planned: a poolside cookout and fireworks, dinner party at Dr. Walker's beach house (a few minutes from the hotel), and plenty of time to enjoy the beach with your families.

[Click here](#) to see the full program brochure, which includes registration information, hotel information, directions, and a full conference schedule, or visit [www.ncoma.org](http://www.ncoma.org).

Any additional questions? Feel free to contact me at [telkins1@hotmail.com](mailto:telkins1@hotmail.com) or our executive director, Jeffrey LeBoeuf at [Jeffrey@ncoma.org](mailto:Jeffrey@ncoma.org).

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### **AOA News** by *Barbara Walker, DO, AOA 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president*



As we near the House of Delegates meeting for the year, I wanted to take a few lines to let you know that the AOA is advocating for all of you, on an international level, a national level, a state level, and also working with individuals who have encountered discrimination regarding osteopathic education and credentials. Having the political and legal "clout" of the AOA has allowed us to not only enjoy practicing as DOs in the state, but also to continue to gain more recognition for our osteopathic identities. The D.O. degree is gaining recognition in more countries than ever, and the AOA is there to making that happen. The AOA is also actively working for all of us in Washington.

We face some incredible challenges with reimbursement (Medicare cuts!), education (Medical Education Funding cuts and caps, lack of preceptor development programs to "teach the teachers"), access to care (limited primary care physicians to meet the future needs, despite our increased schools and class sizes), and continued challenges to our qualifications as DOs. The AOA is available to all of you as your champion. Keep the Board informed of ways that we can help.

AOA President Dr. Ajluni's theme of "Fit for Life" has been a challenge and a commitment to all of the Board members this year as we have tried to incorporate our own fitness needs into our active schedules. I would challenge all of you to take on this challenge and continue to not only advise patients to live fit lives, but to also model this in your own lives.

I would also encourage all of you to become active in your state association, in the Osteopathic Political Action Committee, and in supporting the Greatness Fund, and enlist any other DOs in your areas to be active. We can carry the profession forward in incredible ways if we work as a group. And as we face these challenges, remember that there is a real danger as we move into the future and that "It is better to have a seat at the table than to find that you are a part of the menu!"

See you at the NCOMA meeting!  
Barbara E Walker, D.O.

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## North Carolina Medical Board News *by Don Jablonski, DO, NCMB Treasurer*



**Greetings from the North Carolina Medical Board!** It has been a great challenge serving our profession on the NCMB. The decisions that are made by the Board affect us all. To set the record straight, the Board has no bias towards the osteopathic profession. Being the first DO on the Board has been one of total acceptance, despite out of state rumors that the Board has something against DO's. There are still pockets of resistance from certain hospitals regarding our osteopathic training and our board certification. This problem is being addressed by the AOA.

The NCMB has no jurisdiction over hospital by-laws.

The best way to bring you up to date on the changes in regards to the practice of medicine in NC is to refer to the Board's website, [www.ncmedboard.org](http://www.ncmedboard.org) or e-mail: [info@ncmedboard.org](mailto:info@ncmedboard.org). Everything regarding the rules and regulations for the practice of medicine can be found on the website. Especially important are the **"Position Statements"**. Please take the time to review them. Ignorance can be bliss, but not regarding the Position Statements.

Areas of controversy at this time before the Board include a state mandated "Physician Profiling" website and the Licensure of "Naturopaths". Please review these important issues and e-mail the Board with your comments.

**New Method for Selecting Board Members.** The way most members of the North Carolina Medical Board are chosen has been changed. Last summer, the NC legislature enacted N.C. Gen. Stat. §90-3, which creates a new body charged with screening applicants and recommending candidates to the Governor. The Review Panel will advertise available Medical Board positions, interview candidates, and make at least two recommendations to the Governor for each available position. An important advance is that the Panel provides a position for an osteopathic physician.

The new process applies only to eight of the twelve positions on the Board: seven of the physician members, and one position reserved for either a physician assistant or a nurse practitioner. Previously, the seven physician members were nominated to the Governor by the North Carolina Medical Society. The Governor appointed the PA/NP member without any outside input. The Board also includes three public members and one position for a Doctor of Osteopathy, a member of the Old North State Medical Society, or a full-time faculty member of one of the state's medical schools who uses integrative medicine in his or her clinical practice. The Governor will continue to make direct appointments to the Board for those positions.

The Review Panel is made up of four physicians named by the NC Medical Society, one physician named by the NCOMA, one physician assistant named by the NC Academy of Physician Assistants, one nurse practitioner chosen by the North Carolina Nurses Association Council of Nurse Practitioners, and one current public member of the Medical Board. The Review Panel held its first organizational meeting March 29 and will meet at least once more this year.

**There are two Medical Board positions open this year:** Arthur McCulloch, MD, past president of the Board, will complete his second term and is not eligible for reappointment. Also, Ralph Loomis, MD, will complete his first term and is eligible for reappointment. Any licensed physician in the state who is interested in becoming a member of the Medical Board is encouraged to apply. For more information on the Review Panel and Board member selection process please visit [www.ncmedboardreviewpanel.com](http://www.ncmedboardreviewpanel.com)

I am always available for your questions and input. Please contact me personally at [ccdoc@bellsouth.net](mailto:ccdoc@bellsouth.net) or call 828-890-3200. If you need to make a statement to the Board please do it on their website.

See you at the NCOMA meeting July 31<sup>st</sup>.

Best regards,  
Don Jablonski, DO, FACOFP

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## Letter from the NCOMA President, *Shannon Jimenez, DO*



NC D.O.'s,

I want to let you know that the North Carolina Osteopathic Medical Association is working for you. It has been a fairly eventful year, so I would like to outline for you what I and NCOMA have been doing for you. There is an extraordinary group of physicians and supporters working hard to make NC D.O.'s a stronger voice for their patients, to the NC Medical Board, and to the rest of the medical community.

### Some highlights of my year as President:

**NC Medical Board Review panel.** I served on the review panel at its inaugural meeting to shape the bylaws of how we choose medical board members in our state. For the first time, osteopathic physicians have a permanent seat in a committee on the medical board – thanks in large part to Don Jablonski, DO (*see details of the review panel in the previous article*). This review panel will meet a few times a year and review and evaluate applications for the medical board positions and recommend appointments to the governor.

**NCMB physician profile website.** Along with Barbara Walker, DO, *Wilmington* (AOA Board of Trustees) and Slade Suchecki, DO, *Wilmington*, (NCOMA Membership Chair), I met with Janelle Rhyne, MD, then president of the NC Medical Board in March and were able to give input on the NCMB physician profile website that has been mandated by the legislature. We have been following the development of this over the last year and continue to work with the North Carolina Medical Society and NCMB to make it as publicly transparent yet as fair as possible.

**Licensing of Naturopaths in NC.** I testified in front of the Medical Board regarding licensure of naturopaths in our state. A bill has been submitted to the legislature asking for naturopaths to be licensed in the state and to have their own board. They initially also asked for privileges to prescribe medications, order radiological tests and do minor surgical procedures in the office. They also asked for privileges to do manipulation – with no restriction on what types of manipulation they can do. NCOMA submitted a position statement to the board outlining concerns for patient safety given the limitations of their training and the lack of standardization of their “residencies.” The AOA submitted their position statement as well. I also contacted a former president of the American College of Physicians and the current President of the American Academy of Pediatrics, who both live in NC, who then did the same with their organizations.

**Establishing an osteopathic medical school in NC.** I participated in discussion with 2 institutions regarding establishing an osteopathic medical school in NC; and continue to advocate for bringing an osteopathic school and osteopathic residencies into our state.

**Fighting DO discrimination.** Carolinas Healthcare System in Charlotte and Moore Regional Medical Center in Pinehurst still do not recognize the credentials of osteopathic residency-trained or COMLEX tested physicians, and several of our colleagues at these institutions have been denied staff privileges. Despite internal negotiations,

neither institution seems ready to accept our pathway to licensure. It would appear that legal action is imminent, thus I have also been in contact with the legal counsel at the AOA to assist in preparation and representation for our DO's. I have written letters to DO's at those institutions as well as local congressman to spur a grassroots movement.

[Medicare payment cuts](#). I have been privileged to go to Washington, DC and meet the health policy aides for Senators Dole and Burr and Congressman Jones to discuss the Medicare payment formula and its impact on recruiting quality doctors to our state. This was through the Ohio U/ NYIT Health Policy Fellowship that I have nearly completed.

If you are a D.O. in N.C., we are working for you. Whether you are a member of NCOMA or not, AOA or ACGME-residency trained, AOA or ABMS-certified, we are working for you. However, we could have more strength with more numbers. We need your membership! We need your participation! If we are to grow and shape the future of healthcare in North Carolina, WE NEED YOU!

Join NCOMA now!

For the opportunity to serve as president of NCOMA last year – thank you.  
Shannon Ramsey Jimenez D.O.

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## Breaking News: Congress fails to stop 10.6% Medicare physician pay cut

As you probably know, on June 27, the US Senate failed to pass legislation that would avert the projected 10.6% cut in physician payments. On July 1, the cut will go in effect. There is only one more chance that the Senate may take action to avoid this cut. The issue may be revisited for consideration following the July 4 recess. *We need your voice to help in this effort! A 10.6% pay cut, or on average, \$30,000 per year per physician is imminent.*

Senator Dole was one of the Senators who voted to stop this pay cut. There were only 2 more Senators needed to pass this legislation, and embarrassingly, North Carolina's Richard Burr was one of the "nay" votes. We need *all* physicians to contact Senator Burr's office to advocate for our profession and our patients. The bill to be considered is HR 6331, "**Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008.**" Click on the following link to see talking points for this legislation: [Facts about the Medicare pay cut](#).

Senator Burr's office may be contacted through the AOA Advocacy website at this link: [Senator Richard Burr's contact info](#)

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## NCOMA contact information:

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