



Osteopathic advocacy win: Local coverage determination respects OMT

On Friday, Sept.16, American Osteopathic Association President Boyd R. Buser, DO, FACOFP, sent the following letter to the AOA Board of Trustees and the President's Advisory Council.

Today, we learned that National Government Services (NGS) will put in place policy to appropriately pay for OMT for Medicare beneficiaries. Specifically, NGS issued its final newly revised Local Coverage Determination (LCD) for OMT. The LCD utilizes more than 90 percent of the language the AOA proposed for OMT coverage as part of our extensive comment letter and redline LCD submitted to NGS.

As you know, in June NGS, a Medicare contractor, released a proposed LCD for OMT. The proposal would update existing coverage policy for OMT in 10 states (CT, IL, MA, ME, MN, NH, NY, RI, VT, and WI). Unfortunately, the NGS proposal would have imposed unnecessary barriers to our delivery of OMT during a time when we should be promoting it to treat pain more than ever. They just didn't get it!

Despite years of work with NGS, the proposal and its timing came as a surprise to the profession. Nonetheless, the AOA quickly responded by engaging our affiliate partners and by activating our members in a grassroots advocacy campaign – SaveOMT. Over the course of two months, over 5,000 DOs, osteopathic medical students, and patients engaged in grassroots advocacy through our SaveOMT campaign expressing loud opposition to the proposed rule change by NGS that would have made it nearly impossible for DOs in those 10 states to bill Medicare for an office visit when OMT is performed.

Today's release of the final LCD is an outstanding victory for osteopathic medicine and ultimately a victory for our patients who ask for OMT and want the benefits from its application. The profession again rose to the call-to-duty, and it was victorious as we championed an issue so important to our osteopathic identity.

Thank you for your continued leadership on behalf of this profession and for your support of our advocacy efforts.

The AAO thanks its members for their role in effecting this result.