



## **American Academy of Osteopathy®<sup>1</sup>** **Position Paper on Rights to Peer Review**

Osteopathic physicians (DOs) are fully-licensed physicians in all 50 states and the US Armed Forces. They receive their predoctoral education in colleges of osteopathic medicine, which are accredited by the American Osteopathic Association's (AOA) Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA). The COCA is recognized by the US Department of Education as the accrediting body for colleges of osteopathic medicine. As part of the curriculum in osteopathic medical schools, students learn the philosophy, principles, and practice of osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM) as recognized by the federal government as osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT). A core exposure to and preparation in the various models of osteopathic manipulative medicine is central to this education process. At the time of conferring the DO degree, each Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine has been prepared to undertake the distinctive practice of osteopathic medicine.

DOs complete their postdoctoral training in internships and residencies in a variety of specialties approved by either the AOA or by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.

Some osteopathic physicians, who choose to specialize in neuromusculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine (NMM/OMM), receive additional training in this specialty. This education can be in the form of continuing medical education in osteopathic manipulative medicine, or by completing an AOA approved NMM/OMM or an ACGME ONMM residency program.

The AOA established the American Osteopathic Board of Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine (AOBNMM)<sup>2</sup> as one of its general certifying boards in the profession. The examination process is comprised of written, oral, and practical examinations. Upon successful completion of the examinations, the American Osteopathic Association confers board certification in NMM/OMM.

We recognize that third party payors often utilize non-physician employees to conduct initial records' reviews and that physicians from related specialties may be called upon to review charts. However, in the appeal process of denied claims, the NMM/OMM specialist has the right to be reviewed by specialists who have similar training and credentials.

The American Academy of Osteopathy®, the AOA and the United States Government recognize physicians certified in NMM/OMM and specializing in NMM/OMM as specialists within their field. They have achieved advanced certification and their practices of osteopathic medicine frequently include patients requiring more complex management. Hence, they have the right to have their professional services reviewed by specialists who have similar training and credentials who will understand their approach to osteopathic diagnosis and treatment.

It is the policy of the American Academy of Osteopathy®, a practice affiliate of the American Osteopathic Association, that only unlimited licensed physicians who specialize in neuromusculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine can appropriately conduct definitive peer review of the work of physicians who specialize in neuromusculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine.

Adopted 3/25/1998; amended 3/21/2007; amended 12/08/2016  
AAO Board of Governors

<sup>1</sup> *The American Academy of Osteopathy® is one of 23 practice affiliates of the American Osteopathic Association, the parent organization for the osteopathic profession.*

*The Mission of the American Academy of Osteopathy is to teach, advocate, and research the science, art and philosophy of osteopathic medicine, emphasizing the integration of osteopathic principles, practices and manipulative treatment in patient care.*

*In July 2013, the AOA House of Delegates amended a position paper on physician Expert Witness testimony. The foregoing Academy policy statement on Rights to Peer Review expands on the AOA's Expert Witness policy, which is available via the [AOA website](#).*

<sup>2</sup> *In order to recognize extraordinary proficiency in osteopathic manipulative medicine, the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) created the American Osteopathic Board of Special Proficiency in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (AOBSPOMM) in 1989, in addition to residency training programs in this new specialty. This certifying board conducted an application and examination process that enabled the individual DO to demonstrate his/her special proficiency in an area of practice. This was accomplished through the successful completion of written, oral and practical examinations. Upon recommendation of the AOBSPOMM, the AOA subsequently conferred on successful diplomats certification of special proficiency in osteopathic manipulative medicine (C-SPOMM).*

*In January 1999, the AOA approved revised basic standards for residency training in osteopathic manipulative medicine, which then became identified as residency training in neuromusculoskeletal medicine and osteopathic manipulative medicine (NMM/OMM), effective July 1, 1999. The aforementioned certifying board (AOBSPOMM) revised its Constitution and Bylaws to reflect the change in residency and has henceforth be known as the American Osteopathic Board of Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine (AOBNMM), the change approved by the AOA in July 1999.*