

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Advocating for the Future We Desire

Rodney M. Wiseman, DO, FACOFP *dist.*
2017 - 2018 ACOFP President

I cannot believe that it has been a year since I joined with you at the 2017 ACOFP Annual Convention to start my term as ACOFP President. It has been a most meaningful year for me due to the people I met and the conversations we had.

Many talked about what a quandary medicine is in today, followed quickly by the question, "what can ACOFP do to affect change?" I have been asked by many, what is coming over the horizon and my answer is, that while I cannot see, we need to advocate for the future we desire.

A year ago, I focused my speech on characteristics that I believed represented ACOFP and members of the osteopathic profession – Integrity, Competency, Engagement, Vision, Diversity, Leadership, and Advocacy. I have seen many examples of each as I have made my way across the U.S. this past year.

What I am most proud about during my tenure is the progress that ACOFP has made in finding its legislative voice. It is in 2017-2018 that the ACOFP began taking assertive steps towards building *our* future of medicine. As oppressive as they seem, we can't allow forces to dominate our profession, and not take action.

ACOFP engaged with CMS, the FDA, and organizations to express our concerns and ideas about the increasing complexity of medicine in a meaningful way - not clouded with emotion, not angry and demanding, but with *integrity*.

Through comment letters requested by the government, ACOFP shared opinions on pressing issues, backed by examples of what Family Physicians face every day. We tackled the opioid crisis, the Quality Payment Program (QPP), the burden of increasing paperwork and EMR entry, the Teaching Health Center program, Graduate Medical Education, the increasing shortage of Primary Care Physicians, disparity in pay vs specialists, and funding for Rural Health programs and Disproportionate Share Hospitals (DSH), and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Out of these six areas, there were some big wins. Disproportionate Share Hospital funding, which was scheduled to be cut, was extended for two more years. CHIP, which was also to be severely reduced, was extended for 10 years.

After several months of work by the ACOFP Board, the Federal Legislation Committee, the Alternative Payment Model Committee, our lobbying firm Alston & Bird, and ACOFP Staff, a guiding legislative instrument was completed - The ACOFP 2018 Principles of Health Care Reform. This definitively states what ACOFP's priorities are in making the practice of medicine better through the power of lobbying for policy change.

Ask yourself "why does this work matter to you?" As osteopathic family physicians we all need to come together as a united health care force that will act positively to improve health care with positive patient outcomes, improve quality at a lower cost, and improve physician payment. Maybe it is just a matter of joining with all of us - your membership, and asking what you can do to help. You may want to write to your Representative in Washington, volunteer to serve on a committee, share your expertise by recording a webinar or podcast that members can learn from, write articles for the OFP Journal, or be a moderator at an ACOFP state or annual meeting.

It has been my pleasure to serve you as your President and I encourage you to continue your support for my successor, Dr. Duane Koehler. As I continue on the Board as Past President, I will continue to keep my heart, mind, and ears open to your comments and suggestions.

As you know, I like to add quotations to my communication, so will close with this:

“ The ultimate measure of a man/woman is not where s/he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where s/he stands at times of challenge and controversy. ”

- MLK from *Strength to Love*, 1963

Osteopathically yours,

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