

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



ACOFP Congress to Consider Opening Membership to MDs

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2018 - 2019 ACOFP President

After more than two years of debate and careful consideration, the March 2019 ACOFP Congress of Delegates will consider Constitution & Bylaws Amendments to allow medical doctors (MDs) to become Active Members of the ACOFP.

The ACOFP's mission is to promote excellence in osteopathic family medicine through quality education, visionary leadership and responsible advocacy. By allowing more family physicians to join the College, we are further supporting the mission and objectives, opening more opportunities to promote osteopathic distinction and expanding the reach of our message.

"ACOFP is a community of current and future family physician that champions osteopathic principles and supports its members by providing resources such as education, networking and advocacy, while putting patients first."

The historic membership change is a result of MD graduates training in residencies with Osteopathic Recognition status that are accredited by the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The AOA is also opening its certification to MDs, as the AOA and ACGME are less than two years from a complete transition to the ACGME Single Accreditation System. To grow ACOFP membership, we believe the ACOFP should also be giving MD graduates the opportunity to be involved in osteopathic professional organizations.

HISTORY OF THE TRANSITION

The 2016 ACOFP Congress of Delegates directed the Board to consider changes to the Constitution & Bylaws to allow MDs in residency programs with Osteopathic Recognition status to become Active Members.

The Board welcomed comments from members regarding the important decision to allow MDs to be members, stating, "This is YOUR specialty society and YOUR decision." ACOFP then sent a survey to members and key constituencies including students, residents, committees, Fellows, the Auxiliary, Past Presidents and state societies. The survey asked members for opinions on three models of membership. From the 343 responses, there was no clear consensus:

- 29% for Status Quo
- 31% for Hybrid with Conditions
- 28% for Full Parity for MDs

The Board did not choose one of the models because the survey results were so close, but instead made recommendations on 17 aspects of membership.

FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION WITH MD MEMBERSHIP

There will be NO change to the organization name, mission statement or vision statement of ACOFP.

Active Member Status – The Board recommends that ACOFP accept MDs as Active Members with criteria that parallels the criteria for DOs to be accepted. However, the Board recommends that there be additional conditions regarding items such as MDs being nominated to the Board, serving as a Committee Chair and being nominated as a Fellow, among others.

The ACOFP definition of an osteopathic physician – This does not change, but it now includes, "An MD may practice osteopathically, but an MD is not an osteopathic physician."

Board Criteria for Officer and Governor – An MD must demonstrate commitment to osteopathic family medicine, with the decision being made by the ACOFP Nominating Committee for each individual.

Board Criteria for Resident Governor and Residents Council – An MD resident who is an active trainee at a family medicine residency with ACGME Osteopathic Recognition status may be nominated.

Board Criteria for Student Governor – An MD is not eligible due to lack of osteopathic training.

Committee Participation – ACOFP will accept MDs on Committees, including the right to vote. However, for the Committee Chair positions, only those MDs who have completed osteopathic focused education at a residency with ACGME Osteopathic Recognition status can be appointed.

Congress of Delegates – MDs can be members.

State Societies – Individual states are to determine whether to allow MD membership in their society and the extent of their rights and privileges.

Student Chapters – The Board makes no recommendation at this time.

ACOFP Fellow & Distinguished Fellow Criteria – The Board defers to the Conclave of Fellows to make a recommendation on whether MDs can become Fellows and Distinguished Fellows.

Award Criteria – Qualified MDs can be nominated for all ACOFP awards.

Membership in the Auxiliary to the ACOFP – Membership in the Auxiliary shall be open to all family and friends of those who qualify for ACOFP membership.

Auxiliary Student Scholarship Criteria – The Board defers to the Auxiliary to make a recommendation for the student scholarship criteria.

The ACOFP Constitution & Bylaws/Policy & Organization Review Committee used these factors to add “MD” and “allopathic family physician” wording where applicable to the proposed Amendments to the Constitution & Bylaws. The Constitution & Bylaws state that ACOFP must notify members of such changes

30 days in advance of the next Congress, which will be in March 2019. Congress will vote on whether to approve the Amendments at the ACOFP '19 Convention.

You can read all the proposed Amendments in this *OPF* issue.

We hope the inclusion of medical doctors in our College will be the beginning of a positive era of collaboration, education and networking with a large new group of family physicians.

Osteopathically Yours,



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