



GEORGIA OSTEOPATHIC  
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
— 1902 —

## GOMA News & Updates

Volume 39, May 2023

### GOMA President Dianna Glessner, DO & SOMA Celebrate National Osteopathic Medicine Week



Dianna Glessner, DO was on the Suwanee campus of PCOM

Georgia on Monday April 17th to start the celebration of National Osteopathic Medicine Week. She joined forces with the members of the Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) to give out snacks and retro shirts from GOMA to the students studying on campus. Dr. Glessner reported a great reception by the students who were appreciative of the work that GOMA does including its advocacy work in the Georgia Capital. At the end of the day, Dr. Glessner stated, "The future of osteopathic medicine is bright!"

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### **Jacqui O’Kane, DO & FTC Proposal Featured in Article about Non-compete Contracts**

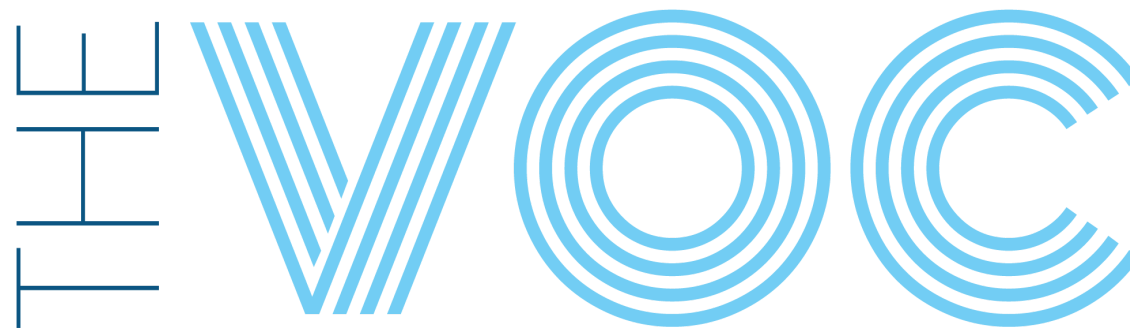


Jacqui O’Kane, DO, FAWM is board certified in Family Medicine and fellow of wilderness medicine. Dr. O’Kane practices at SGMC – Nashville as an employee of South Georgia Medical Center. She is a proud veteran (Major) of the United States Air Force Medical Corps. Prior to opening her practice in Nashville, Dr. O’Kane served patients at the Moody Air Force Base Family Health Clinic for four years. She graduated from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in Suwanee, GA and completed her residency at Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System in Spartanburg, SC. She has years of experience providing comprehensive medical care to adults and children.

Dr. O’Kane says, “Providing comprehensive, compassionate care to those in need is my passion. I am looking forward to serving the people of Nashville, Berrien County, and the surrounding area.”

Dr. O’Kane was featured in a recent article about non-compete clauses for employed physicians and proposals by the Federal Trade Commission to end this limiting employment strategy. The proposal is still not finalized and probably will end in court before being settled. [Read more about Dr. O’Kane and the issues of non-compete clauses.](#)

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### **VOC 2023 Registration Closes May 31!**

The Virtual Osteopathic Conference (VOC) is available on-demand until June 30, but you must register no later than May 31. [Register here!](#)

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### **David Rearick, DO Tells His Chicago to Marietta Story**



David Rearick, DO reached out to the GOMA Newsletter expressing appreciation for the monthly updates on the osteopathic community of Georgia, and extended an offer to write about the history of osteopathic medicine in Georgia. We are always interested in original material especially historical essays that help remind younger physicians that everything was not easy in the past.

Dr. Rearick left Aetna in 2003 spending the next 15 years as an insurance/brokerage consultant. He was Chief Medical Officer for Marsh & McLennan, a \$2 Billion insurance consultancy running their data analytic and population health & wellness department, retiring in 2018. He currently does telemedicine with TeleDoc from his north Georgia home on Lake Blue Ridge. Here is his historical essay:

*Those that laid the groundwork for the present are often forgotten but most of us have benefited from the efforts of those preceding us. The real pioneers of osteopathic medicine in Georgia, the Trimbles, surgeons Al Haight & Joe Vince, Walter Elliott, and many more are the real pioneers but this is my own personal story.*

*After suffering through 30 continuous days below zero as a third-year student at Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine (CCOM), I told my wife we were headed south for internship. We ended up at Doctor's Hospital on Idlewood Road in Tucker, GA. Joining five other newly graduated students, the six of us staffed the ER at night by ourselves, delivered the babies, first assisted on surgeries from bowel resections, cholecystectomies to spinal fusions and did all the hospital admissions. It was an exciting time. This was real doctoring!*

*Only one of the six went onto a residency, there were no DO residencies in Georgia. DO's couldn't find many MD residencies open to osteopaths*

*either: doing an allopathic residency would prohibit being certified by the AOA. Five of us went right into practice opening individual practices, hanging our shingles and waited for patients to show up. I went to East Cobb signed a lease for a 400 square foot space separated into two rooms: a waiting room with 3 chairs and one exam room that contained my desk, an examination table, no staff. I called each patient back myself, did my exam, sat them at my desk, wrote out the prescription, collected their cash payment and then got the next patient.*

*I did numerous garden club lectures, church seminars, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce presentations, annually visited each local pharmacist with homemade Christmas cookies to promote my practice, and always had a supply of brochures explaining "What is a DO". This is what you did to build a practice when you were the only DO in the county.*

*East Cobb was the fastest growing zip code in the entire US for three years and my practice quickly grew to five providers. We built a 20,000 foot medical building with full x-ray and lab with an onsite psychologist, opened from 8am-8pm, Mon-Fri and 8am-12pm on Saturday and managing a 60 bed nursing home. But it wasn't all roses.*

*As the first DO to apply to the local 600 bed Marietta Kennestone Hospital, my application for staff privileges appeared to be stymied. The admission committee had no idea what an osteopathic physician was in 1978. Despite submitting my internship logbook with every patient I'd seen, every surgery, delivery, procedure, and diagnosis I'd done or seen there were doubts about allowing me on staff. A letter from my attorney prompted the hospital to take my application seriously, since I met all the requirements for membership.*

*Despite the fact the Georgia State Medical Board included two osteopathic members, the current chair of which was surgeon, Al Haight, DO (who signed every Georgia medical license that year) it was decided a team of four physicians from Kennestone Hospital would fly to Chicago inspect my osteopathic medical school to determine the extent of training I had received (CCOM was one of seven osteopathic medical schools at this time).*

*It was agreed my training was sufficient, I was admitted to the hospital where I took mandatory ER call in pediatrics, ran a daily census of 2-10 patients, admitted to ICU, CCU, the psych unit, delivered my own four children and eventually but was never allowed to be department chairman in the 20 years I was on staff. It took several years before most staff, especially my family practice colleagues, to accept my training was comparable to theirs (none of which had done a residency). Things have certainly changed for the better. Parity is now generally accepted.*

*It is ironic that after my 1991 Emory MBA, helping to form the Northwest Physicians Group by merging 30 family practices into one group, selling it to Kennestone Hospital and growing it eventually into the WellStar Health System, that the hospital now has DOs serving in residency positions. I left clinical practice serving as Aetna's SE Medical Director in charge of credentialing, preauthorization, and disciplining physicians in the Aetna network, many whom I personally knew who operated "Pill shops" or practiced substandard medicine. Life sometimes goes around full circle.*

*Be proud of your degree, put it after your name, and don't precede your name with only "Dr." The privilege of using the DO was earned by many who fought for the parity and respect it currently enjoys. Yes, there is more to be done, but I always found patients rewarded competence over a degree 90% of the time.*

*Sincerely,*

*David Rearick, DO, MBA, CPE*

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**Sonbol Shahid-Salles, DO & Georgia DO Students  
Attend DO Day on Capitol Hill**



In mid-April, hundreds of osteopathic medical students and physicians were in Washington, DC at DO Day on Capitol Hill, where they met with their members of Congress to advocate for important health policy that improves the lives of medical students, physicians, and the patients they serve. Above is a picture of GOMA President-Elect Sonbol Shahid-Salles, DO (with long white coat & long necklace) with osteopathic medical students outside the office of Georgia U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff.

This year, students and physicians went to Capitol Hill to advocate for:

Protecting Access to Medical Care by advocating for positive updates to Medicare physician payment through H.R. 2474.

Expanding Graduate Medical Education by urging Congress to reauthorize the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program.

Student Loan Reform by encouraging Congress to support the Resident Education Deferred Interest (REDI) Act H.R. 1202/S. 704.

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA), launched a grassroots campaign urging members of Congress to support and cosponsor the issues above to help build momentum and advance commonsense health policy.

Send your members of Congress an email encouraging them to act with the very easy Advocacy Action Center:

<https://osteopathic.quorum.us/campaign/46710/>

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## **Tashinea Bernadin, DO Featured in LA Progressive Magazine**



Tashinea Bernadin, DO earned her osteopathic medical degree from PCOM – Georgia in 2016, and completed her residency at Gwinnett Medical Center. She received her undergraduate degree in Food and Nutritional Sciences from Florida State University.

Dr. Bernadin has a special interest in chronic disease management and women's health. Prior to joining Piedmont Physicians Fayette South Dr. Bernadin was with the Strickland Family Medicine Center.

In her spare time, Dr. Bernadin enjoys writing poetry, working with the youth and giving back to the community. Her inspiring story of hard work and determination was recently featured in the online magazine LA Progressive and [can be read here](#).

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## PCOM South Georgia's First-Ever DO Day of Service on Earth Day



On April 22, students from PCOM South Georgia headed to Reed Bingham State Park in Adel, Georgia to help with some maintenance projects. It was Earth Day so it seemed that the students enjoyed doing the work around the park so that others could enjoy it. All agreed that PCOM South Georgia's first-ever DO Day of Service was a success!

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## **GA-PCOM Student Doctor Peter Choi Researches Vascular Malformations**



Osteopathic medical students at PCOM Georgia have opportunities to expand their skills and knowledge with research. In his Student Research Spotlight, Peter Choi (DO '24) shares the unique journey that led him to pursue research, in addition to how he is studying treatment strategies for vascular malformations in the head and neck region.

Student Doctor Choi said, "Research can be perceived as this mysterious, invisible entity that is only reserved for a select few and the elite. This cannot be further from the truth. I challenge students to seek out people who are willing to take a chance on them. If finding someone is not realistic, create your own project. Start your own timeline and become the person that other students come to." [Get the whole story here.](#)

## Graduations Are Around the Corner

PCOM South Georgia's First Graduating Class will cross the stage at the Conference Center of the University of Georgia Tifton Campus on Thursday May 25th. The Conference Center is located at 15 R D C Road, Tifton, GA 31794. The commencement program starts at 1:00 PM and is anticipated to last three hours. While it seems that the

school just opened up, the soon-to-be osteopathic physicians can assure you it has been four years.

PCOM Georgia's Commencement will be held on Tuesday May 23rd at the Gas South Venue in Duluth, Georgia. The graduation also begins at 1:00 PM and similarly lasts three hours. The PCOM Georgia program will feature a commencement speech by Ms. Julie Ginn Moretz, who is an Assistant Vice-President of Augusta University Health in Augusta, Georgia.

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## GA-PCOM "Goes Big" at Atlanta Science Festival



Thunderstorms in the early morning of Saturday, March 25 belied the beautiful day it would become as PCOM Georgia shone brightly at the Atlanta Science Festival, which attracted about 18,000 attendees to Piedmont Park in midtown Atlanta. A PCOM Georgia festival organizer, Darnae Parks, director of Diversity and Community Partnerships, lauded students and employees alike for their "efforts to bring PCOM Georgia to the Greater Atlanta Community." Earlier in the year, Dean and Chief Academic Officer Andrea Mann, DO, had challenged the campus to "Go Big" for the

annual event resulting in the campus upping its sponsorship and hosting nine exhibit booths. PCOM Georgia has had a booth at the festival for the past several years. However, this year, Kim Lucier, director of operations, Jodi Scott, director of communications for the Office of Admissions, and Parks spearheaded planning meetings beginning last fall and challenged each PCOM Georgia program to provide an activity to engage children and represent the college to the thousands of attendees.

One hundred and thirty-seven PCOM Georgia students, faculty and staff worked the booths, which attracted “huge crowds,” Lucier said. Calling the event a “mini team-building activity with our PCOM family,” she added, “An amazing unintended result was that all the programs worked harmoniously to achieve the same goal. The laughter and smiles were contagious as I watched the interactions with all the participants at our booths.”

“While the kids made slime to learn about blood or dug for bones in the sand, parents could be heard asking our students about their programs and how they chose their career path,” she noted.

[Read the whole story here.](#)

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### **In Other Words**

“You do research carefully, like a porcupine makes love.”  
– Leo Rosten, writer