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GEORGIA OSTEOPATHIC  
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## Your monthly GOMA news & update

Welcome to GOMA's monthly newsletter where you can stay up-to-date on the latest osteopathic news and happenings in the GOMA community.

### Due Date?

#### **Dr. McNally Comments on COVID-19 Baby Boom Turns Out to be a Bust The COVID-19 baby boom appears to be a baby bust.**



When most of the U.S. went into lockdown over a year ago, some speculated that confining couples to their homes – with little to entertain them beyond Netflix – would lead to a lot of baby making. But the statistics suggest the opposite happened. Births have fallen dramatically in many states during the coronavirus outbreak, according to an Associated Press Analysis of preliminary data from half the country.

Even before the pandemic, the number of babies born in the U.S. was falling, dropping by less than 1% a year over the past decade. But data from 25 states suggests a much steeper decline in 2020 and into 2021, as the virus upended society and killed over a half-million Americans. Births for all of 2020 were down 4.3% from 2019, the data indicates. More tellingly, births in December 2020 and in January and February 2021 – nine months or more after the spring 2020 lockdowns – were down 6.5%, 9.3% and 10% respectively, compared with the same months a year earlier.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is expected to provide a national picture late this year. But the data of the 25 states is not expected to change substantially. It appears that the pandemic supercharged an already existing downward trend in birth rates. The U.S. birthrate has fallen to 1.73 births per woman, from a peak of 3.77 births in 1957.

We asked GOMA member Lauryn McNally, DO for her opinion on fertility in the 21st century as well as to introduce her to the membership. Dr. McNally graduated from New York College of Osteopathic Medicine/NYIT in 2008, and then did her OB/Gyn residency at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center in Colton, California. She currently works as an Assistant Professor in the Department of GYN-OB-Generalist Division of Emory School of Medicine working at Emory University Hospital. Dr. McNally is interested in promoting osteopathic medicine in the field of obstetrics and gynecology. In April 2019, she travelled to the Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine at Midwestern University to serve as an American College of Osteopathic Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACCOG) Visiting Professor, where she discussed her use of osteopathic principles and practice within the field of Obstetrics & Gynecology to a OB/GYN Student Interest Group at Midwestern University in Glendale, Arizona. Here was the email exchange with Dr. McNally (LM):

### ***How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect pregnancy rates?***

**LM:** In our institution the COVID-19 pandemic did not affect pregnancy rates. From March 1, 2019 our hospital had 5732 births and from March 1, 2020 to February 28, 2021 we had 5766 births. We thought there would be a pregnancy boom or a surge but actually it is the opposite. The birth rate in this country has been the lowest in years.

### ***Did COVID-19 infections affect pregnancy outcomes?***

**LM:** The COVID-19 pandemic did affect pregnancy outcomes. Black and Hispanic race, obesity, advanced maternal age, medical comorbidities (Chronic HTN, Diabetes) and antepartum admissions related to COVID19 are risk factors for associated morbidity. Pregnant women with COVID-19 are more likely to be admitted to intensive care and require invasive ventilation compared to pregnant women without COVID-19. The odds of preterm birth were higher in pregnant women with covid-19 compared with those without the disease due to worsening symptoms and needing to get the mother better. The most recent studies from the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine demonstrated that women who become severely or critically ill because of COVID19 are at greater risk of dying and experiencing serious pregnancy complications. These women were compared to those who have had COVID-19 but were asymptomatic. Pregnant women with mild or moderate illness were not at higher risk of pregnancy complications than those without symptoms.

### ***April 6 JAMA research letter by Duke Appiah concluding that women's average reproductive life span has expanded by 2.1 years from 35 to 37.1. Do you agree? Why do you think that this is occurring?***

**LM:** Yes I do agree that the women's average reproductive life span has expanded by 2.1 years from 35 to 37.1. I believe that this is occurring because women are getting pregnant at an older age and they are healthier than we were in the past. Since we have more studies from Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) we are able to learn more about the women's reproductive life span and that the attrition of ovarian reserve and egg quality declines at a later age. The fecundity of women decreases gradually but significantly beginning approximately at age 32 years and decreases more rapidly after age 37 years.

Initially we thought the drop was after age 35 but many of the studies have shown that the decrease in fecundity is very minimal between 35-37 but significantly drops off after age 37.

***Do you think that obesity in America is a major factor? Does it promote fertility or is detrimental to fertility of women?***

**LM:** Obesity is a major factor in America but when you look at all the reproductive endocrinology studies BMI is not a risk factor for infertility. There was no interaction between age and BMI, and adjustment for BMI did not substantially change these estimates for fecund ability in females. Age is the most important risk factor. An elevated BMI can result in having irregular periods therefore by losing weight and having more regular periods this can increase chances of getting pregnant. We see that there is a higher risk of ovulatory disorder infertility in women classified as underweight (BMI < 20 kg/m) and for women with obesity (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m) after controlling for diet, age, smoking, and oral contraceptive use. Additionally, a review of the literature related to male obesity and fertility concluded that male obesity is associated with increased risk of infertility, potentially through endocrine dysregulation mechanisms.

***Do the hormones in chicken and other foods affect fertility of women? of men?***

**LM:** A healthy balanced diet does effect fertility of women and of men but the hormones in chicken and other foods do not. We recommend a diet with a high intake of folic acid, polyunsaturated fats and plant-based foods on fertility outcomes. There is some research out there that consumption of a lot red meat can have an adverse effect on fertility. Saturated fat content, which can be particularly high in red meat, has independently been linked to lower semen concentration in males. A cross-sectional study of men showed that higher intake of omega-3 fatty acids was associated with significantly more favorable sperm morphology. Women who consumed higher levels of omega-6, linoleic acid, and omega-3 had a higher incidence of pregnancy than those with lower intake of these nutrients. (Front Public Health. 2018; 6: 211.)

***In November, GOMA's Fall CME Conference had a virtual lecture by Leo Trasande, MD who spoke on chemical hazards specifically endocrine disrupting chemicals that are ubiquitous in our environment. Do they affect fertility of women? of men?***

**LM:** The research is quite clear that metals and chemicals in air, water, food, and health-and-beauty aids are damaging fertility in many ways. These toxicants are causing men to experience relentlessly decreasing sperm count and function while women are suffering progressively worse anovulation, impaired implantation, and loss of fetal viability.

Environmental toxins cause infertility in basically 4 ways:

1. Endocrine disruption; 2. Damage to the female reproductive system; 3. Damage to the male reproductive system; 4. Impaired fetal viability.

This damage not only decreases natural fertility but also makes in vitro fertilization (IVF) much less likely to succeed. The worst fertility disrupters are organochlorine compounds (chlorinated pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls, and dioxins), bisphenol A (BPA), and

organophosphate pesticides and herbicides. However, many other chemicals, metals, and air pollutants seriously damage fertility.

(Source: *Integr Med (Encinitas) v.17(2); 2018 Apr*)

**Thank you, Dr. Lauryn McNally helping us understand fertility better and being a GOMA member.**

## Brotherly Bond

### Rouhizad Brothers Revel in the Professional Kinship

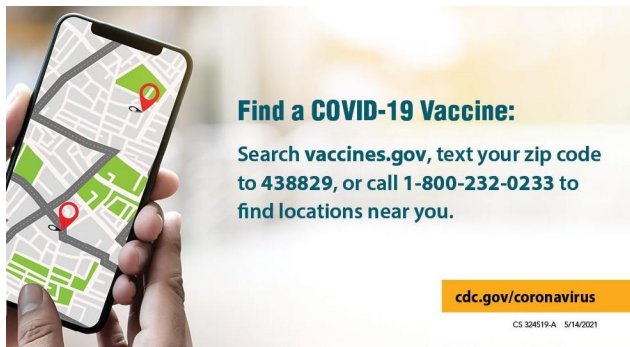
Throughout the annals of history, much has been written about the often-combustible relationships that exist between competitive siblings. That's not the case, however, for Rayan A. Rouhizad, DO and Nasan D. Rouhizad, DO, MPH, MS, MS – who graduated from the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine 11 years apart and



now work at the same hospital in Marietta, Georgia. Read the rest of this article written by Scott Colton, BA, APR and see some [great photographs](#) on page 30 for the Nova Southeastern University *Alumni Spotlights*

## Time to Go

### New Tools to Find Vaccination Locations and Get There



According to U.S. Government agencies, anyone can now text their ZIP code to GETVAX (438829) in English, or VACUNA (822862) in Spanish to get the contact information of three locations near them with available vaccines. The text-line works alongside Vaccines.gov – a revamped version of VaccineFinder.org that similarly allows users to search for available

vaccine doses by Zip code. The CDC and the Department of Health and Human Services also said a to-be-released 1-800 number will also be available to help those who prefer to get information via phone.

Of course, the tools do not include the actual booking process, so callers may still encounter barriers when they try to make appointments.

The U.S. Government is paying for Uber and Lyft rides to vaccination sites until July 4th

A Kaiser Foundation poll found that about 1 in 10 Americans want shots and haven't gotten them. Among unvaccinated adults who say they want a shot as soon as possible, a majority (61 percent) have not yet attempted to make an appointment. Lack of information, difficulty in taking time off work and being too busy to schedule a shot were among the reasons cited for not making an appointment.

## Legislatively Speaking

### 2021 Georgia State Health Legislation Signed into Law by Governor Kemp



**Governor Brian Kemp signed a number of health related bills into law over the past month with most of them becoming effective July 1.**

The complete wording of all the bills can be found at [www.legis.ga.gov](http://www.legis.ga.gov). The following are the bills that we have been following this legislative session that made it to this final stage:

**HB 458** by Rep. Sharon Cooper (R-Marietta) is a bill that focuses on following up on sexual assaults of patients by Georgia's Composite Board of Medical Examiners and includes reporting requirements for Georgia doctors who know about sexual assault of patients. Additionally, all physicians will be required to receive one time education and training for a minimum of two hours regarding professional boundaries and physician sexual misconduct on or after 1/1/2022. Similarly, medical schools in Georgia are required to educate medical students on sexual misconduct on or after 6/30/2022. This bill was signed into law by Governor Brian Kemp and is effective 7/1/2021.

**SB 4** introduced by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick, M.D. (R-Marietta) is a bill that will 1) "prohibit kickbacks, commissions, bribes, benefits, rebates, and bonuses by substance abuse care providers or solicited by substance abuse care providers to induce referral of a patient and outlaws fraudulent marketing techniques designed to deceive individuals into expensive long term recovery facilities" and 2) prohibit "high-tech drug testing" (i.e., testing an individual's specimen for numerous substances and billing and receiving payment separately for each substance that is tested) was signed into law by Gov. Kemp and is effective 7/1/2021.

**SB 80** is a bill by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick, M.D. (R-Marietta) that will improve the prior authorization process by 1) requiring insurers and PBMs to be more transparent about the prior authorization process and requiring them to notify physicians and health care providers when they change their prior authorization process or requirements and 2) requiring physicians to have a chance to speak to a physician or other health care provider who works for the utilization review entity and who is in the same or similar specialty that typically manages the condition or disease in question and who has knowledge providing the service or treatment under review before prior authorization determinations and appeals decisions are made and 3) requiring insurers to respond to prior authorization requests within 15 calendar days between January 1, 2022 and January 1, 2023 and within seven days after January 1, 2023 for non-urgent care and within 72 hours for urgent care and 4) preventing insurers and PBMs from revoking,

denying or changing a prior authorization approval for 45 days unless the prior authorization is for a Schedule II controlled substance and requiring payment when a prior authorization is granted. Failure to comply with the deadlines in this legislation would result in automatic authorization. Gov. Kemp signed this bill into law and it becomes effective 1/1/2022.

**HB 112** by Rep. Trey Kelley (R-Cedartown) is a bill that will extend the COVID-19 liability protections that were enacted by the state in 2020 by one year (i.e., until July 14, 2022). Gov. Kemp signed this bill into law, and it becomes effective 7/1/2021

**SB 5** introduced by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick, M.D. (R-Marietta) is legislation that will 1) require the Georgia Composite Medical Board to establish rules and regulations for the in-office use of sedation in “MediSpas” and 2) prohibit anyone who doesn’t have a license to practice dentistry to administer conscious sedation in a dental facility or during the practice of dentistry in a MediSpa was signed into law by Gov. Kemp and is effective 7/1/2021.

**HB 119** by Rep. Karen Mathiak (R-Griffin), a bill that would allow chiropractors to own professional corporations with physicians was signed into law by Gov. Kemp and is effective 7/1/2021.

**HB 509** by Houston Gaines (R-Athens) is a bill that prevents insurance companies limiting or excluding based on pre-existing conditions was signed into law by Gov. Kemp and is effective 7/1/2021.

## The Good you DO

### Dr. Reid Helps Parents Help Their Kids with Re-Enter Anxiety

Dana Reid, DO is a psychiatrist in Alpharetta that specializes in child and adolescent care. She is a 2008 graduate of VCOM in Virginia who did a psychiatry residency in Houston, Texas and fellowship in Child Psychiatry at Emory University. One month before the COVID-19 pandemic she lectured at the GOMA Pediatric Seminar on Anxiety in Children and Teens. As the discussion in society becomes “getting back to normal”, her blog entitled “[7 Ways to Help Kids and Teens Cope with Re-entry Anxiety](#)” can help providers and parents.



## In the News

### Why Video Meetings are So Exhausting

Stanford University scientists have confirmed what millions of people working from home already knew, reports the Financial Times: “Zoom fatigue” is real. In what they say is the first peer-reviewed study of the issue, the researchers concluded that video meetings are indeed more exhausting and stressful for participants than those conducted face-



to-face. They identified four factors behind the fatigue: the need for constant eye-to-eye contact; seeing one's own face on screen while talking; having to sit still for long periods; and the challenge of interpreting or communicating via body language. "On Zoom," says lead author Jeremy Bailenson, "behavior ordinarily reserved for close relationships – such as long stretches of direct eye

gaze and faces seen close up – has suddenly become the way we interact with casual acquaintances, co-workers, and even strangers." Bailenson offers several suggestions to make video calls less exhausting, including disabling the "selfie" window that shows participants their own face, reducing the size of the video call window, and taking "audio only" breaks to move around or turn away from the screen.

### Dr. Sulaiman Publishes Case Report

Congratulations to Zoheb Sulaiman, DO, an internal medicine resident at Augusta University UGA in Athens, GA as well as a 2019 graduate of PCOM Georgia who had his case report published in the May 2021 issue of Journal of American College of Cardiology Supplement. The complex case was entitled "An Unusual Case of Aerococcus Urinae Infective Endocarditis" and was written up by Dr. Sulaiman and infectious disease specialist Mark P. Visitacion, MD.



## Something to Celebrate

### Live Graduations from PCOM Georgia Return



PCOM Georgia had an in-person graduation of the osteopathic medicine, pharmacy and physical therapy programs on Thursday May 27. The leadership of the school extended congratulations and well wishes to all the graduates and commended the Class of 2021 for their resilience in continuing their studies in the most of difficult circumstances. Ameris

Bank Amphitheatre in Alpharetta stadium was the location this year and in an effort to remain safe during a pandemic, the outdoor attendees were warned to remain in their designated seats and to not approach the stage for photography. The graduates had socially distanced seating. PCOM Georgia Dean Andrea Mann, DO and urologist Richard Jadick, DO addressed the osteopathic graduates with words that were both congratulatory and inspirational. Their [remarks](#) can be seen starting at the 38 minute mark.

The osteopathic graduates only left their seats to approach the stage in small groups and then crossed to pick up their diploma one by one. The smiles seen last year during the 2020 virtual graduation were a highlight of the COVID-19 pandemic, but everyone was happy this year to see the smiling new doctors exhibit vibrant steps as they crossed the stage with their D.O. diploma in hand. Now, the 129 graduates move in to training their chosen fields [here](#) showing the programs that they will start on July 1.

Anesthesiology = 2; Emergency Medicine = 13; Family Medicine = 29; Internal Medicine = 29; Internal Medicine/Pediatrics = 1; Internship = 13; Medicine- Preliminary = 4; Neurology = 3; Obstetrics & Gynecology = 4; Orthopedic Surgery = 1; Osteopathic Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine = 1; Pediatrics = 11; Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation = 2; Psychiatry = 4; Interventional Radiology = 1; Diagnostic Radiology = 4; Surgery = 6; Urology = 1.

### PCOM South Georgia Trent Griner Elected to National Leadership



Trent Griner (DO '23) from PCOM South Georgia has completed a year as the southeastern regional representative to the Student American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine. He was recently elected to a national position. He said, "Very excited and honored to have been elected SAOASM National Vice-Chair. I look forward to continuing to merge my loves of osteopathic medicine and sports as I pursue a career in primary care sports medicine."

### Sharing

*Illness is the night-side of life, a more onerous citizenship. Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick.*



### Update from Twitter Universe

@lauramakaroff is a DO who is the Senior Vice President of Prevention & Early Detection for the American Cancer Society. An article for GOMA's newsletter is on GOMA.org discusses Feb "Cancer Prevention Month". Now her husband @jmaksdreamteam is diagnosed with Pancreatic CA. Follow them.



## Support GOMA!

*Helping your professional society,  
and the osteopathic community weather these  
uncertain times.*

**CLICK HERE to: Renew or Join GOMA!**

Mona Masood, DO is a general adult psychiatrist in the greater Philadelphia area is the founder and chief organizer of the Physician Support Line. , a free confidential peer support line by volunteer psychiatrists was started. It is supported 8 AM to Midnight seven days a week.

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