



February 1, 2021

Greetings!

I hope you had a great New Year and that this finds you, your practice, and your family well. In the past month, in addition to significant holidays, we have experienced many notable events, including a presidential inauguration, accelerated production and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines, numerous protests and executive orders, a historic second presidential impeachment, the storming of the United States Capitol building, an ignorant and negative national scale media assault on our profession (to which the AOA and TOMA vigorously responded) and others.

Since my last letter to you, TOMA has continued to advocate on behalf of all osteopathic physicians and our MD colleagues via the Coalition for Collaborative Care in response to several legislative issues, including the newly introduced House Bill 184 which seeks to grant independent practice to advanced practice registered nurses, nurse clinical specialists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and physician assistants ([a link to the legislation is provided here](#)). I would like to encourage you to contact your state legislators to discuss that these providers, who absolutely have valuable training and an ability to contribute substantially to healthcare delivery, do not have sufficient training and, in many cases, experience to warrant independent practice...especially nurse practitioners who do not have to have any clinical experience other than that obtained in primary nursing school, before entering "advanced practitioner" training. I would ask that you also emphasize that the people of Tennessee will be best served by a model of a physician-led team-oriented approach to healthcare delivery.

In addition, the TOMA board held its winter meeting which featured discussion of:

- 1) a new non-voting associate membership category for our MD colleagues,
- 2) ongoing plans for the upcoming summer AOA House of Delegates business meeting,
- 3) TOMA annual convention and business meeting, which will likely have both in person and virtual registration options (and which will feature the two-hour proper prescribing education needed for Tennessee licensure)-this meeting will feature 24 hours of category 1-A CME plus additional available CME for a pre-convention preceptor training program,
- 4) the slate of officers to be presented to qualified voting members at the spring business meeting,
- 5) ratification of our agreement with Oak Ridge Management Company,
- 6) granting of Life Member status to Dr. Don Hartsfield-if you know Dr. Hartsfield, please feel free to congratulate him, and,
- 7) an AOA update from our own Dr. Tom Ely, current AOA president, who is very capably serving the needs of osteopathic physicians around the world.

It is my hope that you will also consider joining me and TOMA in donating to the Tennessee Medical Foundation (TMF), which, during the pandemic, has been busier than ever. As you may know, TMF is an independent 501(c)3 physician administered nonprofit organization that provides confidential health services specific to the needs of health professionals (most commonly physicians, physician assistants, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, and veterinarians), and those in training, with an emphasis upon stress/burn out, substance abuse

and addiction, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive illness, and other issues. TMF provides its valuable services to all who need them and operates only on contributions from physicians and the public, hospitals, and some grants. The TMF program is considered a leader and a prototypical example to follow in many other states. I urge you to visit the TMF website ([www.e-tmf.org](http://www.e-tmf.org)) to learn about their programs, posted news, helpful links, and information on how to donate. TMF has not only saved many careers, but many lives as well, including those of osteopathic physicians.

We continue to live in turbulent times and it is more important now than ever for us, as DOs, to continue to stand together, and stand tall, advocating for our profession, our patients, and the health of the people of Tennessee, serving not only as great clinicians but also educators and advocates, for which our noble profession is so well-known. Rest assured that TOMA is right there with you in doing so on behalf of our profession and our patients.

Please feel free to touch base with suggestions, comments, or if there is anything we can do on your behalf; as always, we will welcome your participation on committees, in programs, and interest in potential leadership roles.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Wieting, DO". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Michael Wieting, DO  
President