



ABOUT THE AOA

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) is the professional association representing more than 197,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students. We promote public health, support scientific research and serve as the primary certifying body for physicians who practice osteopathically. Our mission is to advance the philosophy and practice of osteopathic medicine and promote the delivery of high-quality, cost-effective care within a distinct, unified profession.

WHAT IS A DO?

Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine, or DOs, are fully licensed physicians who practice in every medical field and specialty, combining medical expertise with a **whole-person approach centered on caring for the body, mind and spirit**. DOs are trained to promote the body's natural tendency toward health and self-healing. They practice according to the latest science and technology while exploring options to avoid drugs and surgery when possible. Listening to patients and partnering in their care are at the heart of the distinctive osteopathic philosophy.

GROWING THE OSTEOPATHIC WORKFORCE

Osteopathic medicine remains one of the fastest-growing health care professions in the country. **DOs now represent 11% of all U.S. physicians and 28% of all U.S. medical students.**

157,456

Osteopathic physicians
in the U.S.

39,942

Osteopathic medical
students in the U.S.

92,946

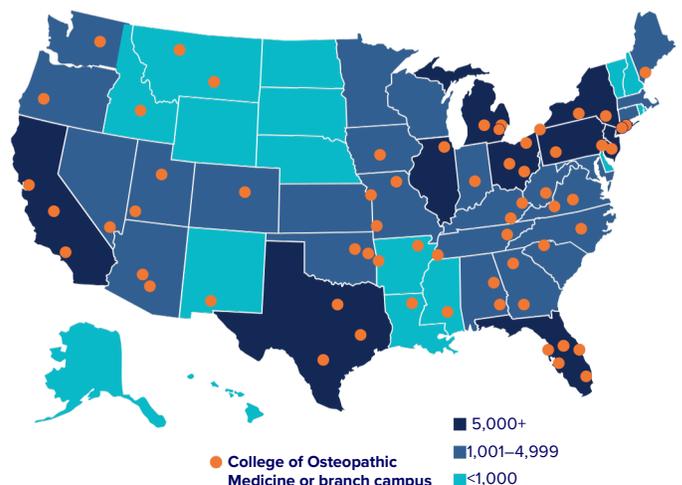
DOs under the age of 45

This past spring, nearly 8,200 new DOs joined the profession, further strengthening our impact. Currently, almost 40,000 osteopathic medical students are enrolled for the 2024-25 academic year, bringing the **total number of DOs and osteopathic medical students nationwide to 197,398.**

DOs ARE ANSWERING THE CALL

DOs practice in communities across all 50 states, often remaining near the areas where they complete their education and training. Because the majority of osteopathic medical schools are located in rural or medically underserved regions, DOs help bridge critical health care gaps in communities with limited access to care.

This map shows colleges of osteopathic medicine along with the rough number of DOs located in each state.



Sources: AOA Masterfile, Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA).



PRIMARY CARE IS IN DEMAND

In 2024, 53% of osteopathic candidates matched into primary care residencies, reinforcing the profession’s commitment to addressing the nation’s physician shortage, which is projected to be as high as 86,000 by 2036. Osteopathic medical schools also lead in primary care training; 16 of the top 20 schools that produce the most primary care physicians are DO schools.

EXPANDING IN EVERY SPECIALTY

Approximately 43% of DOs currently practice in non-primary care specialties, a 16% increase over the past decade. As the demand for well-rounded physicians continues to grow, **DOs are playing an increasingly critical role in both primary care and specialized fields.**

Top 5 Non-Primary Care Specialties

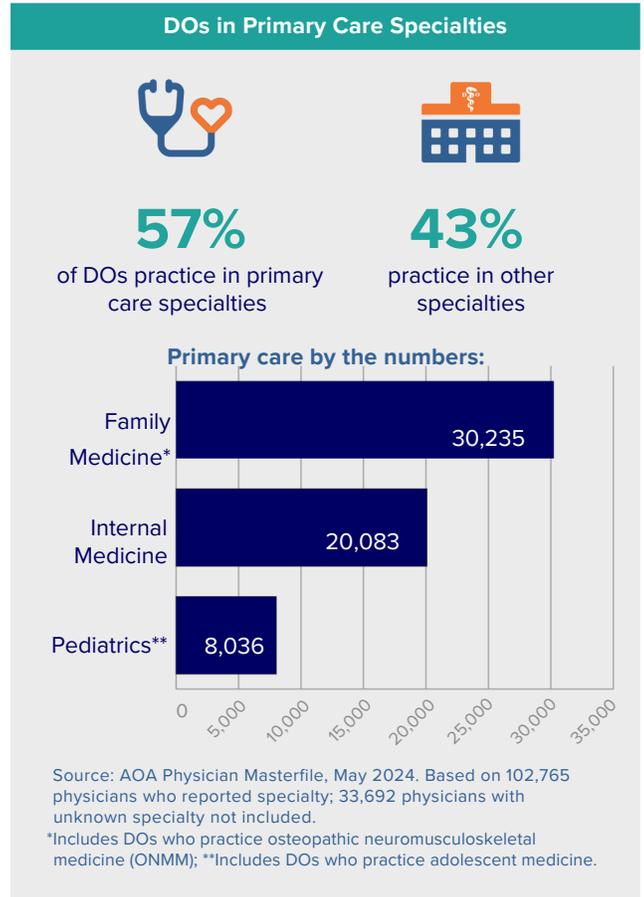
**Emergency
Medicine** 10,363
10%

Anesthesiology 4,345
4%

OB-GYN 4,275
4%

**General
Surgery** 3,894
4%

Psychiatry 3,883
4%



70% under age 45

Nearly 70% of DOs in active practice today are under age 45, reflecting significant growth in the number of physicians choosing careers in osteopathic medicine.



30% of military physicians

DOs play a significant role in the U.S. military medical corps, comprising approximately 30% of all military physicians.



Source: AOA Physician Masterfile, May 2024.

Source: 2024 Osteopathic Medical Profession Report



A M E R I C A N
O S T E O P A T H I C A S S O C I A T I O N



150 YEARS OF OSTEOPATHIC DISTINCTION

The whole-person philosophy established in 1874 by frontier physician A.T. Still, MD, DO, continues to guide the osteopathic profession today.

What began as a revolutionary concept introduced by a Civil War surgeon has transformed into an expansive and thriving community of physicians and medical students dedicated to caring for the body, mind and spirit of their patients. Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine, or DOs, practice in every medical field and specialty available today, combining their expertise with a whole-person approach centered on listening to and partnering with their patients.

In 1874, Dr. Still's progressive philosophy, which focused on treating the body as a unit with a natural tendency toward health and self-healing, was met with resistance by fellow medical practitioners who relied primarily on drugs as a cornerstone of medical care. Despite these challenges, Dr. Still continued to champion osteopathic medicine, eventually founding the nation's first osteopathic medical school in 1892. Since that time, the osteopathic medical profession has grown exponentially and today represents approximately 11% of all physicians and 28% of all medical students in the U.S.

The pioneering spirit of Dr. Still is very much alive, demonstrated by nearly 200,000 members of the osteopathic medical profession who bring a unique whole-person approach to caring for millions of patients across the nation. DOs hold some of the most distinguished positions in medicine today, caring for U.S. Presidents, overseeing the NASA medical team and leading some of the nation's top-ranked hospitals and health systems. Scan the code below for an overview of demographics and trends that are shaping how DOs contribute to the practice of medicine in the U.S.



[OSTEOPATHIC.ORG](https://osteopathic.org)

