



AMERICAN  
OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION



# OSTEOPATHIC MEDICAL PROFESSION REPORT

2023

# A profession on the rise

For the past 131 years, the osteopathic medical profession has provided full-spectrum care for millions of patients seeking a unique approach to managing their health—one that considers the whole person: body, mind and spirit. The profession was founded in the late 1800s by frontier physician Andrew Taylor Still, DO, MD, based on the philosophy that harmony between the body's structure and function is essential to achieving optimal health.

Today, this philosophy continues to guide all aspects of medical education and training for the nation's workforce of osteopathic physicians (DOs). What began as a small profession with a distinctive philosophy has grown to become a critical component of the nation's health care system. In 2023, the total number of osteopathic physicians in the U.S. reached almost 149,000—a 30% increase over the past five years. Over the past three decades, the total number of DOs and osteopathic medical students has more than quadrupled to reach 186,871 in 2023.

Currently representing more than 11% of all physicians in the U.S., the osteopathic medical profession is positioned to continue growing exponentially. Today, more than 25% of all U.S. medical students are pursuing osteopathic medicine. Following four years of medical school, DOs complete internships, residencies and fellowships that can last between three and eight years and prepare them to practice in a specialty of their choosing.

Though the osteopathic profession has strong roots in primary care, DOs practice their distinctive philosophy in every medical field and specialty, combining their medical expertise with a whole-person approach focused on listening to and partnering with their patients. DOs hold some of the most prominent positions in medicine today, including serving as Physician to the President of the United States, overseeing care for the NASA medical team and providing medical care for many Olympic-level and professional athletes.

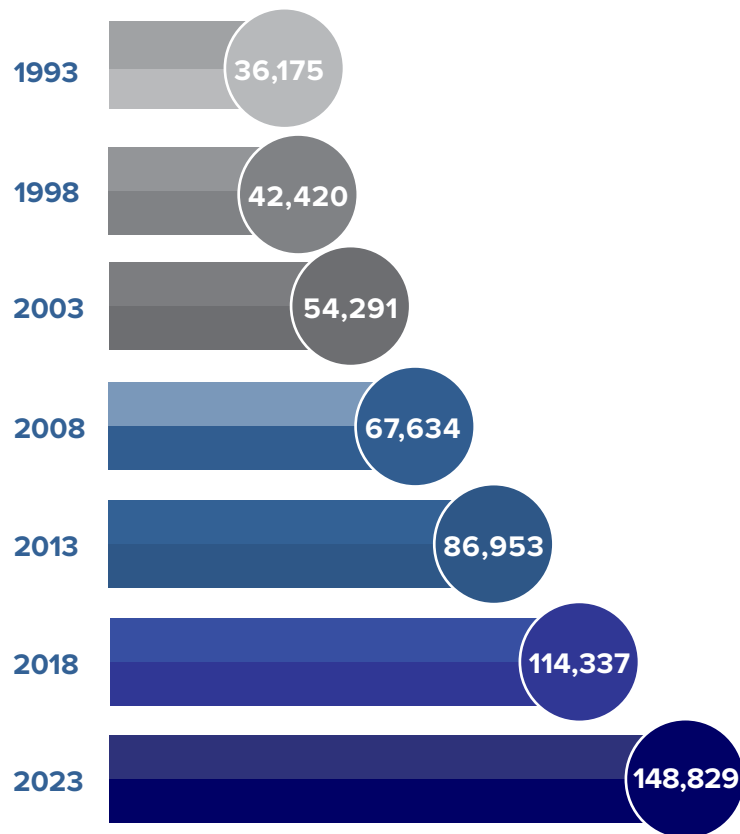
The AOA's Osteopathic Medical Profession (OMP) Report provides an annual update on the expansion and growth within the osteopathic medical profession. Read on for a summary of current demographics and trends related to the practice of osteopathic medicine in 2023.



# Era of growth

More than 7,800 new osteopathic physicians joined the health care workforce in spring 2023, bringing the total number of DOs in the U.S. to 148,829. In addition, more than 38,000 students are enrolled to study at osteopathic medical schools across the country during the 2023-24 academic year, according to the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA).

**Total DOs in the U.S.\***



\*All living DOs, including an estimated 7,859 osteopathic physicians who graduated in 2023, according to the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine. Source: AOA Physician Masterfile, May 2023.

\*\*Includes all estimated osteopathic medical students expected to matriculate in the 2023-24 academic year. Source: Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation.

**148,829**

osteopathic physicians in the U.S.\*



**38,042**

osteopathic medical students in the U.S.\*\*

**186,871**

total osteopathic physicians and students in the U.S.



# Physicians on the front lines

Though DOs bring their distinctive approach to every field and specialty across the landscape of medicine, the osteopathic profession plays a major role in meeting the nation's primary care workforce needs. In 2023, more than half of the nation's DOs practice in the primary care specialties of family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics. The majority of these physicians—62%—are under age 45, demonstrating that primary care remains a desirable specialty for early-career physicians entering the workforce.

The profession's emphasis on primary care positions DOs to make a critical impact in addressing the projected physician shortage expected to limit access to patient care in the next 10 years. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, the U.S. could see an estimated shortage of between 37,000 and 124,000 physicians by 2034, including gaps in both primary care and non-primary care specialties.

The number of osteopathic medical schools has more than doubled over the past two decades, with the majority located in rural or underserved regions. As a result, osteopathic physicians often complete their education and training in communities with limited access to care. On the 2023-24 U.S. News and World Report list of top medical schools, osteopathic schools received the following rankings:

- Seven of the top 10 spots for medical schools with the most graduates in primary care.
- Three of the top 10 spots for medical schools with the most graduates practicing in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).
- Six of the top 10 spots for medical schools with the most graduates practicing in rural areas.

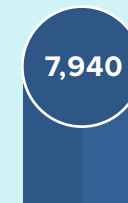
## DOs in primary care specialties



\*Family  
Medicine



Internal  
Medicine



Pediatrics &  
adolescent  
medicine



**57%**

of DOs practice in  
primary care fields



**43%**

of DOs practice  
in other specialties

Source: AOA Physician Masterfile, May 2023. Based on 103,128 physicians who reported specialty; 4,294 with unknown specialty not included.

\*Includes physicians who practice osteopathic neuromuculoskeletal medicine (ONMM).

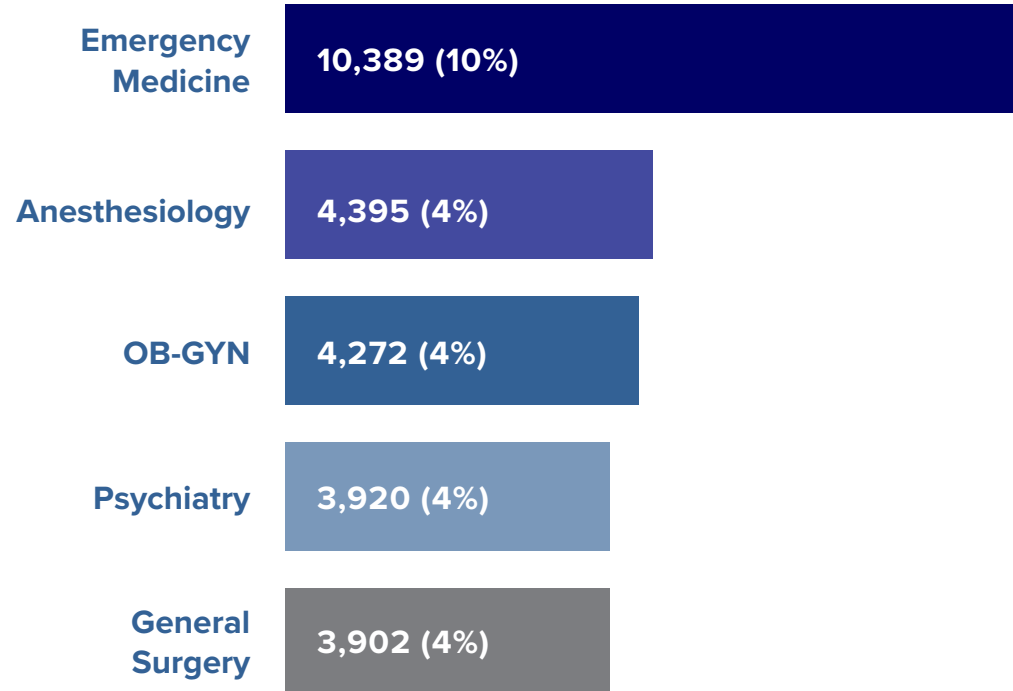
# Expanding osteopathic medicine



Over the past two decades, the number of DOs choosing to pursue non-primary care specialties has increased significantly, leading to the expansion of osteopathic principles and practice across the full range of medicine. In 2023, just over 43% of DOs practice in non-primary care specialties, with emergency medicine, anesthesiology and OB-GYN topping the list.

These numbers mirror DO residency placements secured through the 2023 National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) Match, which placed 57% of osteopathic candidates in primary care programs and 43% in non-primary care specialties. DO Match placements increased in 2023 for general surgery, neurology, psychiatry, pathology, orthopedic surgery, child neurology, vascular surgery and otolaryngology.

## Top 5 non-primary care specialties:



Source: AOA Physician Masterfile, May 2023.



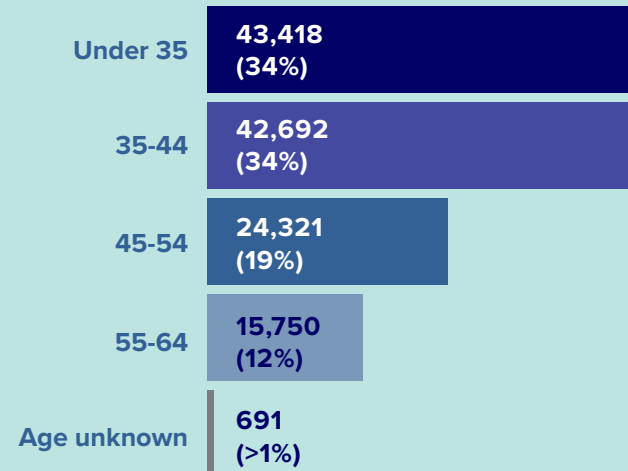
# Snapshot of the profession



As the osteopathic profession continues to grow and evolve, the AOA actively tracks demographic and practice trends among DOs and osteopathic medical students. In recent years, the increased number of medical students pursuing osteopathic medicine has led to an increase in the percentage of DOs under age 45. In 2023, approximately 86,110 DOs fall into this category, representing 68% of all osteopathic physicians in active practice.

The number of women practicing osteopathic medicine increased in 2023. Women currently represent 44% of all DOs in active practice. Approximately 47% of DOs under age 45 in active practice are female. According to data published by the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, the number of female DOs graduating from osteopathic medical schools increased by almost 10% in 2022. Similarly, the number of graduates from underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups increased by nearly 10%.

## Actively practicing DOs by age:



**126,872**  
DOs in active practice

**68%**  
of DOs in active practice are under age 45

**47%**  
of DOs in active practice under age 45 are female

Percentage of female DOs in active practice:

2023: **44%**

2015: **40%**

2010: **32%**

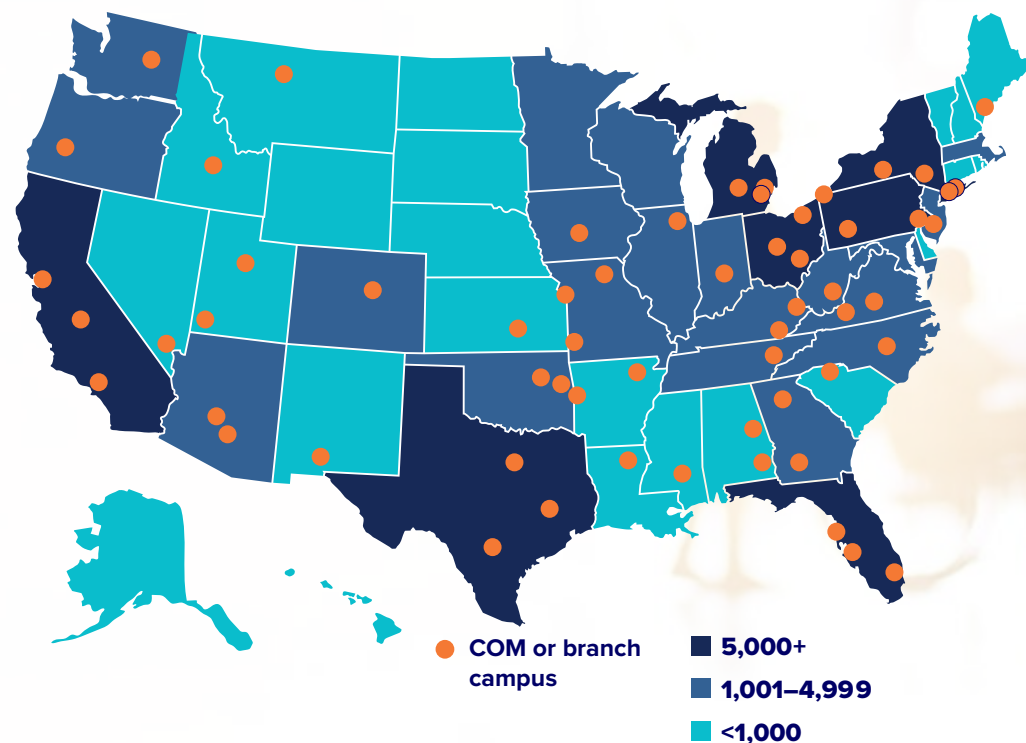
2005: **27%**

2000: **23%**

Source: AOA Physician Masterfile, May 2023.

# Coast to coast

While the numbers vary from state to state, DOs can be found in almost every community across the nation. It is not uncommon for DOs to practice near the institutions where they completed their education and training, leading many to provide care in the underserved and rural regions where osteopathic medical schools are typically located.



## Total DOs in practice, by state:

5,000+	1,000 – 4,999	<1,000
CA: 11,707 (8.3%)	IL: 4,931 (3.5%)	MS: 872 (0.6%)
FL: 11,190 (7.9%)	AZ: 4,020 (2.9%)	ID: 832 (0.6%)
PA: 11,117 (7.9%)	MO: 3,972 (2.8%)	AR: 729 (0.5%)
MI: 9,221 (6.5%)	VA: 3,443 (2.4%)	NH: 554 (0.4%)
NY: 9,091 (6.4%)	OK: 3,113 (2.2%)	NM: 537 (0.4%)
TX: 8,614 (6.1%)	CO: 2,912 (2.1%)	DE: 518 (0.4%)
OH: 7,270 (5.2%)	NC: 2,821 (2.0%)	HI: 506 (0.4%)
NJ: 6,033 (4.3%)	WA: 2,714 (1.9%)	LA: 480 (0.3%)
	IA: 2,377 (1.7%)	NE: 468 (0.3%)
	GA: 2,322 (1.6%)	MT: 430 (0.3%)
	IN: 2,227 (1.6%)	RI: 406 (0.3%)
	TN: 2,050 (1.5%)	AK: 368 (0.3%)
	WI: 1,882 (1.3%)	SD: 298 (0.2%)
	OR: 1,805 (1.3%)	WY: 210 (0.1%)
	WV: 1,802 (1.3%)	DC: 186 (0.1%)
	SC: 1,790 (1.3%)	VT: 165 (0.1%)
	KY: 1,765 (1.3%)	ND: 142 (0.1%)
	MA: 1,608 (1.1%)	
	AL: 1,546 (1.1%)	
	MD: 1,469 (1.0%)	
	MN: 1,422 (1.0%)	
	UT: 1,359 (1.0%)	
	NV: 1,343 (1.0%)	
	KS: 1,335 (0.9%)	
	ME: 1,335 (0.9%)	
	CT: 1,011 (0.7%)	

AOA Physician Masterfile, May 2023; Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation.

# Future of the profession



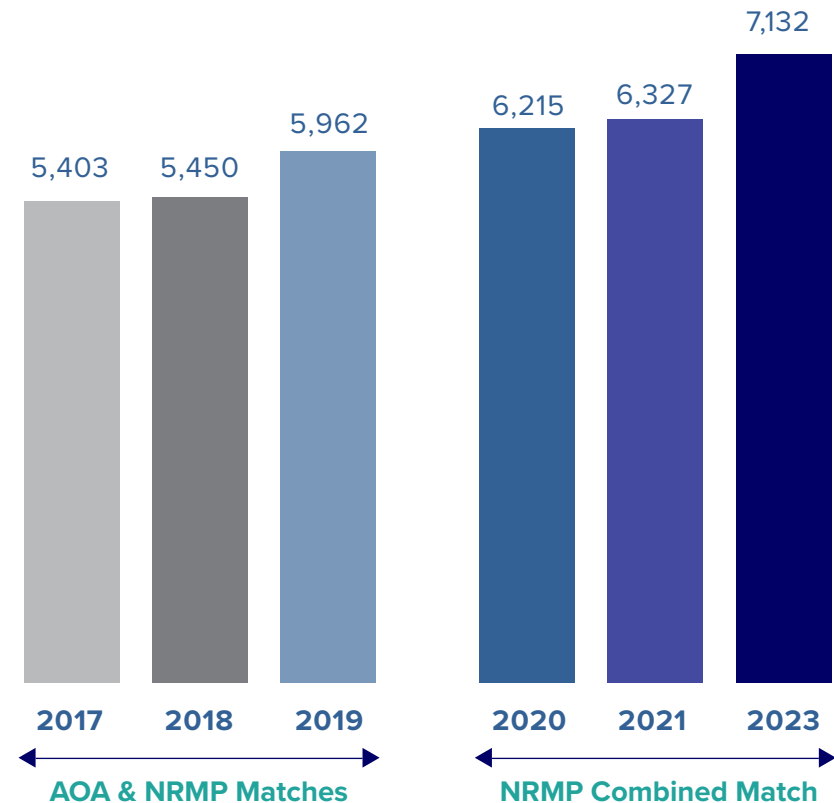
More medical students than ever before are choosing to pursue careers in osteopathic medicine. During the 2023-24 academic year, the AOA's Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) will accredit 40 colleges of osteopathic medicine offering instruction at 65 locations to more than 38,000 medical students.

Following medical school, DOs complete internships, residencies and fellowships, which can last between 3-8 years and prepare them to practice a specialty of their choosing. Each year, fourth-year osteopathic medical students and DOs seeking graduate medical education placements participate in the NRMP Match to secure residency positions at training institutions across the country.

Breaking records from all previous matches, the 2023 Match placed 7,132 osteopathic medical students and past DO graduates into residency positions in 37 specialties. Outside of the NRMP Match, additional DO candidates secured residencies through NRMP's SOAP, the San Francisco and Urology matches, and the Military Match, leading to a final total placement rate of 99.5% for DO seniors.

## DO residency match rates

Year over year match rates for DO students and graduates continue to rise, breaking all previous placement records for the NRMP Match.



Source: National Resident Matching Program.



OMP Report 2023



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