

# 2024

American Osteopathic Association

# Osteopathic Medical Profession Report

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OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION



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## — 150 years of osteopathic distinction

This year, we join to celebrate 150 years of osteopathic medicine, commemorating the date in 1874 when frontier physician A.T. Still, MD, DO, first established the founding principles of the profession.

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. More prospective physicians than ever before are choosing to become DOs, with nearly 40,000 medical students attending 42 colleges of osteopathic medicine across 67 campuses.

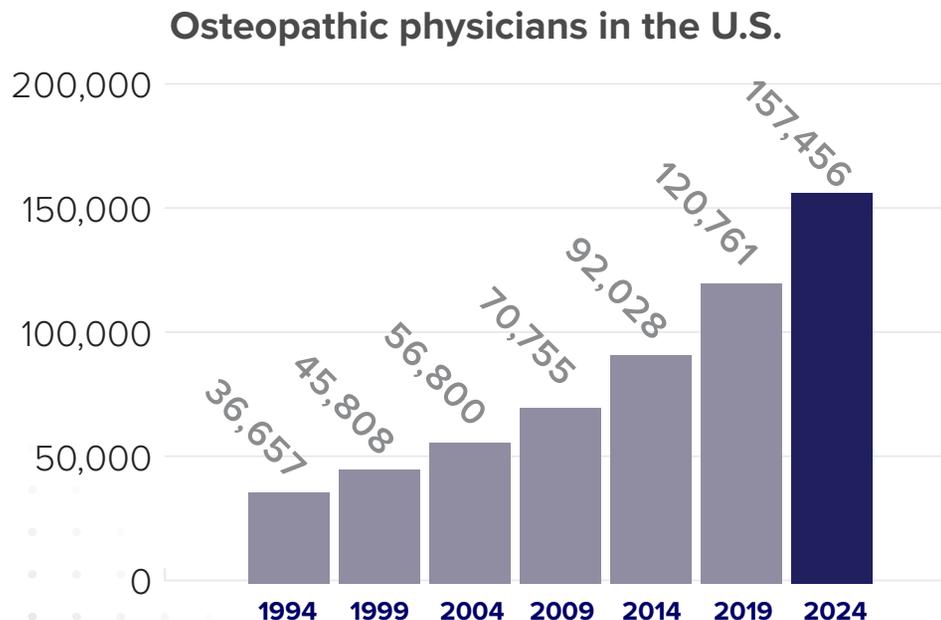
The pioneering spirit of Dr. Still is very much alive, demonstrated by nearly 200,000 members of the osteopathic medical profession who bring a unique whole-person approach to caring for millions of patients across the nation. DOs hold some of the most distinguished positions in medicine today, caring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

In the AOA's Osteopathic Medical Profession (OMP) Report, you'll find the latest updates detailing growth and expansion of the osteopathic medical profession. Read further for an overview of demographics and trends that are shaping how DOs contribute to the practice of medicine in the U.S.

## — Growing the DO workforce

The osteopathic medical profession continues to expand each year, bolstered by the growing number of medical students pursuing careers as DOs. This past spring, the profession welcomed nearly 8,200 new DO graduates. In addition, approximately 40,000 osteopathic medical students are enrolled for the 2024-25 academic year, bringing the total number of DOs and osteopathic medical students across the nation to 197,398.

The profession is poised to surpass 200,000 DOs and osteopathic medical students in the year ahead, further contributing to the expansion of the osteopathic philosophy across the full spectrum of specialties.



150 years of growth

**157,456**

Osteopathic physicians  
in the U.S.\*

11% of all U.S. physicians

**39,942**

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

28% of all U.S. medical students

**197,398**

Total osteopathic physicians  
& medical students in the U.S.

\*All living DOs, including an estimated 8,195 new graduates. Source: AOA Physician Masterfile.

\*\*All osteopathic medical students set to matriculate in the 2024-25 academic year. Source: American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM).

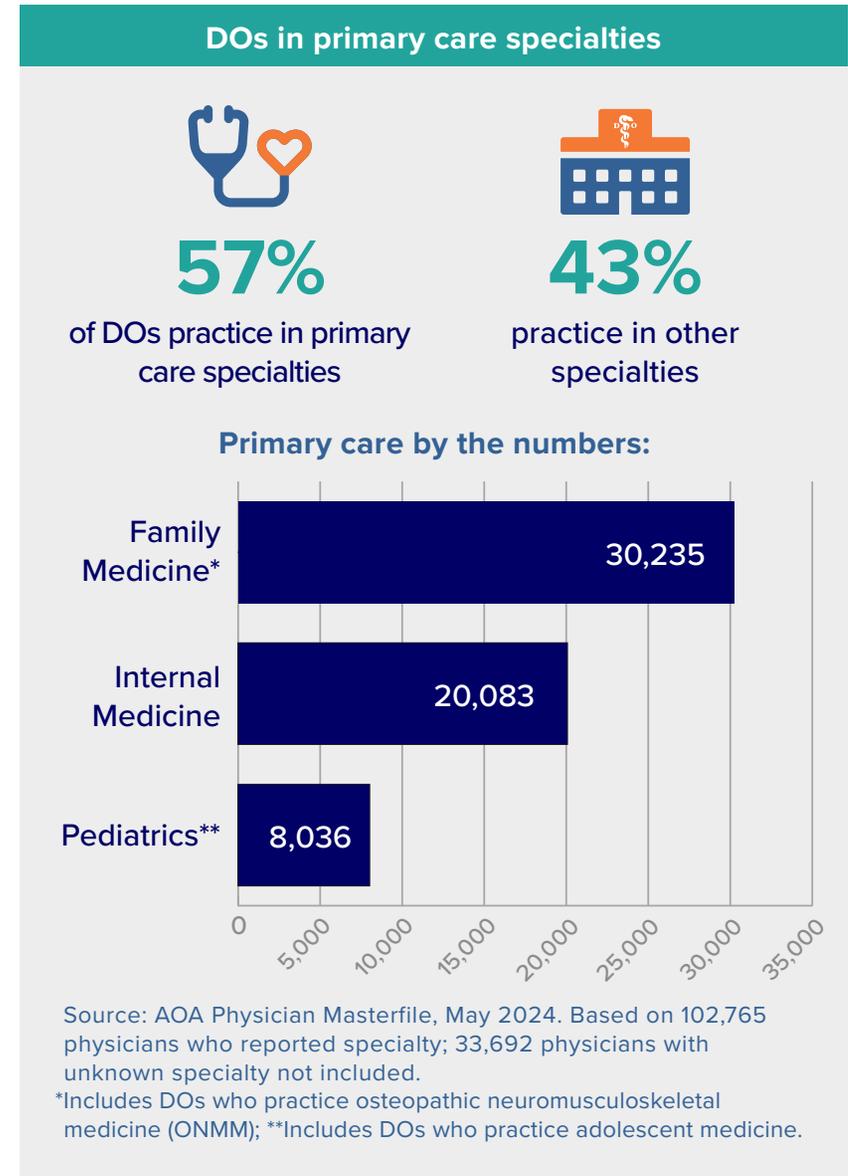
# -- Primary care in demand

When Dr. Still first established the founding principles of osteopathic medicine more than 150 years ago, he envisioned a world where the practice of medicine focused more on wellness and disease prevention rather than treatment of symptoms. This whole-person approach to wellness remains the cornerstone of osteopathic medical education, training and practice today.

DOs bring a distinctive approach to caring for patients across the full spectrum of medicine, with a significant number choosing to pursue careers as frontline physicians in primary care specialties, including family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics.

Reflecting the profession's ongoing commitment to primary care, 53% of osteopathic candidates matched into primary care residency programs in 2024. These physicians—and those who will join the workforce in coming years—will play a critical role in helping to alleviate a shortage of up to 86,000 U.S. physicians by 2036, as projected by the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Underscoring the profession's continued commitment to building the future of primary care, osteopathic medical schools make up 16 of the top 20 schools producing the most graduates practicing in primary care, according to U.S. News and World Report's 2024 rankings.



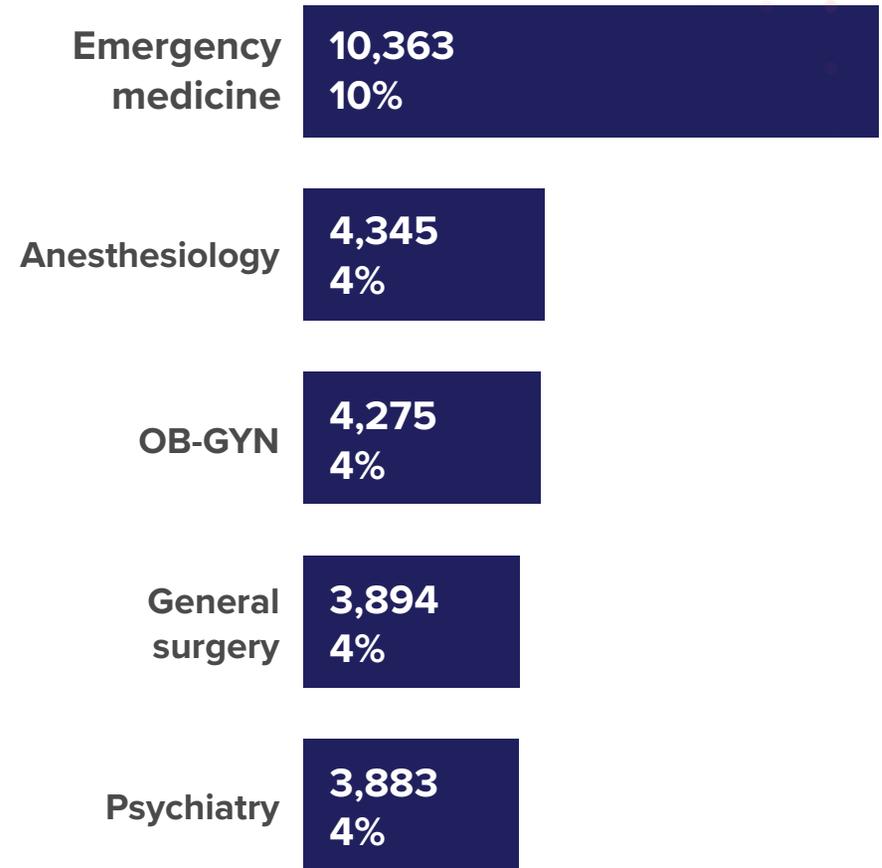
## — Era of expansion

Despite the osteopathic medical profession's strong roots in primary care, more DOs than ever before are choosing non-primary care specialties. These DOs practice across a wide range of medical disciplines, including surgery, emergency medicine, OB-GYN and psychiatry. Regardless of specialty, DOs treat their patients using the distinctive osteopathic philosophy focused on wellness in body, mind and spirit.

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. Their ability to provide a whole-person approach, combined with their rigorous medical training, positions them well to meet the complex needs of patients in today's health care landscape. Top non-primary care specialties for DOs in 2024 include emergency medicine, anesthesiology, OB-GYN, general surgery and psychiatry.

Representing the future of the profession, approximately 47% of DO students matched into non-primary care residency programs across a variety of specialties through the 2024 NRMP Match. The number of DO senior placements increased significantly in emergency medicine, psychiatry, OB-GYN, general surgery, radiology, anesthesiology and physical medicine and rehabilitation.

### Top 5 non-primary care specialties

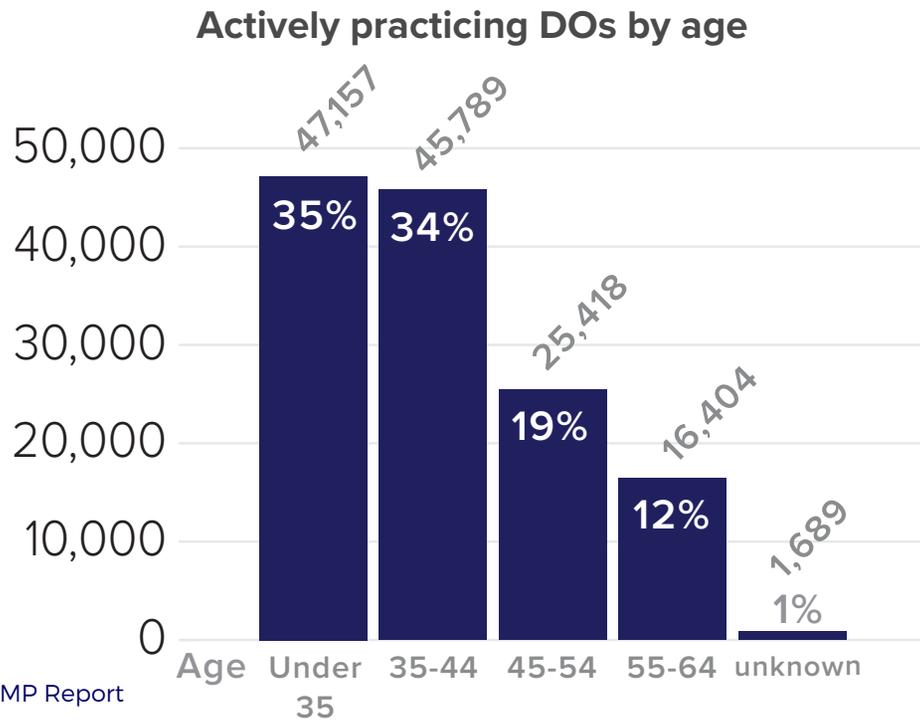


Source: AOA Physician Masterfile, May 2024.

## — DO demographics

With each passing year, the number of future physicians who choose careers in osteopathic medicine continues to increase. Reflecting significant growth in the number of new graduates entering the profession during the past decade, nearly 70% of DOs in active practice today are under age 45.

The number of female osteopathic physicians is also on the rise, accounting for 45% of all DOs in active practice. This percentage increases to 48% for those in active practice under age 45. Moreover, women currently make up more than 50% of all osteopathic medical students, according to the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM).



### Snapshot of the profession

**136,457**

DOs in active practice\*

**92,946**

DOs in active practice under age 45

**44,592**

Female DOs in active practice under age 45

Percentage of female DOs in active practice:

2024 : **45%**

2019 : **42%**

2014 : **39%**

2009 : **34%**

**32%**

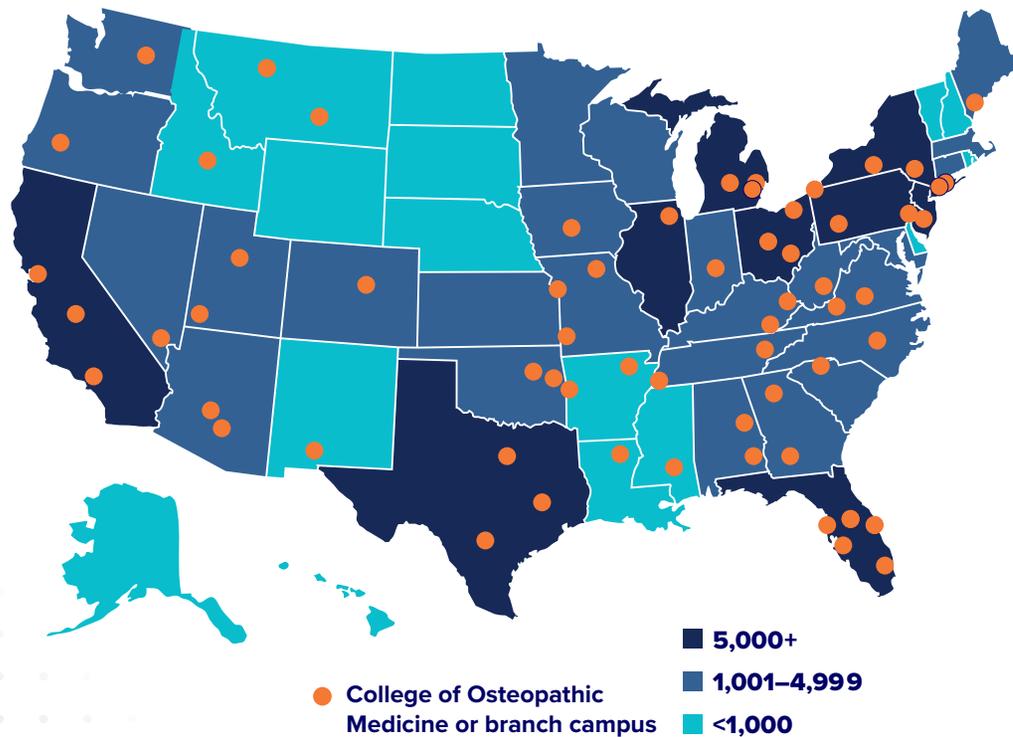
increase over  
15 years

Source: AOA Physician Masterfile, May 2024.

\*Includes all DOs, including those in training, under age 65 who are not known to be active or retired.

# — Answering the call

In addition to applying their distinctive philosophy to all medical specialties, DOs practice in communities across every state in the nation. Data shows that DOs tend to practice in or near the communities where they complete their education and training. Moreover, the fact that osteopathic medical schools are primarily located in rural or medically underserved regions makes DOs more likely to practice in communities with limited access to care.



State	5,000+	State	1,000-4,999	State	<1,000
CA	12,063 (8.8%)	AZ	3,744 (2.7%)	ID	963 (0.7%)
FL	10,576 (7.8%)	VA	3,713 (2.7%)	AR	898 (0.7%)
PA	10,078 (7.4%)	MO	3,547 (2.6%)	MS	875 (0.6%)
NY	9,392 (6.9%)	NC	3,017 (2.2%)	LA	539 (0.4%)
TX	8,309 (6.1%)	CO	2,751 (2.0%)	NM	520 (0.4%)
MI	7,862 (5.8%)	OK	2,741 (2.0%)	NH	508 (0.4%)
OH	6,525 (4.8%)	WA	2,558 (1.9%)	NE	482 (0.4%)
NJ	5,726 (4.2%)	GA	2,318 (1.7%)	HI	478 (0.4%)
IL	5,080 (3.7%)	IA	2,130 (1.6%)	DE	475 (0.3%)
		IN	2,129 (1.6%)	MT	384 (0.3%)
		TN	2,095 (1.5%)	RI	340 (0.2%)
		SC	1,950 (1.4%)	AK	322 (0.2%)
		KY	1,891 (1.4%)	SD	295 (0.2%)
		WV	1,844 (1.4%)	WY	181 (0.1%)
		WI	1,759 (1.3%)	DC	173 (0.1%)
		OR	1,718 (1.3%)	VT	140 (0.1%)
		AL	1,665 (1.2%)	ND	127 (0.1%)
		UT	1,566 (1.1%)		
		MA	1,555 (1.1%)		
		MD	1,459 (1.1%)		
		MN	1,418 (1.0%)		
		NV	1,353 (1.0%)		
		ME	1,161 (0.9%)		
		KS	1,125 (0.8%)		
		CT	1,024 (0.8%)		

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

## — Caring for the underserved

According to the National Rural Healthcare Association, rural areas average 13 physicians per 10,000 patients, compared with 31 in urban areas. The osteopathic medical profession plays a critical role in helping to narrow that gap by placing emphasis on recruiting medical students who are more likely to practice in the areas where they complete their education and training.

On U.S. News and World Report's 2024 list of the best medical schools in the nation, osteopathic medical schools landed four of the top 10 spots for schools with the most graduates practicing in underserved areas. The top two schools noted in the category were Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine and Campbell University-Jerry M. Wallace School of Osteopathic Medicine, respectively.

Six of the top 10 schools with the most graduates practicing in rural areas were osteopathic medical schools, with the top honor awarded to A.T. Still University Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, followed by William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine and University of Pikeville-Kentucky College of Osteopathic Medicine.



## — Investing in the future

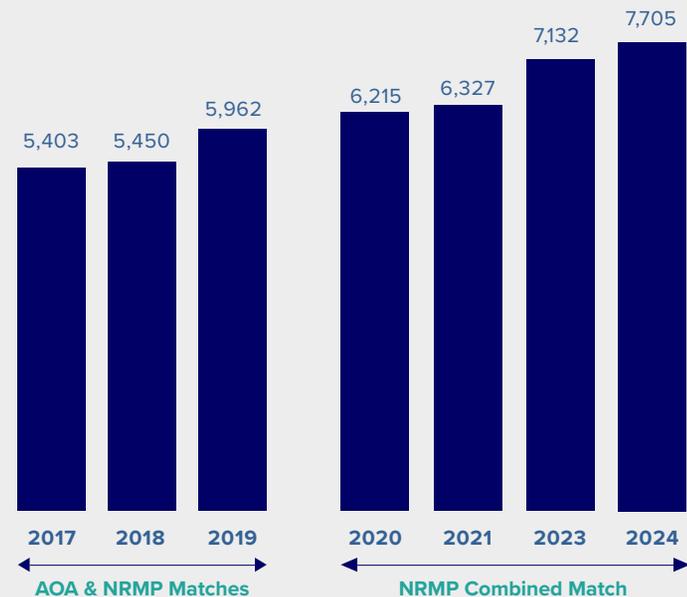
For more than 150 years, the osteopathic medical profession has answered the call for millions of patients seeking a distinctive approach to managing their health and wellness. As the profession continues to evolve, DOs will undoubtedly play an even more impactful role in the U.S. and global health care systems, expanding further into diverse specialties, shaping healthcare policy and improving access to care.

The next generation of osteopathic medical students and residents poised to enter the physician workforce will practice medicine in a rapidly evolving health care landscape, with the advantage of blending modern innovations and a whole-person philosophy rooted in human touch and connection. This unique combination is already being actively sought by graduate medical education training programs spanning the full spectrum of specialties and geographic locations, resulting in DO seniors achieving a 99% final residency placement rate, the highest for all applicant types in 2024.

These physicians—and those who follow—will play a critical role in ensuring a bright and successful future for osteopathic medicine during the next 150 years and beyond.

### 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.



Sources: NRMP Match, American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine.



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