



2026 OSTEOPATHIC MEDICAL PROFESSION REPORT

Enduring growth of a timeless philosophy

An approach to patient care that has withstood the test of time

When A.T. Still, DO, established osteopathic medicine more than 150 years ago, he grounded the philosophy in whole-person care and the connectedness of the body's systems. He also pioneered the idea of wellness and treating the patient rather than the symptom. A forward thinker, he enrolled six female students in his inaugural medical school class.

Advancing from these founding principles, the osteopathic medical profession continues to grow year over year. This past year has seen significant growth in the total number of Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (DOs) in active practice*, women osteopathic physicians and DOs providing vital access to healthcare in rural and underserved areas across the country.

In 2025, the total number of osteopathic physicians and medical students surpassed 200,000 for the first time, numbering 207,158. In 2026, the number of osteopathic physicians and medical students is over 218,000**, with DOs now accounting for approximately 14.1% of all physicians,*** up from 11% in 2025.



~218,000

Total osteopathic physicians
and medical students



Through wars and pandemics, the osteopathic medical approach to patient care has withstood the test of time, and the profession continues to expand and help lead American healthcare.

DOs practice in every medical field and specialty. Osteopathic physicians are more in-demand than ever, with DOs holding some of the nation's top medical roles, including Physician to the President of the United States, Chief Medical Officer for the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee sports medicine program (Team USA), Chief Health and Medical Officer at NASA and Chief Medical Officer of the U.S. Department of Energy. DOs also serve in leadership positions in large health systems across the country.

Sources:

*DOs in active practice consists of all osteopathic physicians, including DOs in training under the age of 65 who are not known to be inactive or retired

**American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) 2026 Applicants, Matriculants, Enrollment and Graduates report

***AOA Physician Masterfile, May 31, 2026; The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) U.S. Physician Workforce dashboard.

Match rate records shattered; Student populations soar

Twenty-nine percent of medical students attend an osteopathic medical school today. The record-high number of current osteopathic medical students—41,001—is 10 times the enrollment number recorded nearly 50 years ago.* As more medical students choose the osteopathic path, educators have risen to meet demand.

This past year, the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) accredited 46 osteopathic medical schools, which offer education at 73 teaching campuses nationwide, up from 43 colleges of osteopathic medicine and 70 campuses in 2025. The quality and rigor of these educational institutions have been more broadly recognized. Case in point: 12 of these osteopathic medical schools ranked among the best medical schools for primary care on U.S. News & World Report's 2026 list. U.S. News also included 12 DO schools on its list of the best medical schools for research.

While student populations soar, so do residency match rates for DOs. For the fourth consecutive year, the highest number yet of osteopathic medical students and graduates obtained residency placements in the 2026 NRMP Match. With a total of 7,928 DO seniors matching, the DO senior match rate was a record-high of 93.2%, a 0.6% increase from last year. In 2026, DO seniors achieved a 98.8% final residency placement rate, with 9,019 seniors placing into residency training.

DO seniors matched into residency programs spanning 37 specialties. In 2026, DO seniors made up a larger share of the total positions filled in several specialties, including emergency medicine, neurology, surgery and anesthesiology.



1 in 4

medical students are in
osteopathic medical schools



41,000+

record-high number of
osteopathic medical students



93.2%

record-high NRMP
match rate

Majority of osteopathic primary care physicians are women

Primary care remains a cornerstone of osteopathic medicine's preventive, whole-person approach to care, with 55% of all DOs in a primary care specialty. This year, women are leading the growth in osteopathic primary care. For the first time in AOA Physician Masterfile records, women make up the majority of DOs practicing in primary care. In 2026, 50.2% of osteopathic physicians actively practicing primary care are women, up from 46.3% less than a decade ago.

The shift is driven by the youngest cohorts entering the profession. Among primary care DOs under age 35, 55.4% are women. With 65% of DOs in primary care under age 45, the profession's frontline workforce is also younger than at any point in its history.

Across the profession, women now represent 46.1% of those in active practice. More than 50,000 female DOs under age 45 are practicing today—a milestone crossed for the first time this year.



55%

DOs in a primary care specialty



50.2%

DOs in active primary care practice who are women



50,252

Female DOs in active practice under age 45

The up-and-coming DO workforce



The strong future of osteopathic medicine is evident in the escalation of osteopathic medical students and DOs under age 45.

Of the estimated 151,240 DOs in active practice today, 102,402, or 67.7%, are under the age of 45.

Primary care remains a cornerstone of osteopathic medicine now and into the future, with 65% of primary care DOs under the age of 45.*



2/3

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

Year	Practicing DOs
2010	63,121
2014	76,955
2018	101,006
2022	122,236
2026	151,240



65%

of **primary care** DOs
are under age 45*

DOs span non-primary specialties, with growth in all 5 top specialties

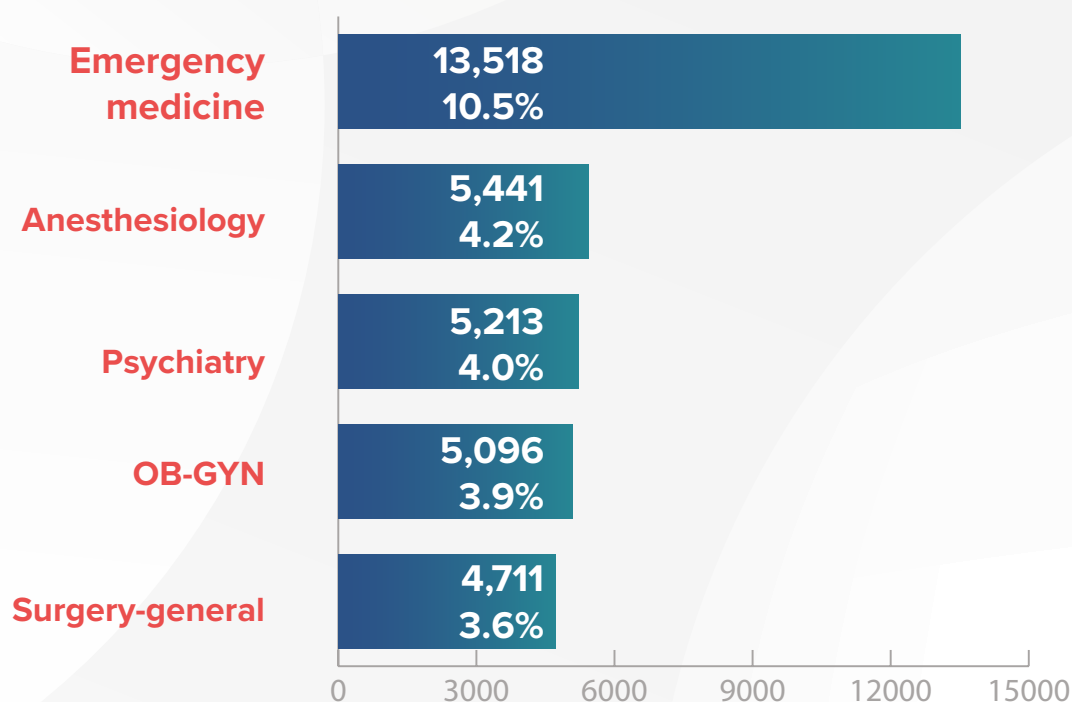
The focus on wellness of body, mind and spirit is foundational to the practice of osteopathic medicine across all specialties and subspecialties, from emergency medicine to psychiatry, anesthesiology and general surgery.

Of the 45% of practicing DOs who've chosen to apply the distinctive philosophy of osteopathic medicine to a non-primary care

specialty, the majority choose emergency medicine year after year. Of the top five non-primary care specialties among DOs, emergency medicine remains solidly number one, with 13,518 actively practicing in the specialty, or 10.5% of all practicing DOs.

No matter the specialty, DOs are positioned to treat the complex needs of patients across the healthcare landscape.

Top 5 DO non-primary care specialties



Osteopathic medicine spreads across the country, and DOs increase in every state

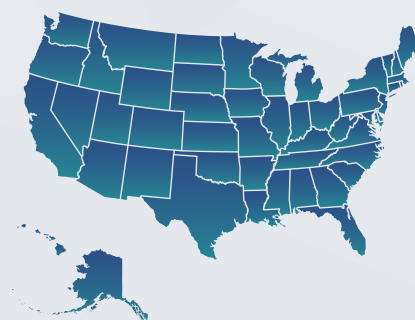
As we celebrate the United States' 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence this year, we see the osteopathic medical profession expand from sea to shining sea. The number of DOs grew in all 50 states and the District of Columbia in 2026, with 20 states outpacing the national growth rate of 6%.*

Six states are now home to more than 10,000 DOs, up from four last year, as Texas and Michigan joined California, Florida, Pennsylvania and New York above that threshold. Texas also moved ahead of Michigan to become the fifth-largest DO state. Kentucky surpassed 2,000 DOs and Mississippi crossed 1,000, leaving only 13 states and the District of Columbia below that mark.

Indicative of the osteopathic medical profession's commitment to providing healthcare access in rural and underserved areas, the steepest gains came in states where DOs have historically been fewest. Louisiana grew 13.8% year over year, followed by Idaho at 11%, Nevada at 10.4%, New Mexico at 9.7% and Arkansas at 8.6%. Over five years the pattern is sharper still: Arkansas has nearly doubled its DO population, up 92.9% since 2021, while Idaho grew 68.1%, Utah 66.1% and Louisiana 63.3%, each well ahead of the 31% national increase over the same period.

The result is a profession that is not only larger but also more evenly distributed. The six largest DO states accounted for 42.9% of all osteopathic physicians in 2026, down slightly from 43.1% a year earlier, as growth continues to spread into states with the fewest physicians per resident.

The future is burgeoning and bright for the enduring philosophy of osteopathic medicine.



50 of 50
all 50 states and D.C.



+92.9%

Growth in Arkansas' DO population since 2021, the fastest in the nation



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