



GEORGIA OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
1902

Your monthly GOMA news & update

Welcome to GOMA's monthly newsletter where you can stay up-to-date on the latest osteopathic news and happenings in the GOMA community.



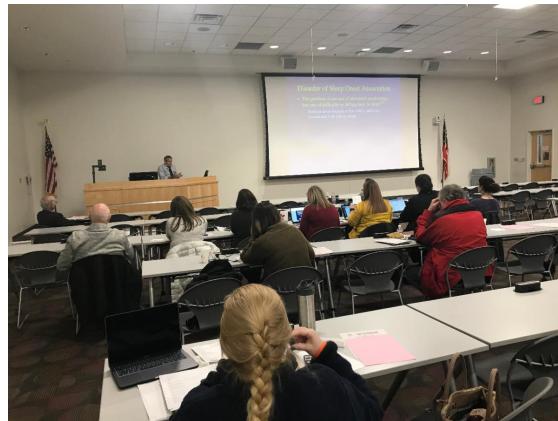
Specialty Seminar in Review

On a snowy day in February...



GOMA held its first specialty seminar on Saturday February 8, 2020 at PCOM in Suwanee. In this inaugural year, the focus was Pediatrics. All the physicians who attended felt that the lectures were high quality and pertinent to care of children. The eight hours of CME featured five osteopathic physicians that we would like to feature in this newsletter.

Gary Freed, DO, FAAP, FACOP, Professor of Pediatrics, PCOM Georgia & PCOM South Georgia, spoke on the “ABZZZs of Pediatric Sleep”. Dr. Freed is a former Professor Pediatrics at Emory, and transitioned to teaching at PCOM after 26 years at Emory. He led the Pediatric Clerkship program at Emory as well as the SIDS Program there. Dr. Freed did not speak on sleep apnea since that subject had been covered earlier in the morning by Emory Pediatric ENT Nikhila Raol, MD, MPH. He reviewed a wide selection of other sleep conditions. An interview with Dr. Freed immediately after he spoke was recorded in his office and can be seen [here](#).



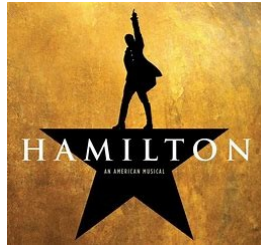
Michael Briones, DO is an Associate Professor of Pediatric Hematology Oncology at Emory University and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. He can be reached by [email](#) or by calling his office 404-785-1200. His talk was entitled “Pediatric Vascular Anomalies for Primary Care Physicians”. He talks about the changes in his career as well as his career path in his post-lecture interview which can be viewed [here](#).

Sarah Gard Lazarus, DO is Pediatric Emergency Medicine specialist for Pediatric Emergency Medicine Associates (PEMA) working at emergency rooms around Atlanta. Dr. Lazarus can be reached by [email](#). Her lecture on "Visual Clues to Child Abuse" was well received by the attendees. Her post-lecture interview can be seen [here](#).

Margaret "Peggy" Strieper, DO is a retired Assistant Professor of Pediatric Cardiology at Emory University & Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. She spoke on a subject that is close to her heart, electrophysiology, when she lectured on "Tachyarrhythmias of the Pediatric Heart". Dr. Strieper's post-lecture interview highlights her lecture as well as her post-retirement adventures can be viewed [here](#).

Dana Mansour Reid, DO was the last lecturer of the seminar. Dr. Reid is a Pediatric & Adolescent Psychiatrist in Alpharetta, GA. She spoke on "Anxiety in Children & Teens". Her office number is (770) 212-2249. Her post-lecture interview can be found [here](#).

RENEW / JOIN GOMA!



TICKETS WON!!

Congratulations to Ellen M. Ferguson, DO for winning 4 tickets to Hamilton at Atlanta's Fox Theatre!



Your membership dues support GOMA, the state chapter of the American Osteopathic Association. GOMA actions to support the DOs of the state have been numerous:

- Monthly newsletters
- Creating a bond between 1400 osteopathic physicians, residents and medical students by having an active Facebook presence
- Promoting the Osteopathic profession to the citizens of Georgia. In 2019, ninety five thousand (95,000) saw our advertisements
- Social gatherings in various locations around the state of Georgia
- Supporting members when they have problems with insurance companies misunderstanding DOs and osteopathic medicine
- Supporting members when they have problems with specialty societies misunderstanding DOs and osteopathic medicine
- Supporting members when they have problems with hospitals misunderstanding D.O.s and osteopathic medicine
- Helping young citizens of Georgia navigate their way into getting health insurance
- High quality CME programs for primary care physicians as well as specialists

In October 2019, GOMA President Craig Kubik, DO said after his installation, "Know about your roots. Remember where the profession came from and help guide the profession into the future. This is something you should join. It's worth your time. It's important for your profession."

At the same Fall CME Meeting GOMA Immediate Past President Michael Baron, DO said in his farewell, "No other state organization will speak for the DOs in the state of Georgia. 2020 is time for us to help each other. The Osteopathic profession brought us to this day. Please continue to support GOMA, and GOMA promises to support you."

[CLICK HERE to: Renew or Join GOMA!](#)

GEORGIA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Crossover day was completed in the evening hours of Thursday March 12, 2020. This is the day that proposed legislation that fails to be passed by one chamber of the legislature “dies”. Hence, only legislation that has moved on by the end of crossover day has any chance of being signed into law by the Governor. The legislature did pass an amended budget ending 6/30/2020 adding \$100 million for COVID-19 (Coronavirus) as well as restoring funding for everything from county public health grants to food inspectors. Lawmakers also added \$5 million in the budget for rural hospitals. The midyear budget would still cut \$159 million in spending and leave 1,255 vacant positions unfilled.

The Georgia General Assembly has been suspended “until further notice” as a result of the COVID-19 public health threat. The remainder of this article will feature proposed laws that still have a chance to get to the Governor’s desk this year. Please note that some measures could be revived this year if eagle-eyed lawmakers find opportunities to add their bill onto legislation that has already passed one chamber, which they can do if the two measures are in the same code section of state statutes.

IN THE SENATE:

At the end of February, inspired by a year-long investigation by the Atlanta Journal Constitution analyzing the quality of care of private-pay assisted living communities and large personal care homes, the Georgia House passed **H.B. 987** in a near unanimous vote. The proposal heads to the Senate and if it is adopted there and signed into law, it would increase training requirements and safety protections for seniors in these type of residences. It would also increase fines for abuse and neglect in homes. Rep. Sharon Cooper, R-Marietta, who shepherded it through the House in little more than a week after introduction, is a nurse.

A prescribing law **H.B. 791** passed the House unanimously, and is moving to the Senate. H. B. 791 would allow pharmacists to convert a maintenance medication prescription from a 30-day supply to a 90-day supply up to the quantities that have been authorized through refills by the physician – although this would not be permitted on the initial fill of the prescription or whenever the physician specifies that the refills should not be combined.

An insurance law **H.B. 888** passed the House with only 4 legislators in opposition, and is now in the Senate. H.B. 888 proposes:

1. To set the price that should be paid for out-of-network emergency care and unanticipated out-of-network non-emergency care at A) the previously contracted rate between the provider and the insurer or B) the 2017 median contracted rate, adjusted annually according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) – whichever is greater – and paid without the need for prior authorization and without any retrospective payment denials;
2. To allow a patient to choose out-of-network elective care by consenting in writing and orally at least 48 hours in advance with an estimate of the charges;
3. To require an insurer to use the most recent in-network contract rates as the initial payment for a physician/provider when a contract is terminated without cause by the insurer or with cause by a physician/provider within one year of the effective date of the legislation;
4. To establish a “baseball-style” arbitration system (i.e., the insurer and physician/provider would each submit a payment amount and an arbitrator would choose one of the numbers and the “loser” would pay the arbitration costs and the bundling or batching of claims would be allowed, with no thresholds).

IN THE HOUSE:

An insurance network law **S.B. 352** passed the Georgia Senate, and moves to the House Insurance Committee. S.B. 352 would require insurers to cover physician/other health care provider charges at in-network rates for the duration of the patient’s contract year if a

physician/provider departs the network during the contract year and were advertised as in-network in the insurer's provider directory when the patient selected their plan.

An insurance transparency law **S.B. 303**, passed the Senate one vote short of unanimous and has been assigned to the House Special Committee on Access to Quality Health Care, would require health insurers to make certain patient cost comparison information available on an interactive and publicly accessible website. This legislation would allow patients to 1) see how much in-network physicians are paid by insurers and 2) see the average amount that in-network physicians actually agree to be paid by insurers and 3) get an estimate for how much out-of-pocket money they will owe their physicians/providers and 4) compare quality metrics for the physicians/providers that are in their network in major diagnostic categories, adjusted for risk and severity.

Another insurance transparency law **S.B. 359** passed the Senate unanimously and has been sent to the House Special Committee on Access to Quality Health Care. S.B. 359 would

1. set the price that should be paid for out-of-network emergency care and unanticipated out-of-network non-emergency care at 1) the previously contracted rate between the provider and the insurer or 2) the 2017 median contracted rate, adjusted annually according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) – whichever is greater – and paid without the need for prior authorization and without any retrospective payment denials and;
2. allow a patient to choose out-of-network elective care by consenting in writing and orally at least 48 hours in advance with an estimate of the charges and;
3. require an insurer to use the most recent in-network contract rates as the initial payment for a physician/provider when a contract is terminated without cause by the insurer or with cause by a physician/provider within one year of the effective date of the legislation and;
4. establish a "baseball-style" arbitration system (i.e., the insurer and physician/provider would each submit a payment amount and an arbitrator would choose one of the numbers and the "loser" would pay the arbitration costs and the bundling or batching of claims would be allowed, with no thresholds).

A MediSpa law **S.B. 323** passed Georgia Senate and now is in the House Health & Human Services Committee. S.B. 323 would

1. require the Georgia Composite Medical Board to establish rules and regulations for the in-office use of sedation in "MediSpas" and
2. prohibit anyone who doesn't have a license to practice dentistry to administer conscious sedation in a dental facility or during the practice of dentistry in a MediSpa.

A physician supervision bill **S.B. 321** changes the rules allowing P.A.s and N.P.s to not be limited where they practice being near their supervising physician, and additionally it revises the number of P.A.s and N.P.s a physician can authorize and supervise at one time from four (4) to six (6). This bill passed the Senate one vote short of being unanimous and is now sitting in the House's Regulated Industries Committee.

A surprise billing bill **S.B. 359** passed the Senate without opposition and has been assigned to the House Special Committee On Access to Quality Health Care Committee. S.B. 359 would:

1. provide for certain consumer protections against surprise billing;
2. provide mechanisms to resolve payment disputes between insurers and out-of-network providers regarding the provision of healthcare services;
3. require the department to provide for the maintenance of an all-payer health claims data base;
4. provide for in-network cost-sharing amounts in healthcare plan contracts; and
5. establish an arbitration process.

There is a pause in the legislature due to the COVID-19 health care threat. This is an unusual opportunity. As medical providers, you have a chance to communicate with the legislators about your opinion on these bills. If you want to read the actual wording of the bills as well as see who will be hearing testimony about these bills by going to house.ga.gov or senate.ga.gov.





Top-left, Rep. Sharon Cooper receives a standing ovation and is congratulated by Speaker Pro Tem Jan Jones, R-Milton, after the House passed H.B. 987 in a 160-1 vote. It is awaiting action in the Senate.

Top-middle, meeting with Georgia House members for lunch gave a chance to discuss successes and challenges in healthcare. Pictured (Lt to Rt): Michael Baron, DO; Rep. Patty Bentley; Rep. Sharon Cooper, RN; Karen Turner, DO and Richard Chase, DO.

Top-right, Sometime the legislators are so impressed with the passion of the citizens that they get an official photograph with their constituents. All GA-PCOM medical students except the Dr. & the Rep. Left to Right: Doree Morison; Dr. Michael Baron; Thomas Wolz; Rep. Josh McLaurin; Christian Pruitt; Abhiram Srivatsa; Ferzan Uddin; Aldwin Soumare.

Lower-left, Terri Hodges, lobbyist for St Joseph Candler Hospital system and Karen Turner, DO, President-elect of GOMA like to discuss Savannah and strategies on dealing with legislators in Atlanta.

Lower-right, Members of the Patient-Centered Physicians Coalition of Georgia met with Lt. Governor Geoff Duncan on March 5, 2020. Pictured (Lt to Rt): Michael Baron, DO (GOMA); Edward Chin, MD (Georgia ACP); Al Scott, Jr, MD (Georgia OBGyn Society); Lt. Governor Geoff Duncan; Donald Fordham, MD (GAFF) and Terri McFaddin, MD (Georgia AAP)

GOMA GOES FOR THE SNMA GOLD!



THE STUDENT NATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Student National Medical Association (SNMA) is an organization that supports minority medical students as they work towards becoming physicians. SNMA has been around since 1968. SNMA was cultivated to support current and future underrepresented minority medical students, addressing the needs of underserved communities and increasing the number of clinically competent physicians.

Each year, SNMA holds a national conference which caters to students from all over the country. Last year, the conference was held in Philadelphia and had an attendance of over 2,000 made up of pre-med and medical students as well as residents and attending physicians. This year SNMA's conference was set to be in Cleveland Ohio from April 8- April 12 2020, and has since been cancelled in light of the current environment.

GOMA is proud to support the efforts of SNMA as a Gold Sponsor. The GOMA Executive Board is happy to support an organization that is helping bring more people of color into the osteopathic profession.

PHYSICIANS' DAY AT THE CAPITOL



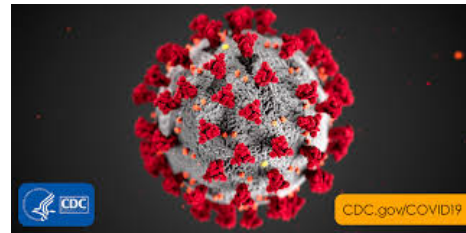
MARCH 5: GOMA VISITS THE CAPITOL TO LOBBY FOR PRIMARY CARE

The GOMA Legislative Team of Drs. Karen Turner, Michael Baron and Richard Chase (pictured left with GA-PCOM student) along with Executive Director, Valerie Okrend took time away from their regular duties to lobby Georgia legislators and Governor Brian Kemp on behalf of the osteopathic physicians of the state and their patients. It was a busy and very productive day! They were joined by fifteen osteopathic medical students from PCOM's Suwanee and Moultrie campuses.

The Patient-Centered Physicians Coalition (PCPC) of Georgia Legislative Day at the Capitol was attended by close to 200 physicians from four groups: GOMA; Georgia Academy of Family Physicians; Georgia Academy of Pediatrics (pictured above far right); Georgia College of Physicians (IM) and the Georgia OBGyn Society. The day was a culmination of efforts by representatives of each group meeting by phone monthly over the past year. Dr. Karen Turner deserves special thanks for the work she has done on legislative matters.

COVID-19 in Georgia

Since the first death from the coronavirus announced by the state of Georgia on March 12, the number has risen to 14.



The first patient, 67, had been hospitalized at WellStar Kennestone Hospital in Marietta since testing positive for COVID-19 five days before his death. The man also had “underlying medical conditions,” said Governor Brian Kemp’s office in a news release. Since then officials have taken numerous steps to prevent further transmission of the virus.

Healthcare Providers who suspect COVID-19 infection in a patient should report them immediately to Georgia Department of Public Health by calling 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584) and ask for a Medical Epidemiologist. Kathleen E. Toomey, MD, MPH has stressed to NOT have the patients call the number to request testing.

[CLICK HERE for: Real-Time Updates and Best Practices!](#)

SEEKING: Thriving solo practice in Snellville for the last 20 years seeking a long-term, full-time osteopath provider, but may also immediately benefit from a qualified interim provider Contact Tom Mahon, OD at mahonthomas@msn.com or 678-357-504

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