



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.



[REGISTER NOW](#)

GOMA's Annual CME Conference November 6-8, 2020

Friday 11/6: (1-5:30 pm)
Sat & Sun 11/7 & 8: (8 am - 1:30 pm)

AN ONLINE EVENT

REGISTRATION FEES for FULL 3-DAY EVENT
\$425 member / \$550 non-member / \$0 student registrants

offering 14 hours of AOA Category 1-A CME

The Georgia Osteopathic Medical Association is accredited by the American Osteopathic Association to provide osteopathic continuing medical education for physicians.

GOMA designates this program for a maximum of 14 of AOA Category 1-A credits and will report CME and specialty credits commensurate with the extent of the physician's participation in this activity.

GOMA Offers Safe Quality CME Nov 6 – 8, 2020

Georgia Osteopathic Medical Association's (GOMA) conferences have developed a terrific reputation over the past five years. Attendees would travel from surrounding southeastern states to attend in person, but as GOMA has moved into online CME programs this past summer, the programs have attracted doctors from around the country including Arizona and Michigan. Attendees have praised the conference for its unique subjects and the quality faculty.

A GREAT SCHEDULE

The 2020 GOMA Fall Conference is also going to be hosted on an online learning platform and will be scheduled to be easy on attendees. Friday, November 6th features only four hours of lectures that afternoon while Saturday November 7th and Sunday November 8th offer five hours each morning totaling 14 hours over the three days.

A DIVERSE PROGRAM

A strong and diverse educational program will be delivered over the three days by content experts that will share their knowledge on a broad array of timely and compelling topics. Session content will range from pediatrics, public health and the environment, human trafficking, psychopharmacology, influenza and telemedicine, to CAM for depression and anxiety, opioid use, pain management, and topics in cardiology and dermatology. The final hour will be dedicated to an update from the Georgia Composite Medical Board.

EXPERT FACULTY

Learn a little more about the content areas identified by program planners and the expert faculty below who will bring them to life.

- **J. Mark Bailey, DO, PhD** returns this year to present again on pain management for the first of three hours dedicated to this topic and prescribing /managing opioid use. He is based at the University of Alabama—Birmingham (UAB) where he is a professor of pain management and Program Director. For the next two hours, the CO*RE REMS curriculum, based on the FDA's REMS Education Blueprint, looks at balancing the risks and benefits of these medications and is presented by **Melissa Walker, DO** thanks to a grant from the AOA.
- **Nathan Cleaver, DO** will present on melanated skin and disease presentation. Besides his dermatology practice in Cumming, Georgia, Dr. Cleaver is an Associate Professor at PCOM Georgia. Kirksville College and Michigan State College of Osteopathic Medicine.
- **Stephanie H. Dunlap, DO** is a professor of cardiology at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, Georgia, and serves as the director of the heart failure and coronary care unit. Dr. Dunlap will speak to guidelines for medical therapy of congestive heart failure.
- **Dia Smiley, DO** stays busy with practicing cardiology in Atlanta as well as writing books including "TickerTalk" and has a new book coming out about EKGs. She will use a lot of EKGs that she has saved from her cardiology fellowship at Yale Hospital as she teaches the attendees tricks of the trade.
- **Leo Trasande, MD** is a New York University Professor of Pediatrics and Environmental Medicine . Dr. Trasande will share his knowledge on the topic of plastics and the effect on health - a topic about which he is featured in Consumer Reports.
- **Rebecca Philipsborn, MD, MPA** is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Emory University who has an MPA in Environmental Science from Columbia University. Climate change is frequently discussed and the question physicians ask is how it will affect health care. Dr. Philipsborn will be answering the question of climate and its effects on health.
- **Jordan Greenbaum, MD** will expose attendees to the topic of human trafficking She is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Emory whose main job is serving as the Director of the Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

- **Ryan Smith, DO** is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at PCOM Georgia as well as UNECOM in Maine. Dr. Smith will be discussing psychopharmacology with a focus on the newest medications that have come on the market.
- **Amanda Olagunju, DO** is taking a different perspective by discussing complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) to treat depression and anxiety. Dr. Olagunju is a family physician who is practicing at Langley Hospital in Virginia as part of the U.S. Airforce. Her article in Journal of Family Practice on this subject impressed the planners of the conference.
- **Barby Simmons, DO** who is the Chairperson of the Georgia Composite of Medical Examiners and in her work with Kaiser's Southeast Permanente Medical Group has a practice focused on telehealth before it became a pandemic reality for the average doctor. Dr. Simmons will discuss proper and improper actions when practicing medicine online.
- **William Bostock, DO** is a member of the Georgia Composite Medical Board and he will be giving an update on the work of the Board along side **LaSharn Hughes, MBA**, the Composite Board's Executive Director. Dr. Bostock is a family physician who serves on the faculty of Northside Gwinnett Medical Center's Family Practice Residency.

See all the details of this great fall conference by going to www.goma.org/cme_events.

From the (battle) Field

War-Zone Mentality at Marietta Hospital



This is a truncated article by Scott Colton, BA, APR for NSU KPCOM's Alumni Magazine is based on a March 2020 interview

As the number of COVID-19 patients began flooding into Kennestone Hospital in Marietta, Georgia, 2015 Nason D. Rouhizad, DO, MPH, MS, MS, knew he was well-prepared to deal with an unprecedented pandemic that was radically altering lives across the globe. That's because Rouhizad, who earned his D.O. degree from Nova Southeastern University's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) in 2015, had augmented his educational arsenal with both Master of Public

Health and Master of Science in Disaster and Emergency Management degrees from the KPCOM. "I felt mentally prepared, even though the situation is dire," said Rouhizad, a hospitalist and core faculty member at Kennestone. "My wife asked me why I was so calm, and I cited my education and exposure to these events from the Disaster and Emergency Management program."

Because of his multifaceted education and experience, Rouhizad was put in charge of overseeing and cohorting the COVID-19-positive patients, as well as the patients under investigation (PUI). "Because our numbers exponentially increased—rising from less than a dozen to almost triple digits in a matter of weeks—we are in the process of forming a team of physicians to see only these patients," he explained. "This minimizes exposure to the physician group, as well as other patients." To mitigate the spread and isolate suspected and positive testing COVID-19 patients, the hospital erected a triage tent outside its emergency department to care for these individuals, which allowed other hospital patients to be cared for in negative-pressure, vacuum-sealed rooms within the hospital. "We canceled all elective procedures, so our overall hospital census is low, but our COVID-19/PUI patients have increased dramatically. The hospital also initiated checkpoints for anyone entering the building, which includes being asked a series of questions and participating in a temperature screening," Rouhizad said.

The testing conundrum punctuated the paradox of treating COVID-19 patients. "We cannot discharge suspected patients to their rehab facilities and assisted living homes, or

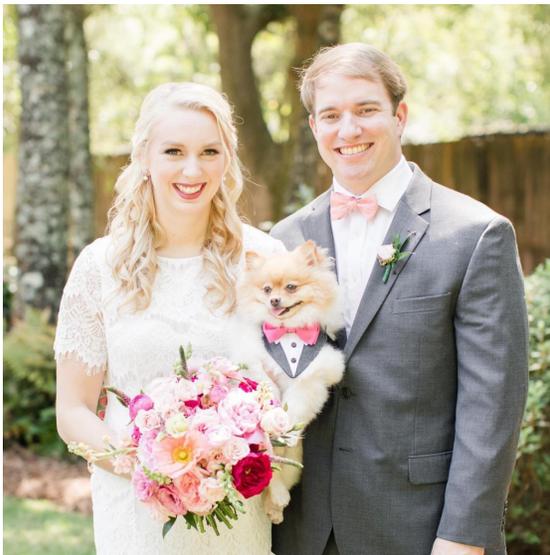
even to outpatient dialysis clinics, without knowing if they are negative,” Rouhizad said. “I have discharged several positive patients to their homes under self-quarantine. However, the stress on the system is not sustainable at this rate.”

Working on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis also created a situation that seemed to alter on an hourly basis. “The hospital has become a much higher-stress environment; in fact, it’s almost like a war zone. Beyond stressing effective communication and teamwork, our primary goals include risk stratification, risk minimization, personal protective equipment (PPE), and patient cohorting,” Rouhizad said. “I’m typically a very easygoing guy, but the gravity of the situation does weigh on you,” he added. Fortunately, I have a lot of support, including my wife, Paola, and my brother, Rayan Rouhizad, D.O., who graduated from NSU KPCOM in 2004. He works as an emergency room physician at the same hospital. In a way, we’re like the Cuomo brothers, taking over.” To remain upbeat and resist giving in to a gamut of emotions ranging from paralyzing despair to crippling anxiety, Rouhizad has relied on his copious training to focus on the positives. “I’ve mostly been at work and not on social media, so it is strange to see empty grocery-store shelves in person or see people wearing surgical masks at the gas station. But there are some silver linings during these challenging times. I feel like we appreciate our older generation now more than before, especially since I have been separated from my parents and relatives for weeks,” Rouhizad explained. “My children miss their grandparents, but we all light up whenever we call or FaceTime one another,” he added. “I’m also finding that people are more patient and kinder. We will get through this—together.”

[Pictured above: Nason Rouhizad, DO with his wife Paola & Vilma and Rayan Rouhizad, DO]

Just DO'in it!

Weddings During a COVID-19 Pandemic



Under normal circumstances, days between osteopathic medical school and starting residency are frequently filled with weddings and honeymoons. This year, due to the pandemic, things became much more complicated. Two couples, Anna Ulmer, DO & Michael Ulmer, DO (pictured left) and Donna Yoon, DO & Daniel Hong, JD (pictured right), shared their 2020 wedding stories and the unfolding of events that still allowed them to get married, but quite differently than they had envisioned.

Dr. Anna Ulmer explains, “We were planning a huge wedding ceremony and reception for April 25, 2020 in Spanish Fort, AL. In late March/early April, the Alabama governor prohibited gatherings of more than 10 people, so we knew we’d have to postpone. We made the final decision after several family discussions on April 1, 2020. Though we postponed our big celebration, we had a beautiful backyard ceremony in Fairhope, AL in Michael’s parents’ backyard with only our immediate family. We felt this was best at the time to ensure the safety of our guests. Initially, I was heartbroken. I’d been planning this day for almost 2 years and it felt as if it was being taken away from me. I felt very

conflicted, as I did not want any of my guests to be at an increased risk for COVID-19, I was still sad that my big day wasn't going to happen as planned. We had to cancel our bachelor/bachelorette parties, a big shrimp boil we had planned for all out of town guests, and our honeymoon. I really had to keep things in perspective at this point, and be thankful that we weren't cancelling due to disease/death in either of us or our immediate family members. I tried to remember that we were going to get our big reception, I would just have to wait a year. This was a good lesson in patience for me, and one I'm continuing to learn.

Dr. Donna Yoon had a similar experience, "We initially planned for a May 2020 wedding at Atlanta Botanical Garden for 150 guests. In March, it was clear that our wedding would not be able to go on as planned and we made the difficult decision to cancel our wedding. At the time, we did not announce a postponed date because we wanted to see how the pandemic would progress. I just knew that I wanted to get married before the start of residency on June 18. (We also cancelled our Hawaiian honeymoon and plans for a postponement are TBD.) Throughout quarantine in March, April and May, it became evident that the pandemic was not going to end anytime soon, let alone before my residency started. As special as it would have been to have all 150 loved ones attend, we knew that reality could not happen anytime soon. To complicate matters, my vacation days during my intern year of residency were very limited and already established for the full year. It would be very difficult to try and schedule a wedding during my first year of residency. At the end of May, we made the last minute decision to hold an intimate daytime wedding with just family on June 14, giving us just 2 weeks to re-plan our wedding. It was a stressful whirlwind securing our venue and all of our vendors in such a short time frame, but we ultimately made it work. We had a beautiful ceremony and luncheon at our original venue at Atlanta Botanical Garden. Our reception space changed from a large ballroom to a small restaurant on the garden grounds. The venue did a wonderful job with COVID precautions, requiring masks and social distancing. They provided seat placeholders and we provided goodie bags with hand sanitizers and masks. The ceremony and reception seating were arranged so that only members of the same household could be seated together. Per COVID precautions, we had to do a served luncheon (instead of buffet) and we couldn't serve our displayed wedding cake (in case it had germs from being left out in the open). Thus, we had to purchase a second cake that could be kept in the kitchen and then served to our guests. We also had to do without our bridesmaids/groomsmen, a cocktail hour, and dancing. We had to find another officiant, because our original officiant was my cousin who lives in Florida. We live-streamed our ceremony on Zoom where many of our loved ones were able to tune in and send us well wishes. We had a very simple wedding, but it was still lovely, intimate, and unforgettable."

Drs. Anna and Michael Ulmer are living in Columbus, Georgia. They first met in July 2016 at a social dinner just prior to starting medical school at Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in Auburn, Alabama. Anna and Michael developed a friendship after a long conversation that resulted from arriving at that dinner early and waiting to be seated at the restaurant. Dr. Anna Ulmer is from Dallas, Texas and got a B.S. in Nuclear Engineering from Texas A&M University in College Station, TX. He is from Fairhope, Alabama and graduated from University of Alabama – Birmingham with a B.S. in Chemistry. Their study groups and weekend social outings bloomed into a romantic relationship in February 2017, and culminated in an engagement proposal in front of both sets of parents at Mobile Bay on Labor Day weekend in 2018. They were fortunate enough to do the couples match into residencies that are only ten miles apart. Dr. Anna Ulmer just started her family medicine program at Columbus Piedmont Midtown Hospital, and Dr. Michael Ulmer just started his orthopedic surgery program at Jack Hughston Memorial Hospital.

Dr. Donna Yoon and her husband Daniel Hong have known each other since attending neighboring middle schools in Johns Creek, Georgia, but started dating in the final years of high school after Daniel volunteered his time and his car to help Donna with errands for the local Interact Club. They continued to date while they both attended Georgia Tech, and then throughout graduate school (her PCOM Georgia) and him at law school). In September 2019, Donna's cousin schemed to get Donna dressed up in a cocktail dress and located in the bamboo forest treehouse in the center of the llama farm in Atlanta where Daniel met her and proposed in front of her shrewd cousin and a photographer. Dr. Donna Yoon just started her family practice residency at Wellstar Kennestone Hospital.

Both couples are planning on having a celebration next year to celebrate their nuptials. Both Dr. Donna Yoon and Dr. Anna Ulmer were philosophical about their wedding experiences. Dr. Yoon summarizes, "Ultimately though, these are unprecedented and serious times. People are dying, losing family members, facing unemployment, and millions of heroes are working hard to help our fight against this virus. I have so much to be grateful for in my life and I am thankful I got to celebrate my wedding the way I did." And Dr. Ulmer reflected, "I still kept in the forefront of my mind, that many more people were experiencing much worse trials than we were. Keeping everything in perspective and enjoying the intimate time we could spend with our families helped a lot." [Photo Credit of Donna Yoon, DO & Daniel Hong, JD by Baird & Lim] [Photo of Anna Ulmer, DO & Michael Ulmer, DO & their Pomeranian "Tank" by Elizabeth Gelineau]

DOing it Right!

Christian Pruitt (DO'22) Appointed as National Research Representative of the COSGP



PCOM Georgia student-doctor Christian Pruitt (DO '22) (pictured above) was recently appointed to the executive board of the Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents (COSGP) as the national research representative. Noting that his background and current research endeavors aligned well with the role, he said, "I am dedicated to advancing osteopathic student research at both the lab bench and the patient bedside."

"My mission is to promote and advocate for osteopathic student research," he said, "as well as to provide guidance and resources that facilitate creative, original and impactful medical research. I want to give all osteopathic medical students the tools and opportunities that empower them to pursue medical research and the platform to share their work with the medical community and the world around them." Read more about student-doctor Pruitt's background and goals at [Bit.ly/3hX9uss](https://bit.ly/3hX9uss)

GOMA Takes Action

NBOME Response to GOMA's Concerns and Questions

On September 8, 2020, John R. Gimpel, DO, MEd, President and CEO of the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME) responded to an August 2020 letter from the Executive Board of GOMA. Dr. Gimpel appreciated the concerns about exam safety and travel safety for the medical students taking board exams. Below are quotes from the two page response letter:

"Upon making COMLEX-USA testing available again in May 2020 at Prometric Test Centers, we worked with Prometric and Johns Hopkins University public health experts to

enhance physician distancing in test centers and make the experience as safe as possible, and with the college accreditor (AOA-COCA) to modify their standards temporarily to allow students to delay testing, as desired, should they feel unsafe or desire to delay testing for any reason. The deans and the students, among others, put significant pressure on us to get testing back up and running. Since resuming COMLEX-USA Level 1, Level 2-CE, and Level 3 testing at Prometric Centers in May, we have had over 16,000 successful and safe administrations and not a single case of illness or positive COVID-19 test traced to COMLEX-USA testing. [In the rare instances (n~60, 0.00375%) where there were reported low risk exposures to other test takers or staff in the centers, contact tracing allowed us to notify the candidates directly (and their schools about a potential), but none have resulted in a test positive or illness.]”

“We continue to work with Johns Hopkins University and other infectious disease and safety consultants to make exam modifications that enhance safety. With 25% of the Class of 2021 already having passed this exam and 56% of the total class being within an 8 hour drive of one of our two National Centers, resumption may allow us to meet the needs of more candidates. At the same time, we worked with the college accreditor (AOA-COCA) and enthusiastically supported their temporary modification of the graduation standard of passing Level 2-PE before graduation for the Class of 2021. You asked for the rationale ‘of not allowing students to postpone taking Level 2-PE until after the pandemic.’ The modified AOA-COCA standard allows students in the Class of 2021 to delay testing until they are ready and feel safe to do so, and likely still to have a year or two to test prior to taking COMLEXUSA Level 3 for state medical licensure. We eliminated all rescheduling fees and froze exam fees at 2019 rates (effectively the same since 2016).”

” Finally, please be aware that the NBOME has invested considerably in advocating for safety of the physician workforce and learners/trainees, as well as outreach to residency program directors and medical regulatory groups to advise them that 2020-2021 applicants to residency program should not be held accountable for results of licensing exams that they may have been unable to take due to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Reports of Changes to Anthem/BCBS Contracts

GOMA has heard reports from some physicians that Anthem/Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia (Anthem/BCBS) has notified them that it is implementing new contracts and fee schedules on a regional and staggered basis in the state.

These physicians are in independent practice and/or in rural settings. At least one of them received this message from a third party (i.e., a “Sonya Hollis with OneSpan”), so some physicians/practices in the state may have inadvertently deleted these notifications and are unaware of these developments.

Anthem/BCBS is reportedly...

- Terminating its legacy agreements
- Implementing new enterprise agreements (new language, all products, etc.)
- Implementing new fee schedules, keeping in mind that some went into effect on

September 1 while others will go into effect on November 15

- Updating its fee schedules on an annual basis going forward
- Increasing payments for E&M services and decreasing payments for some other services

Practices will reportedly be required to use the ‘Avality’ platform to access the Anthem/BCBS fee schedule, as Anthem/BCBS will no longer send fee schedule changes directly to them.

Anthem/BCBS will also now reportedly require APRNs and PAs to be credentialed and paid at 85 percent of the physician rate, effectively enacting a 15 percent cut in reimbursement for these services.

Please notify GOMA of any confirmations or further details as GOMA works with other medical organizations to create a unified front on behalf of Georgia physicians. Contact gomaosteo@outlook.com

PCOM Georgia HEARTS Clinic Gives Flu Shots

In mid-September, PCOM Georgia students belonging to the HEARTS Club joined Walgreens Pharmacy and the Lawrenceville Co-Op to administer free influenza vaccinations to uninsured adults. Mr. Tom Balog, Executive Director of the Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry, said, "We are so blessed to be working with the students at PCOM to set up this free flu clinic to benefit those in need in our community. It truly takes a community coming together to make a real difference." Learn about the details and the student-doctor leaders who spearheaded this initiative by going to: [bit.ly/2GPqVha!](https://bit.ly/2GPqVha)



'A Tale of Two Cities' during a Pandemic



It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities
English novelist (1812 - 1870)



Support GOMA!

*Helping your professional society,
and the osteopathic community weather these
uncertain times.*

CLICK HERE to: Renew or Join GOMA!

DO'ing for Others...

With many college and high school pre-med students across the state, GOMA is seeking practicing osteopathic physicians across all specialties and regions of the state for mentoring opportunities. These opportunities can be as limited as a student-physician phone call or as involved as shadowing and longitudinal mentorship. GOMA is not looking for particular levels of commitment, simply a list of physicians who would be willing to help students. Please email Executive Director, [Valerie Okrend](#) indicating your interest including your preferred level of mentoring for students.

Your information will not be explicitly listed on the website for privacy, rather, GOMA will facilitate the start of communication between physician and student. The objective is for GOMA to reach out to students to learn about osteopathic medicine and provide

networking opportunities."



Physician Support Line
Free Confidential Peer Support Line by
Volunteer Psychiatrists for US Physician Colleagues
during the COVID19 Pandemic

1-888-409-0141
NOW LIVE

7 days a week
8am - 12am EST

www.physiciansupportline.com

On April 6, 2020, a free confidential peer support line by volunteer psychiatrists was started. It is supported 8 AM to Midnight seven days a week. **(See left)**

Mona Masood, DO is a general adult psychiatrist in the greater Philadelphia area is the founder and chief organizer of the Physician Support Line.

[Visit our website](http://www.physiciansupportline.com)