Since establishing osteopathic postdoctoral training institutions (OPTIs) in 1995, the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) continues to expand programs, refine procedures, and develop measurement methods to evaluate the impact OPTIs have on osteopathic graduate medical education as well as to lobby federal policymakers.

**Program expansion and approval**

Requests for new graduate medical education programs continue to be reviewed by the Council on Postdoctoral Training (COPT). The COPT grants approval status for internship and residency training programs.

In February 2002, the AOA Board of Trustees (Board) adopted a change in the manner in which applications and recommendations are approved for new internship training programs. The Board granted authority to accredited OPTIs to review, and recommend approval to COPT, potential osteopathic internship programs currently accredited through the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education for at least three years. This review by an OPTI is an alternate approval route of the traditional, initial, AOA on-site program review. All programs approved through this method are required to have the follow-up AOA program review during the first year of an AOA-contracted intern/resident.

Guidelines were developed for OPTIs to attest that all proper, required documentation has been reviewed, that the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education program meets the requirements for AOA program approval, and that the OPTI has completed a site visit. This process will only apply to osteopathic internship programs and only for the first training year. At their April 2002 meeting, the COPT began reviewing the first recommendations by OPTIs for new internship program approvals.

The Program to Accredit Osteopathic Postdoctoral Training Institutions, the document governing OPTI accreditation, and the basic documents for postdoctoral training have undergone extensive revisions to remove redundancies within the accreditation and approval processes.

The AOA’s Osteopathic Graduate Medical Education State Development Initiative continues assisting OPTIs in developing new programs. During 2001, 22 new internship programs and 29 new residency programs received approval by COPT.

**COPT Subcommittee on OPTI Evaluation and Oversight**

The COPT Subcommittee on OPTI Evaluation and Oversight (OPTI Subcommittee) was appointed in July 1999 to develop a system to objectively measure the educational effectiveness of OPTIs. The four topic areas for evaluating OPTIs were developed by the OPTI Subcommittee, along with measurable goals. These include the following:

- Osteopathic postdoctoral training institutions must meet or exceed the AOA published standards. The goal is for all OPTIs to achieve full compliance annually with all published standards. Measures may include preparing an annual report on OPTI compliance with standards to include charting accreditation/reaccreditation actions on a five-year cycle; summarizing standards; reviewing OPTI’s corrective action plans; and comments and recommendations.

- Osteopathic postdoctoral training institutions will exceed established levels of quality for osteopathic graduate medical education and measure the effectiveness of their educational programs. The goal is to achieve the highest possible quality in graduate medical education. Measures may include documenting the specialty certification pass rate for all programs; maintaining records of approval for all of the OPTI’s internships and residencies; documenting trainee completion rates; and developing suggested methods for achieving quality enhancement on osteopathic graduate medical education.

- Osteopathic postdoctoral training institutions will assess institutional, administrative, and fiscal commitment that assures the long-term stability of programs within the OPTI. The goal is to provide interns and residents assurances of access to, and stability within, the osteopathic graduate medical education programs. Measures may include OPTIs documenting the operational, financial, and in-kind support from member institutions to assess program stability; OPTIs providing trend analyses of member institutions’ financial and related support for osteopathic graduate medical education; OPTIs adopting policies and procedures to protect intern and resident positions in the event of financial exigency; and OPTIs maintaining administrative and

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support staff sufficient to maintain quality in administering and delivering its programs.

Osteopathic postdoctoral training institutions contribute to the development of programs in practice fields, growth in numbers of positions, and to expanded demographic distribution in osteopathic graduate medical education. To document achievements, summary reports pertaining to trend and related data, numbers of member institutions, and programs by specialty and trainees will be published. Statistical reports about the number of graduates from OPTI-associated/affiliated programs, number of graduates in primary and nonprimary care programs, distribution of graduates by demographic or other pertinent criteria, and OPTIs’ plans for expansion may also be published.

The OPTI Subcommittee also developed a standards crosswalk tool to be used by surveyors at the time of accreditation site visits. The standards crosswalk provides a uniform guideline information and document review by the surveyors.

Lobbying policymakers
The Council on Federal Health Programs continues to pursue federal recognition of OPTIs and changes in current law that would benefit the OPTI concept of graduate medical education and stabilization of federal graduate medical education funding. The AOA continues to work with Congress, seeking legislative language that would require the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to fund the consortia demonstration project as outlined in Section 4628 of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

The AOA continues to seek changes in current law that would increase the floor for direct graduate medical education to 100% of the locally adjusted national average per resident amount for all programs.