

# COMS CONNECTIONS

The official publication of the Connecticut Osteopathic Medical Society

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## PENDING CME DEADLINE: 12/31/09

**Quick:** have you earned sufficient osteopathic Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits this cycle (2007-2009)? Note, **December 31<sup>st</sup>** is your last day to get CME credits registered with the AOA CME Division. AOA membership requires CME, as do osteopathic certifying boards. To ensure your Board Certification is not interrupted, be sure to get sufficient CME.

Our 2009 Oceanside CME conference will offer as many as **23.5 hours** of 1-A CME from May 1 – May 3. Register now via telephone (800) 648-9777 or fax (312) 202-8224. Do you need another copy of the brochure sent to you? Just call your COMS staff & we'll get one right out to you.



**Need even more hours?**  
Visit [www.do-online.org](http://www.do-online.org) to find additional CME programs.

## DOs IN THE NEWS

**Paul Tortland, DO** (Avon, CT) has been elected to the Board of Directors of the American Association of Orthopedic Medicine (AAOM) and was appointed Program Chair for the AAOM 2010 annual conference and scientific seminar. The AAOM is a group of DOs and MDs dedicated to non-surgical orthopedics and musculoskeletal medicine, including prolotherapy, manipulation, and nutritional treatments.

And in additional news from AAOM, congratulations to COMS President Paul Tortland, DO, who has become the first physician in New England to be Certified in Prolotherapy by the AAOM ([www.aaomed.org](http://www.aaomed.org)). Prolotherapy is an injection technique utilizing various solutions to stimulate a permanent repair of chronically damaged ligaments and tendons. The AAOM is the primary national organization sponsoring and teaching prolotherapy to physicians. Dr. Tortland presented on Prolotherapy at the March 2009 Annual Meeting of the American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine ([www.aoasm.org](http://www.aoasm.org)) in Snow Bird, UT.

**Albert J. Kozar, DO** has been awarded the status of Fellow of the American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine. The award was presented at the AOASM 2009 annual meeting in March. Dr. Kozar specializes in sports medicine, non-surgical orthopedics, and OMM in Avon and East Hartford.

In March 2009, Connecticut physician **Andrew M. Goldman, DO**, presented at the American Academy of Osteopathy's Annual Convocation. His lecture and workshop were on "Exploring the Jugular Foramina." In addition, he also addressed the National Undergraduate Fellow Association on "Exploring the Jugular Foramen."

University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNT-HSC) last fall named **Darrin D'Agostino, DO, MPH** as the new Chair of Internal Medicine for the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. D'Agostino is board certified in Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine, and previously served as Director of Medical Education and Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine,

among other positions, at the University of Connecticut's School of Medicine and Hartford Hospital. Dr. D'Agostino is the Vice President of the Connecticut Osteopathic Medical Society.

Trustee **Christina Kozar, DO**, a pediatrician from Glastonbury, spoke to the Women's Club of East Granby on "Preventing HPV: What You Should Know." Note to COMS Members: are you interested in offering these kinds of public health information presentations? Perhaps you'd like to offer a short piece to your local newspaper? COMS and AOA can help with some issues through the Osteopathic Public Awareness Network (OPAN). Give us a call, (800) 648-9777 or email, [connecticut@osteopathic.org](mailto:connecticut@osteopathic.org).

Last, congratulations to Dr. Christina Kozar for competing in her first ever triathlon last fall!

*Do you have news about a professional or personal accomplishment? Please share with your DO colleagues. Send the details to [connecticut@osteopathic.org](mailto:connecticut@osteopathic.org) or call COMS staff at (800) 648-9777.*

## UNECOM OUTCOMES: EDUCATING PHYSICIANS FOR NEW ENGLAND SINCE 1978



For over 30 years, the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNECOM)

has been training physicians in New England. UNECOM was founded as a community-based osteopathic medical school in 1978, at a time when there were

projected physician shortages nationally and in New England, especially for primary care and rural practice. The founding and enduring mission of UNECOM continues to include advancing primary care and providing physicians who serve New England and the nation.

One test of effectiveness of educational programs is the extent to which they deliver on their mission, i.e., the outcomes. In the six New England states, 69% of UNECOM's

723 graduates are practicing in primary care practices (family physicians, pediatricians, or general internists), and 17% are serving in medically underserved areas. Of the 310 UNECOM graduates practicing in Maine, 68% are primary care physicians as compared to the 32% of MDs and the 44% of non-UNECOM graduate DOs in the state. In Maine, 24% of the physicians practicing in rural areas are UNECOM graduates. In the recent national residency matching program, where residents rank

preferred training programs and match according to their preference and program selection, 52 (44%) of the members of the Class of 2009 matched in programs in New England (2 of these in Connecticut), with over 70% of the class entering primary care residency programs.

Consistent with extensive literature on the subject, UNECOM's success in providing rural and primary care physicians for New England and the nation has been built on its 30-year practices of admitting qualified candidates who have demonstrated both the ability to serve, and the inclination to serve. UNECOM's innovative "Patient-First Curriculum" has focused on early clinical education in community hospital and outpatient clinical experiences for over three decades. Other new medical school programs are attempting to duplicate these strategies for clinical education. And perhaps most importantly, findings from the Robert Graham Center and the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation<sup>1</sup> document that the mission, the content and the milieu of the medical school experience do matter in career choice. Medical schools that are located in rural areas graduate substantially more rural physicians, and it is well documented that the culture of academic medicine in some settings has had a negative disposition toward primary care.

<sup>1</sup>Phillips, RL. *Specialty and Geographic Distribution of the Physician Workforce: What Influences Medical Student and Resident Choices? The Robert Graham Center: Policy Studies in Family Medicine and Primary Care. Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation. March 2009.*

UNECOM has supported an amended version of legislation proposed in Maine which intends to address the pending physician workforce crisis for Maine, providing scholarships for Maine residents who attend one of Maine's medical school programs (either at UNECOM, at a new program at Maine Medical Center which offers a branch campus of Tufts University School of Medicine, or at an Eastern Maine Medical Center program with University of Vermont School of Medicine.) Without some action, the number of physician-shortage-areas in the state are likely to escalate in just a few years, on top of the more than 200 open positions for doctors currently in Maine. With the average UNECOM graduate finishing medical school with more than \$205,000 in educational debt, we believe that the proposed legislation, supported by Governor Baldacci, will assist students to attend UNECOM or one of the newer programs and remain committed to careers in rural practice and primary care. We are looking for other ways to reduce the educational indebtedness of our graduates as well, providing other avenues for scholarships and tuition reduction for students intending to practice primary care or in rural areas.

UNECOM was featured on "Maine

Watch" with Jennifer Rooks on Maine Public Television and Radio on March 20. UNE President Danielle Ripich, Ph.D., and OMSIII Daniel Sheps represented UNECOM and the osteopathic medical profession very well in discussions about physician workforce. View the program at: <http://www.mpbn.net/ProgramsSchedules/LocalPrograms/Television/MaineWatch/tabid/477/Default.aspx>

*Program Notes:* On June 6, The College of Osteopathic Medicine expects to graduate 122 new osteopathic physicians. This year, on June 5, former President George H. W. Bush will officiate at our military commissioning ceremony, and at graduation the UNECOM Pioneer of Osteopathic Medicine Medal, the highest award given by the college, will be presented to Ira Stockwell, D.O., and to Mr. John Downing. The commencement speaker will be humanitarian and Nobel Prize winner Bernard Lown, M.D., author of "The Lost Art of Healing." For information on how you can participate in these activities, please contact UNECOM's Office of Recruitment, Student & Alumni Services at 207-602-2000 or [comsa@une.edu](mailto:comsa@une.edu).

John R. Gimpel, DO, MED  
Dean, UNECOM

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to the latest edition of the COMS newsletter. I hope you found our inaugural issue informative and useful.

In spite of the gloomy economy and winter weather, this is actually an exciting time for osteopathic medicine in the state of Connecticut. As noted previously, an increasing number of osteopathic students

are choosing to do residencies in our state, and are staying to practice here. The reputation of DOs as highly competent and compassionate physicians continues to grow.

However, in spite of the growth of the DO ranks in Connecticut, one area that continues to remain underserved is the number of DOs performing OMT in their practices.

I am frequently asked by existing and potential patients alike about the availability of DOs who still practice "osteopathically." It's abundantly clear that patients are actively seeking the unique style of training and practice that DOs have to offer.

There are approximately a dozen DOs in Connecticut offering OMT as a significant portion of their practice. However, the majority of these OMM specialists accept

## 2008-2009 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### President

Paul Tortland, DO, FAOASM  
Avon, CT

### Vice President

Darrin D'Agostino, DO, MPH  
W. Hartford, CT and Ft. Worth, TX

### Treasurer/Secretary

James Ryan, DO  
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Glastonbury, CT

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Manchester, CT

### Interim Executive Director

Elizabeth Forkins Harano  
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# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Gregory Broslawski, DO	Flemington, NJ	IM	UMDNJ SOM
Scott J. Ellner, DO	Hartford	Bariatric/ General Surgery	WUHS-COMP
Lynne A. Freiburger-Epstein, DO	Easton	OMT	DMU COM
Sarah M. Gamble, DO	Stamford	Hospitalist/IM	UHS COM
James Gusfa, DO	Rocky Hill	Psychiatry	MSU COM
Christopher J. Hoimes, DO	New Haven	IM	NYCOM
Andrea McCullough-Hlobik, DO	Norwich	Peds	PCOM
Camtu Karrenbauer, DO	Glastonbury	FP	NSU COM
Arlene Mrozowski, DO	Trumbull	EM	KCUMB COM
Jacqueline A. Rheiner, DO	West Hartford	IM	NYCOM
Erica I Rice, DO	Manchester	Peds	UNE COM
Donna M. Romito, DO	Norwich	IM/Pulmon. Cnt. Care	NYCOM
Howard J Sadinsky, DO	Milford	Peds	PCOM
George Shervanick, DO	Barrington, RI	EM	MWU AZCOM
Emily P. Stanford, DO	Tolland	IM	UMDNJ SOM
Michael T. Vest, DO	New Haven	Fellow - Critical Care Med	UNE COM
Leigh R. Wilson, DO, MPH	Derby	IM/Prevent Med	WUHS-COMP

## FYI: NEWS YOU CAN USE

*Compiled by your COMS Interim Executive Director Elizabeth Harano from various news publications, physician association leadership sources, and government announcements. If there are topics that you're interested in getting more information on, please contact Connecticut@Osteopathic.org or (800)648-9777.*

### eJACOP launches

The American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians (ACOP) has launched the inaugural issue of its e-journal, eJACOP. The journal will be published quarterly and will serve as a teaching portal for those students, residents, fellows and attending physicians who have a thirst for a scholarly existence. The journal will provide a peer-reviewed venue for the working pediatrician and family physician, as well as the academic attending physician. The ACOP Board of Trustees has agreed to offer the journal to all members of state osteopathic medical societies, and hopes you will enjoy it and contribute to it! To review this e-Journal, please visit: <http://www.acoped.org/ejacop/2008october/>.

### Specialty CME

The AOA Board of Trustees approved a resolution at its July 2008 Annual Meeting to help specialists and subspecialists obtain AOA Category 1-A CME credit. To allow osteopathic specialty colleges time to develop quality osteopathic subspecialty CME for subspecialist DOs while enabling these subspecialists to obtain relevant CME credit for AOA membership, this resolution creates a pathway for specialties numbering fewer than 250 members to satisfy some of their 1-A CME requirement using ACCME Category 1 credits. This policy is being will sunset in 2016, and phases in as follows:

CME Cycle	ACCME Category 1 Credits
2007 – 2009	20 credits
2010 – 2012	15 credits
2013 – 2015	10 credits
After 2015	0 credits



# UNECOM OPENS NEW BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH CENTER

As incoming students arrived for the fall semester, University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNECOM) opened the doors of its new, \$6.1 million Pickus Center for Biomedical Research. The 22,000 square foot facility houses six laboratories, two conference rooms that can be utilized as classrooms and an open office suite for lab technicians and assistants. In the near future, the center will be expanded to accommodate 10 research teams of investigators, researchers, students and trainees. The center was partially funded by a \$1 million grant from Owen Pickus, DO, a clinical faculty member at UNECOM and a member of the university's board of directors, and his wife, Geraldine Pickus, DO, a UNECOM graduate and family medicine practitioner.

Source: AACOM e-news October 08

Photo: [www.une.edu/giving/facility.asp](http://www.une.edu/giving/facility.asp)



TITLE: Vincent Furey Jr., chair of the UNE Board of Trustees, addresses the gathering.

## ECONOMIC RECESSION

The Boston Globe reported on 1/25/09 that patients are having physical effects due to the economic recession. Patients are foregoing preventive tests like colonoscopies; stress is causing blood pressure to rise; and obese patients are gaining weight by eating cheaper, high-calorie foods and giving up gym memberships.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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only cash, not insurance, putting their valuable services out of reach for many of our state's residents.

OMT can be a great way to build a practice and to increase patient satisfaction. It is also a very useful tool in helping to diagnose and treat many conditions.

I encourage you to consider rediscovering your osteopathic roots. The American Academy of Osteopathy ([www.academyofosteopathy.org](http://www.academyofosteopathy.org)) offers many excellent OMT courses, both for a "refresher" and also for advanced training.

As my father once said to me, "Stay with the one that you came to the dance with." The Osteopathic profession gave us the opportunity to become physicians. Patients are seeking DOs for their care. What more incentive does one need to reclaim one's osteopathic identity?

Our 2009 annual meeting and clinical conference is scheduled for May 1-3 at the Mystic Marriott. Last year's meeting was a resounding success, and this year's meeting is shaping up to be even better.

This year is also the 3rd year of the 3-year CME cycle. So why not use this opportunity not only to get your osteopathic CMEs, but also to begin reconnecting with your osteopathic heritage?

Paul Tortland, DO, FAOASM  
President

# FYI: NEWS YOU CAN USE *continued from page 4*

## Call for Papers on Low Back & Pelvic Pain

The 7th Interdisciplinary World Congress on Low Back & Pelvic Pain will take place November 9 – 12, 2010 in Los Angeles, CA. The 6th conference was held November 2007 in Barcelona, Spain, and attracted more than 1400 participants from all over the world. The 2010 program will focus on effective clinical implementation of evidence-based research for low back and pelvic pain. For more information: [www.worldcongresslbp.com](http://www.worldcongresslbp.com).

## Exciting Enhancement for DO-Online Members' Practice Sites

To help your practice reduce costs and build patient loyalty, the AOA offers a new online resource for AOA members and their patients: The "Instant Medical History" feature. New and existing patients of AOA members may use this optional feature to collect patient information prior to an office visit. The HIPAA-compliant patient data is then sent to the physician via a secured PDF. For more information about this new feature and instructions on setup, download the Instant Medical History Guide. To access your practice site, go to DO-Online and log-in using your AOA ID number and password.

## CMS PECOS system

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that Internet-based Provider Enrollment, Chain and Ownership System (PECOS) is now available to physicians and non-physician practitioners in Connecticut to enroll, make a change in their Medicare enrollment, view their Medicare enrollment information on file with Medicare, or check on the status of a Medicare enrollment application via the Internet. To access, go to <https://pecos.cms.hhs.gov>.

## 2009 PQRI Measure Specifications Now Available

The AOA's Regulatory Affairs Division in Washington, DO announced last month that reporting for the 2009 Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) began January 1, 2009. To facilitate participation in the program, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has released its detailed specifications for the 2009 PQRI measures and the 2009 PQRI measures groups. The following resources have been posted to the PQRI webpage on the CMS website:

### *2009 PQRI Quality Measure Specifications Manual*

Contains codes and reporting instructions for the 153 2009 PQRI quality measures for claims or registry-based reporting and a summary of the changes from the 2008 PQRI Measure Specifications.

### *2009 PQRI Implementation Guide*

Provides guidance about how to implement 2009 PQRI claims-based reporting of measures to facilitate satisfactory reporting of quality data codes by eligible professionals for the 2009 PQRI.

### *2009 PQRI Measures Group Specifications Manual*

Contains the detailed specifications and instructions for the seven (7) 2009 PQRI measures groups and a summary of the changes from the 2008 PQRI Measures Groups Specifications.

### *Getting Started with 2009 PQRI Reporting of Measures Groups*

Provides guidance about implementing the 2009 PQRI measures groups.

To access the 2009 PQRI manuals and implementation guides, go to: [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PQRI/15\\_MeasuresCodes.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PQRI/15_MeasuresCodes.asp#TopOfPage) on the CMS website. Once on the Measure/Codes page, scroll down to the "Downloads" section and click on the appropriate link.

In addition, CMS has a new section page on the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative web page. The "Spotlight" section page can be accessed on PQRI web page at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/pqri/> on the CMS website and click on the Spotlight tab. The "Spotlight" page is updated frequently and was created to alert eligible professionals to the newest program information available on the PQRI web page.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Connecticut Osteopathic Medical Society (COMS) continues to grow! Please welcome our new members (see list on page 4), and spread the COMS Connections to your fellow DOs in the state.

Our focus has been to develop another high quality CME program for you and your colleagues, and our Program Committee has definitely risen to the challenge. Thanks go out to Greg Czarnecki, DO, our Program Chair, and his Committee members: Paul Tortland, DO, Christina Kozar, DO, Darrin D'Agostino, DO, MPH, and Jeffery Miller, DO. They reviewed your comments from the 2008 Oceanside CME, conferred with fellow physicians, reviewed current literature, and prepared a great conference with several tracks: musculoskeletal medicine, specialty updates, orthopedic surgery, internal medicine, pediatrics, and the Connecticut state-mandated CME lectures. While each year we offer the four lectures, note that our faculty bring new information and perspectives on risk management, infectious disease, sexual assault and domestic violence.

Membership recruitment, retention, and services is another major priority for COMS, so I have been following up with those members who hadn't had a chance to renew and are still in CT, plus reaching out to non-members. We've been very pleased with our membership growth, and will be publishing a new Directory of Members this summer. Be sure to get any updated information to us as soon as possible, please!

We inaugurated our member newsletter and christened it COMS Connections, beginning with this, our second issue: Spring 2009. I met with our Board in December in Wethersfield, and continue to meet every month with the President and Vice President.

As always, please feel free to call or email me with any comments or recommendations, because only by meeting your real needs can this Society succeed – so that's my goal as your Executive Director!

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Forkins Harano, Interim Executive Director  
(800) 648-9777 -- [Connecticut@Osteopathic.org](mailto:Connecticut@Osteopathic.org)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### May 1 – 3, 2009: Annual Oceanside CME Conference

Sponsored by Connecticut Osteopathic Medical Society. 23.5 hours of Category 1-A CME approved by AOA CCME; Hartford Hospital designates this educational activity for a maximum of 21 category 1 credits towards the AMA PRA. Hartford Hospital is accredited by the CSMS to provide CME for physicians. At the Mystic Marriott in Groton, CT.

For more information: (800) 648-9777 or [Connecticut@osteopathic.org](mailto:Connecticut@osteopathic.org).

### June 12 – 14, 2009: Massachusetts Osteopathic Society Summer CME

Hilton Back Bay, Boston, MA.

For more information: [Massachusetts@osteopathic.org](mailto:Massachusetts@osteopathic.org) or [massosteopathic.org](http://massosteopathic.org).

### June 13 – 17, 2009: Cranial Academy Introductory Course

Hyatt Regency, Bethesda, MD. 40 hours of Category 1-A anticipated.

For more info: (317) 594-0411 or [info@cranialacademy.org](mailto:info@cranialacademy.org).

### June 18 – 21, 2009: Cranial Academy Annual Conference – Embryology and Osteopathy, Dr. Sutherland and Beyond

Hyatt Regency, Bethesda, MD. For more info: (317) 594-0411 or

[info@cranialacademy.org](mailto:info@cranialacademy.org).

### July 13 – 19, 2009: AOA Annual Board of Trustees Meeting and House of Delegates

Fairmont Hotel, Chicago, IL

### August 13 – 16, 2009: RISOPS Annual Yankee Conference

Hyatt Regency Newport Hotel & Spa, Newport, RI.

For more information: [www.risops.org](http://www.risops.org) or (800) 454-9663.

### October 31 – November 3, 2009 – Annual Clinical Assembly of Osteopathic Surgeons

Chicago Marriott Magnificent Mile, Chicago.

For more information: [www.facos.org](http://www.facos.org).

### November 1 – 5, 2009: AOA Annual Convention

New Orleans, LA. For more details: [www.DO-Online.org](http://www.DO-Online.org).

### December 3 – 6, 2009 – Winter Scientific Seminar

Sponsored by Illinois Osteopathic Medical Society. 30 hours of Category 1-A CME anticipated, pending approval by AOA CCME. Westin Lombard Yorktown Center, Lombard, IL.

For more information: [IOMS@IOMS.org](mailto:IOMS@IOMS.org) or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8174.

### Various dates

OMM series at UNE-COM. For details, [www.une.edu/com/cme/events.asp](http://www.une.edu/com/cme/events.asp), call (207) 602-2589 or [CME@une.edu](mailto:CME@une.edu).

### Additional CME programs are listed for:

Hartford Hospital at [www.harthosp.org/newseventsclasses](http://www.harthosp.org/newseventsclasses)

Yale Medical School at <http://info.med.yale.edu/calendar>

UConn Medical School at <http://cme.uchc.edu>

UNE College of Osteopathic Medicine at [www.une.edu/com/cme/events.asp](http://www.une.edu/com/cme/events.asp)

The entire osteopathic family at [www.DO-Online.org](http://www.DO-Online.org), then click on Calendar.

# PREPARE NOW FOR UPCOMING BLUE CROSS/BLUE SHIELD eRx REQUIREMENTS

Starting January 1, 2011, BCBSMA will require that physicians and specialists who prescribe medications use electronic prescribing technology to qualify for any of their physician incentive programs. BCBSMA is introducing this initiative in an effort to continuously improve the quality, affordability, and efficiency of care for members. Currently, e-prescribing is an optional incentive measure for providers participating in our incentive programs. The new eRx requirement comes one year before the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) deadline for prescribing without penalty. BCBSMA plans to help doctors by supporting a number of new licenses in 2009. This helps offset the wait for e-Prescribing incentive payouts from CMS, which begin in 2010.

“Our incentive programs are designed to reward doctors for taking steps to improve the quality of care for patients, and e-Prescribing has certainly proven to increase quality of care,” said John Fallon, M.D., BCBSMA’s Chief Physician Executive and Senior Vice President. “As a leader in e-health initiatives and e-prescribing programs, we will continue to be prominent in the adoption of e-prescribing as a tool to improve the quality, safety, and affordability of care for patients while improving efficiencies for physicians.”

BCBSMA incentive programs reward physicians for meeting nationally recognized quality standards and patient safety goals. Currently, 99% of primary care physicians (PCPs) in the HMO Blue® network and 78% of specialists participate in BCBSMA incentive programs.



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