Memo

Date: November 11, 2010

To: Osteopathic State Societies
   Osteopathic Specialty Colleges

From: John B. Crosby, JD, Executive Director

RE: TEXAS COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

The Board of Regents at the University of North Texas (UNT) is studying a proposal to create an MD option at the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (TCOM). One option in the proposal is to have each student admitted to TCOM choose the professional degree that he or she wishes to pursue (DO or MD). A second option is to create an MD school as part of the University. Primary reasons given for having an MD option are to produce more primary care physicians and to become a top-tier research institution.

To ensure there was no misunderstanding of the facts, the AOA Board of Trustees invited Scott Ransom, DO, MBA, President of the Health Science Center, and Don Peska, DO, M Ed, Associate Dean for Educational Programs, to the Board’s February meeting to explain the proposal. After the presentations and extensive questions and answers, the AOA Board deliberated and approved a resolution with four points, the AOA Board of Trustees:

1. Supports the Texas law that prohibits the University from offering an MD degree;
2. Suspends its financial support of the Osteopathic Research Center at the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine until the situation is resolved to the Board’s satisfaction;
3. Informs the University Chancellor, the Board of Regents, and the President of the Health Science Center of its opposition to the proposal; and
4. Asks members who oppose the MD option at TCOM to make financial contributions directly to the Texas Osteopathic Medical Association, which has created the “TCOM Dedicated Fund” to finance its research and advocacy in support of osteopathic medicine in Texas.

In response to the presentations, the AOA Board of Trustees found no credible evidence that adding an MD option will produce more primary care physicians nor would an MD option enhance TCOM as a leading research institute. TCOM was already a leading research institution as evidenced by selection of the school to be the home of the first Osteopathic Research Center.

While osteopathic research is extremely important to the osteopathic profession, the AOA Board made the difficult decision to suspend funds to the ORC because the support of osteopathic
medicine at the University is in doubt. The AOA, the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, and the American Osteopathic Foundation have jointly supported the Osteopathic Research Center since its founding in 2002 and have contributed more than $1.75 million to the Center. These funds were to support the infrastructure and not individual research projects. The AOA Board concluded that it cannot provide support to an institution whose support of osteopathic medicine is uncertain.

The AOA Board of Trustees continues to support individual osteopathic research projects at UNT. In 2006-07, the AOA awarded two 2-year grants to TCOM researchers for $87,630 and $79,000 and the AOA Board continues to support these research projects. Osteopathic researchers have already submitted five grant requests to the AOA totaling $450,000 for the next research cycle.

In addition to the AOA Board of Trustees, several other organizations have voted to oppose the MD option proposal, including: the Medical Student Government Association at TCOM, the OMM Department at TCOM, the TCOM Alumni Association, the Texas Osteopathic Medical Association, and the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians. (see attachments)

The AOA Board of Trustees is asking each osteopathic state society and specialty college:

- To consider showing support of osteopathic medicine by taking a position to oppose the MD option,
- To express your opposition to the University of North Texas Board of Regents, and
- To ask your members to provide financial assistance to the Texas Osteopathic Medical Association to hire lobbyists to stop the school’s attempt to change the law in Texas that prohibits the University from offering an MD degree.
Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine
Student Position Regarding the Addition of an MD Degree to UNTHSC

WHEREAS, the Medical Student Government Association (MSGA) Council of the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (TCOM) is composed of elected representatives of each class of the TCOM; and

WHEREAS, the MSGA Council serves to represent the student body of TCOM; and

WHEREAS, the MSGA Council has made efforts to gather information from members of all classes at TCOM regarding the issue of potentially adding an MD Degree to the degree offerings at the University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC) via email communications, personal conversations with members of our individual classes and student town-hall meetings as well as via review of the online survey results; and

WHEREAS, the majority of students state that there is no anticipated benefit to the TCOM, the community or the UNTHSC, but there are multiple risks that outweigh any purported benefits from adding an MD degree to the UNTHSC; and

WHEREAS, the process of evaluating the feasibility of adding an MD degree to UNTHSC has been complicated by a sense of distrust, secrecy and a lack of transparency surrounding the process of the study; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the MSGA Council of TCOM, in its capacity as the official representative body of all TCOM students, does hereby declare its opposition to any effort by the University of North Texas Board of Regents, its Chancellor or the President of UNTHSC to begin to offer the MD degree at the UNTHSC; and be it further,

RESOLVED, that the MSGA Council does hereby urge the UNT Board of Regents, the Chancellor of UNT and the President of the UNTHSC to stop using the limited resources of the UNTHSC to study the feasibility of adding the MD degree to UNTHSC and to use those resources to assure the future stability and success of TCOM as one of the nation’s top ten medical schools by improving the quality of teaching staff at UNTHSC, improving its curriculum, securing 250 clinical rotation slots for third and fourth year osteopathic medical students and using its political and financial influence to establish a relationship with an area hospital as the primary teaching hospital for the TCOM; and be it further,

RESOLVED, that the MSGA Council does hereby urge the UNT Board of Regents, the Chancellor of UNT and the President of the UNTHSC to embrace the osteopathic heritage of the UNTHSC and the TCOM and to use the strengths of the school and its strong record of academic excellence to promote its unique product to the community at large in order to better serve the community, area hospitals, alumni and current and future students.

PASSED: one abstention, zero nays.
Don Peska, DO  
Chairman, MD Option Study Group  
University of North Texas Health Science Center  
3500 Camp Bowie Blvd.  
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

February 2, 2009

Dear Dr. Peska,

This letter is intended to provide our input regarding the possibility of an MD degree option at UNTHSC. We appreciate the efforts collecting input regarding this issue. As we provide this input to you, we will also provide similar input to the TCOM Interim Dean, the UNTHSC Provost, the UNTHSC President, the UNT System Chancellor, and the UNT System Board of Regents.

We, the undersigned members of the OMM Department at UNTHSC-TCOM wish to state unequivocally, that UNTHSC should not offer an MD degree. We assert this for these reasons:

1. It is unnecessary. TCOM already produces exceptional physicians who are accepted into some of the top residencies and practices in the country.

2. It is harmful to TCOM and our community. The development of a new, costly program on our campus will necessitate diversion of resources away from TCOM, thereby weakening our position of strength and leadership in Texas and across the osteopathic profession. Our community and our state are in need of more primary care physicians, which have historically been produced in higher numbers from osteopathic institutions, not allopathic ones.

3. It institutionalizes professional discrimination and prejudice. We have been told that the development of an MD program would increase the access our osteopathic students have to rotation and residency slots. We understand that our school is not alone as we face challenges in the availability of training sites, but there are other potential solutions to this problem that are not being adequately investigated.

A decision of this magnitude should be made with each step of the process being thoughtful, inclusive and unbiased. The landmark consequences of such a decision must be fully understood. This path will change not only the course of TCOM but also the manner in which osteopathic medicine will move forward in this country. To set a
decision timetable based on the abbreviated legislative session that Texas utilizes, we believe undermines the validity and integrity of the current process.

We do not believe that a valid reason to change exists to create a second medical degree option at UNTHSC. Regardless of what decision is made, our department is committed to providing quality medical education.

Sincerely,

Russell Gamber, DO, MPH

Kendi Hensel, DO

Rita Patterson, PhD

Scott Stoll, DO, PhD

Randall Hayes, DO

Shrawan Kumar, PhD, DSc, FRSC

Lesley Schmitz, DO

Stuart Williams, DO, FACOFP
TCOM Alumni Association

The Board of Directors of the TCOM Alumni Association met during the TOMA Mid Winter Conference at the Westin Park Central hotel in Dallas on February 7, 2009. Nearly the entire two hour meeting was spent discussing the controversial issues at TCOM. At the conclusion of this discussion two motions were made and unanimously passed. Students in the room were asked to refrain from voting in order to protect their interests.

Motion # 1:
Representing the over three thousand members TCOM Alumni Association, the Board of Directors hereby issues a Vote of No Confidence for current UNTHSC President Dr. Scott Ransom.

Discussion: This motion was prompted by the deep concern that alumni have registered over current, proposed, and anticipated changes at UNTHSC. We are strongly opposed to the “new direction for UNTHSC” Dr. Ransom often refers to when explaining personnel changes and the proposed MD degree initiative. These changes pose a threat to the quality of education at TCOM, the osteopathic tradition of the school, and the osteopathic profession in Texas and elsewhere.

Motion # 2:
A. The Alumni Board opposes the proposed granting of the MD degree by the UNT System.
B. The Alumni Board supports current Texas statutes that provide for the DO degree being the only medical degree offered at the UNTHSC.

Discussion: The TCOM Alumni Board of Directors wants to go on record to restate their support for the motions passed and actions taken during the December 2008 TOMA Board of Trustees meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Garza, DO, FACOFP, FAAFP
President, TCOM Alumni Association
Chair, TOMA Task Force
Texas Osteopathic Medical Association

Dear Osteopathic Colleagues and Friends,

Recently the University of North Texas Health Science Center’s (UNTHSC) President, Scott Ransom, DO, announced the formation of a Study Group (SG). The SG consists of Health Science Center administrators, local civic leaders, health care executives, medical association leaders, both osteopathic and allopathic, and at least one Texas College of Osteopathic Medical (TCOM) student. The SG was created for one reason and one reason only; that is, to investigate the concept of offering an MD degree at UNTHSC. The University of North Texas (UNT) Board of Regents (BOR) directed Dr. Ransom to create the SG. Therefore, the BOR will receive the final SG report of its finding after the 3rd and final meeting in March.

The Texas Osteopathic Medical Association’s (TOMA) Board met in early December and passed three resolutions, all opposed to the MD option. One of the resolutions was to reaffirm our support to the existing state statute that prohibits UNT from granting an MD degree. We feel that this statute was passed for a valid reason and TOMA agrees with the statute. Another TOMA resolution created a Task Force (TF), chaired by David Garza, DO, to independently study the issue.

TOMA opposes the creation of a MD option at UNTHSC for a multitude of reasons.
- There are eight medical schools in Texas (TX) that already grant an MD degree. There is only one osteopathic medical school (TCOM) that grants a DO degree. There are proposals for at least two more MD schools in TX, one in the Rio Grande Valley and the other in Austin, TX. All TX medical schools are anticipating increasing class size, so there appears to be no reason to offer an MD degree at UNTHSC from a mere MD numbers perspective. TCOM deserves to increase the number of DO students.
- TCOM, the medical school, at UNTHSC is arguably the top osteopathic medical school in the osteopathic profession. It has ranked in the top 50 of all US medical schools in Primary Care according to US News and World Report for seven years in a row. It is TOMA’s contention that diluting UNTHSC with an MD degree option would divert focus and finances away from the DO primary care dominance to other less critical venues.
- TX health care ranks in the bottom five (5) states in health care delivery in the USA. One of the major reasons is the lack of primary care available to our citizens. TX needs more primary care physicians! Over 65% of TCOM graduates enter primary care while MD schools do not even approach this lofty percentage. TCOM is well positioned to ask for more students and expect the necessary funding to do so. Creating an MD option at the expense of DO student positions seems contrary to the needs of TX citizens.

The TOMA Task Force has been charged with championing the wishes of TOMA’s Board. The TOMA Executive Committee is the party to which the TF reports and receives its instructions. The TF has been directed to:

- The TF will recruit TOMA members, osteopathic colleagues and supporters as advocates for TOMA’s position.
- the TF and its advocates will petition the UNT Chancellor, UNT Board of Regents, TX state Senators, TX state Representatives, TX Higher Education Board, allopathic leaders, health care administrators and civic leaders and provide information on why the MD option is not needed, nor is it the right thing to do for a host of reasons.
As you can imagine, this is a huge undertaking and your help is needed. Contact your TOMA district President, your TOMA House of Delegate representatives or the TOMA office at 800-444-8662 or lucyg@txosteo.org to express your opinion. Also, please contact your state Senator and Representative to express you opposition to the MD degree at UNTHSC. Contacting the Chancellor and the UNT BOR is another needed method to voice your opposition. And please contact any TCOM alumni you know both in Texas and out-of-state. The website www.keeptcomdo.com is an excellent resource for finding out how to contact these individuals; or call or email the TOMA office. Please let the TOMA Office know who you contact so we can be sure all of the key players have heard from the Osteopathic Profession. In addition, this letter and form are posted on the TOMA website www.txosteo.org if you would like to download it.

Finally, the TOMA Executive Committee has created a designated fund to finance the Task Force. UNTHSC has already dedicated a significant amount of time and money to the SG. The TF will have a protracted and costly chore. You can help by renewing your membership or joining as a new member. If you are already a member, please fill out the attached contribution form and help finance the Keep TCOM DO crusade.

Fraternally,
Monte E. Troutman, D.O., President

YES, I WANT TO JOIN THE FIGHT TO PROTECT TCOM AND THE OSTEOPATHIC TRADITION IN TEXAS!

_____ Enclosed please find my check in the amount of $_________________.
  (please indicate on the check that it is for the TOMA War Chest)

_____ Please charge my credit card as follows:
  _____ One time contribution of $_______
  _____ Monthly contribution of $________
  ___ VISA     ___ MASTERCARD     ___ AMERICAN EXPRESS
    Card Number: ____________________________________  Exp Date: _______
    PRINT Name as it appears on card: ____________________________________
    Authorized Signature: _______________________________________________

_____ I am a TCOM Alumnus, I graduated in ___________
_____ I am a TOMA Member
_____ I am not currently a TOMA Member but I would like to be
_____ I am not a TOMA Member but I support this effort

Please send your contribution to:
Texas Osteopathic Medical Association
1415 Lavaca Street
Austin, TX 78701-1634
You can FAX credit card contributions to 512-708-1415
RESOLUTION NO. 11

WHEREAS, the administration of the University of North Texas has initiated an investigation into the possibility of granting the degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD) in addition to Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) through the University of North Texas Health Science Center; and

WHEREAS, this process is being considered in order to improve the teaching venues available to the students and graduates of the University of North Texas Health Science Center; and

WHEREAS, this study group has only had only one survey posted with responses to a number of local business and community leaders, several osteopathic physicians, and several of the Texas state and local osteopathic associations; and

WHEREAS, the report to date has been posted on the web site for University of North Texas Health Science Center Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNTHSC/TCOM) (http://www.hsc.unt.edu/); and

WHEREAS, this report lacks many documented facts about the comparison of osteopathic physicians to allopathic physicians in terms of graduates in primary care, costs in savings to patients, costs in morbidity and mortality, and access to care; and

WHEREAS, the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (TCOM) is a premier osteopathic medical college that has ranked in the top 50 of all MD and DO colleges and universities for the past seven years in graduating primary care physicians (U.S. News and World Report), a fact that no other allopathic college of medicine in Texas has achieved; and of the eight schools and colleges of medicine in Texas, TCOM is the only college of osteopathic medicine (COM); and

WHEREAS, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board reports from its own study of September 2008 that startup costs for a new U.S. Medical school (based on 60 students) is $92 million, with no promises from graduates to stay in state after they graduate, with figures including costs for administration, staff, faculty, and additional class and building space; and
WHEREAS, the Texas Medical Board (TMB) reveals that only 28-42% of Texas MD graduates go into primary care (depending on the COM), yet 67-74% of TCOM DO graduates go into primary care (see attachment A); and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth Fund Report authored by Barbara Starfield in 2006, updating the original 1999 report, gives evidence that adults who have a primary care physician have 33% less cost of care, and a 19% less mortality (i.e. are less likely to die prematurely), and this report also indicates that patients who have a primary care physician is consistently associated with improved health outcomes, and in the United States an increase of 1 (one) primary care physician is associated with 1.44 fewer deaths per 10,000; and

WHEREAS, a white paper from the American College of Physicians (ACP) 2008, entitled “How is a Shortage of Primary Care Physicians Affecting the Quality and Cost of Medical Care?” reveals that a dramatic decline is occurring in the number of graduating medical (MD) students entering primary care; and, that a 2007 survey of 4th year medical students reveals only 2% of students intended to pursue careers in general internal medicine; and

WHEREAS, in this same report from the ACP, the authors found that by increasing the number of primary care physicians by 1 per 10,000 population was associated with a reduction in overall spending of $684 per Medicare beneficiary, and an increase of 1 specialist per 10,000 population increased spending of $526 per Medicare beneficiary; and

WHEREAS, the report Code Red: The Critical Condition of Texas Health was jointly conceived by the Task Force consortium of The University of Texas System with ten academic health institutions (including UNT/HSC/TCOM), and members from small and large business employees, health care providers, insurers and consumers was published in 2006, which reveals Texas faces an impending crisis regarding the health of its population that will profoundly influence the state’s competitive position nationally and globally; that the health of Texas, economically, educationally, culturally and socially depends on the physical and mental health of its population; and that the quality of life for individual Texans and the communities in which they live depends critically upon health status, based on the fact that Texas has an inadequate number of physicians, the national average is 220 direct (primary) care physicians per 100,000 people, and Texas averages only 152 primary care physicians per 100,000; and

WHEREAS, a special communication authored by Miller, Hooker and Mains, entitled “Characteristics of Osteopathic Physicians Choosing to Practice Rural Primary Care,” from JAOA May 2006, revealed that male osteopathic physicians were 2.3 times more likely than all other physician groups to practice rural primary care, and also revealed that female osteopathic physicians to choose primary care as a specialty and were 2.5 times more likely than female allopathic physicians to practice primary care in a rural location, and that most physicians in Texas are located in metropolitan areas, of 39,595 licensed physicians (all categories) with Texas addresses, 37,434 were located within one of the 27 metropolitan statistical areas, that only 3% (994) of Texas physicians were located in nonmetropolitan areas that are not adjacent to metropolitan areas, and that of the 11,884 Texas physicians who met the study criteria and practiced primary care, 1123 were osteopathic physicians, that female (70%) and male (57%) osteopathic physicians practiced in primary care fields, and in comparison, less than half of female and a third of male allopathic physicians were in primary care; and
WHEREAS, in this same communication from Miller, Hooker and Mains, that there continues to be disparities in access to healthcare in the United States, especially evident for rural and other underserved communities, and that osteopathic medicine has emerged as one of few consistent remedies for these inequities, and that in contrast with allopathic physicians, most osteopathic physicians choose primary care specialties, and furthermore, the literature suggests that osteopathic physicians practice in rural areas relatively more than their allopathic colleagues; and

WHEREAS, an article by Benjamin Brewer, M.D., from Jan 2009, relates that decades of research have shown that good primary care reduces costs and improves outcomes, yet this is a blind spot as the biggest flaw in the healthcare system, and that an adequately funded system of primary care is the key to adequate healthcare; now, therefore be it,

RESOLVED, that the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) Congress of Delegates goes on record for maintaining the integrity of the University of North Texas Health Science Center and the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine by preserving it as an exclusively Osteopathic institution so that all medical graduates are Osteopathic physicians which will benefit the State of Texas and the health of our nation, and, be it further,

RESOLVED, that letters from the President and Board of Governors of ACOFP are to be sent to the current University of North Texas (UNT) Chancellor, the UNT Board of Regents, and the current President at UNTHSC/TCOM reflective of this resolution; and, be it further,

RESOLVED, that this resolution be forwarded to the American Osteopathic Association House of Delegates for consideration and action.
REFERENCES:
http://www.hsc.unt.edu Study Group Document: MD Degree Assessment UNT Health Science Center


http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/Agency/Topics.cfm Overview Basic Steps To Start A New Medical School

http://www.jaoa.org/ “Characteristics of Osteopathic Physicians Choosing to Practice Rural Primary Care”, from JAOA May 2006, by Miller, Hooker and Mains

ATTACHMENT A

Medical School Graduates Practicing Primary Care in Texas Source: Legislative Appropriations Requests submitted to the State Legislature

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Baylor College of Medicine is a private institution and does not submit a Legislative Appropriations Request to the State of Texas.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board report:

The average Percent of Medical School Graduates Practicing Primary Care in Texas decreased by six percentage points in fiscal year 2007 from fiscal year 2006. UTSWMC, TAMUSHSC, UNTSC, and TTUHSC met or exceeded their respective targets. UTMB, UTHSC–H, and UTHSC– SA did not meet their targets. According to UTMB, because of restraints placed on primary care physicians by insurance companies and reduced reimbursement for Medicare and Medicaid patients, fewer residents chose primary care as their practice of choice. UTHSC–H did not meet its target of 40 percent because of a trend of medical school graduates with a declining interest in careers as primary care physicians. UTHSC–Tyler and UTMDACC do not have medical school programs.
SUBJECT: Maintaining the Integrity of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (COM) and University Health Science Centers (UHSC) Granting the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Degree (DO)

SUBMITTED BY: Texas Society of the ACOFP

REFERRED TO: 2009 ACOFP Congress of Delegates

RESOLUTION NO. 13

WHEREAS, the Barbara Starfield report update in 2006, from the original 1999 report, gives evidence that adults who have a primary care physician have 33% less cost of care, and a 19% less mortality (i.e. are less likely to die prematurely), and this report also indicates that patients who have a primary care physician is consistently associated with improved health outcomes, and in the United States an increase of 1 (one) primary care physician is associated with 1.44 fewer deaths per 10,000; and

WHEREAS, a white paper from the American College of Physicians (ACP) 2008, entitled “How is a Shortage of Primary Care Physicians Affecting the Quality and Cost of Medical Care?”, reveals that a dramatic decline is occurring in the number of graduating medical (MD) students entering primary care; and, that a 2007 survey of 4th year medical students reveals only 2% of students intended to pursue careers in general internal medicine; and

WHEREAS, in this same report from the ACP, the authors found that by increasing the number of primary care physicians by 1 per 10,000 population was associated with a reduction in overall spending of $684 per Medicare beneficiary, and an increase of 1 specialist per 10,000 population increased spending of $526 per Medicare beneficiary; and

WHEREAS, a special communication authored by Miller, Hooker and Mains, entitled “Characteristics of Osteopathic Physicians Choosing to Practice Rural Primary Care”, from JAOA May 2006, revealed that male and female osteopathic physicians were 2.3 and 2.5 times respectively, more likely than all other physician groups to practice rural primary care; and

WHEREAS, in this same communication from Miller, Hooker and Mains, that there continues to be disparities in access to healthcare in the United States, especially evident for rural and other underserved communities, and that osteopathic medicine has emerged as one of few consistent remedies for these inequities, and that in contrast with allopathic physicians, most osteopathic physicians choose primary care specialties, and furthermore, the literature suggests that osteopathic physicians practice in rural areas relatively more than their allopathic colleagues; and
WHEREAS, an article by Benjamin Brewer, M.D., from Jan 2009, relates that decades of research have shown that good primary care reduces costs and improves outcomes, yet this is a blind spot as the biggest flaw in the healthcare system, and that an adequately funded system of primary care is the key to adequate healthcare; now, therefore be it,

RESOLVED, that the ACOFP Congress of Delegates uphold and support that all Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine and University Health Science Centers granting the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Degree (D.O.) preserve that integrity; and, be it further,

RESOLVED, that this resolution be forwarded to the American Osteopathic Association House of Delegates for consideration and action.
References:


http://www.jaoa.org/  “Characteristics of Osteopathic Physicians Choosing to Practice Rural Primary Care”, from JAOA May 2006, by Miller, Hooker and Mains

ACTION _____________________
WHEREAS, the State of Texas created the University of North Texas Health Sciences Center (UNTHSC) and, in 2001, approved legislation requiring that UNTHSC include a college of osteopathic medicine and specifically stating that the UNTHSC board not issue an MD degree; and

WHEREAS, less than 10 years after the State of Texas provided this unequivocal instruction, in December 2008, the leadership at the University of North Texas - Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (TCOM) is deliberately disregarding the statute by announcing plans to develop an “MD Option” whereby students would be given the option to obtain either a DO degree or an MD degree; and

WHEREAS, the reasons given by TCOM leadership for promoting this option are: (1) to produce more primary care physicians for Texas and (2) to propel TCOM into a top-tier medical research school; and

WHEREAS, in December 2008, the Executive Committee of the AOA Board of Trustees formed a Special Task Force to investigate this situation and to make recommendations to the AOA Board of Trustees; and

WHEREAS, the TCOM Special Task Force has reviewed the material from TCOM and has met with leadership of the Texas Osteopathic Medical Association and the TCOM Alumni; and

WHEREAS, the TCOM Special Task Force found that the MD option is likely to reduce the number of primary care physicians produced by TCOM since osteopathic schools, both nationally and at the Texas state level, produce a higher percentage of primary care physicians than MD schools; and

WHEREAS, the TCOM Special Task Force found no compelling rationale that TCOM must become an MD granting school in order to become a top-tier research school, when, in fact, (1) the TCOM was a leader in research, (2) the Osteopathic Research Center (ORC) was established at the TCOM in 2002 because of this research leadership, and (3) the American Osteopathic Association, the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine and the American Osteopathic Foundation have provided more
than $1.75 million in financial support to ORC from 2002 to 2008 in recognition of this research leadership; and

WHEREAS, the TCOM Special Task Force is concerned that the quality of education at TCOM is being adversely affected by the discussion of an MD option; and

WHEREAS, the TCOM Special Task Force is concerned that the creation of an MD option and the costs associated with developing such an option would take resources away from the osteopathic medical program that could be used to enhance the osteopathic medical program; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) suspend all payments to the Osteopathic Research Center until the situation has been resolved to the AOA Board of Trustees' satisfaction; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the AOA Board of Trustees stands in support of the 2001 Texas legislation that prohibits the University of North Texas’ Board of Regents from offering an MD degree; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the AOA Board of Trustees communicates to the Chancellor of the University of North Texas (UNT), the UNT Board of Regents, and the President of the University of North Texas Health Science Center its opposition to an MD degree at University of North Texas; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Osteopathic Association ask members who oppose the MD option at TCOM to make financial contributions directly to the Texas Osteopathic Medical Association, which has created the “TCOM Dedicated Fund” to finance its research and advocacy in support of osteopathic medicine in Texas.

Explanatory Statement:
In 2002, the AOA, the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine and the American Osteopathic Foundation formally established the osteopathic profession's first Osteopathic Research Center (ORC) at TCOM and have provided more than $1.75