



## Purpose

**Federally-funded graduate medical education (GME) residency programs frequently exclude or impose discriminatory requirements on Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (DOs).** These practices exacerbate the workforce shortage by creating barriers and limiting access to licensed DO physicians.

## Background

Osteopathic medical students attend Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine and take the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination of the United States (COMLEX) for state licensure and acceptance to residency programs. COMLEX is comparable to the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) taken by allopathic students (MDs).

Residency training for physicians was consolidated under a single accreditor, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, in 2020. Graduating DO and MD seniors now enter a “single match” and compete for acceptance into these residency programs where they will train for the next three to seven years, depending on medical specialty.

Residency programs are supported through government-funded Graduate Medical Education (GME). Medicare accounts for 71% of all GME funding. **Over 20% of Medicare GME programs will not accept DO graduates or impose costly, burdensome and unnecessary requirements for DO participation, like mandating the USMLE.** DO and MD requirements are parallel, both leading to unrestricted physician licenses, and even the American Medical Association (AMA) promotes equal acceptance of the COMLEX and USMLE at all U.S. residency programs. Taxpayer funded GME should not be allowed to discriminate against a class of licensed physicians based solely on degree and examination type.

## Impact

Congressional action is needed to end discriminatory practice against DOs for federally funded GME because:

- Many government-supported residency programs exclude DO graduates.
- **Over 20% of residencies, totaling over 1000 programs, only accept the USMLE.**
- DO students are required to take the COMLEX-USA for graduation.
- Over 86% of osteopathic medical students who attend medical school and do residency training in a state will practice in that state. Over 73% of DOs will practice in the state where they do residency training.
- Residency locations impact physician distribution and must accept all medical school graduates.

## AACOM Recommends

Pass legislation that prohibits residency programs that receive federal GME funding from discriminating against Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine.

## About AACOM

The American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) leads and advocates for the full continuum of osteopathic medical education to improve the health of the public. Founded in 1898 to support and assist the nation's osteopathic medical schools, AACOM represents all 37 colleges of osteopathic medicine—educating nearly 34,000 future physicians, 25 percent of all U.S. medical students—at 58 teaching locations in 33 U.S. states, as well as osteopathic graduate medical education professionals and trainees at U.S. medical centers, hospitals, clinics and health systems. **For more information, please contact David Bergman, Vice President of Government Relations, [dbergman@aacom.org](mailto:dbergman@aacom.org) (301) 968-4174.**