

**Testimony of Robert A. Cain, DO, FACOI, FAODME**

**President and Chief Executive Officer**

**American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine**

**Concerning the Department of Health and Human Services**

**Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2023**

*Submitted for the Record to the House Committee on Appropriations*

*Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies*

May 26, 2022

The American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) appreciates the opportunity to highlight priorities for the osteopathic medical education (OME) community in the LHHSE fiscal year (FY) 2023 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services budget.

AACOM supports FY23 funding for the following priority programs:

- **\$49 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)**
- **\$11 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
- **\$9.8 billion for discretionary Health Resources and Services Administration**
- **\$1.51 billion for the PHSA Title VII and Title VIII health professions workforce programs**
- **\$500 million for Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education**
- **\$500 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality**
- **\$375 million for Children’s Hospital Graduate Medical Education**

- **\$210 million for discretionary National Health Service Corps Scholarship and Loan Repayment programs**
- **\$75 million for the Medical Student Education Program**
- **\$67 million for the Area Health Education Center Program**
- **\$59 million for the Primary Care Training and Enhancement Program**
- **Permanent funding for the Rural Residency Planning and Development Program**

AACOM advocates for the full continuum of OME to improve the health of the public.

Founded in 1898 to support and assist the nation's osteopathic medical schools, AACOM represents all 38 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine (COMs) —educating nearly 34,000 future physicians, 25 percent of all U.S. medical students—at 60 teaching locations in 34 U.S. states, as well as osteopathic graduate medical education professionals and trainees at U.S. medical centers, hospitals, clinics and health systems.

Osteopathic medicine plays an essential role in our nation's healthcare delivery system and is the fastest growing medical field in the country according to the U.S. Bureau of Health Professions. Osteopathic physicians are trained to see the body as a unit of interdependent systems which promotes healing through a dynamic interaction of body, mind, and spirit. DOs have expertise in the musculoskeletal system, receiving extensive training in osteopathic manipulative treatment, a hands-on technique and non-pharmacological solution to pain management.

AACOM is concerned that scientists at osteopathic medical schools are underutilized in NIH research and underrepresented on NIH Advisory Councils and study sections. The Joint

Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-103) highlighted this concern and requires NIH to report on the status of NIH funding to colleges of osteopathic medicine and the representation of DOs on NIH National Advisory Councils and study sections. We thank you for acknowledging this disparity and urge the Subcommittee to ensure swift implementation.

If this disparity in funding and representation continues, NIH will miss a key opportunity to bolster its capacity to address some of the Nation's most pressing health threats. COMs have a commitment to serving rural and underserved communities: 58 percent are located in Health Professional Shortage Areas and almost all schools have a mission to address these populations. Moreover, nearly 40 percent of physicians practicing in medically-underserved areas are DOs. They serve as the backbone of the primary care system with more than half of DOs practicing in primary care specialties. Finally, COMs routinely train osteopathic medical students in community-based settings, which aligns with the HHS Initiative to Strengthen Primary Health Care. Maintaining a focus on this issue will benefit the public by ensuring increased NIH research on these disadvantaged populations.

AACOM appreciates the opportunity to share our LHHSE FY23 funding priorities and looks forward to continuing to work with the Subcommittee on these important matters.