



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

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Good afternoon, honored friends, family, and of course all of you, my osteopathic family.

I am honored, grateful, excited, and humbled to be given the opportunity to serve you this year as President of the ACOFP. Most of you in this room know me. My name is Greg Cohen, DO, FACOFP dist. I have been a proud member of our organization for over 30 years. I've had the privilege of serving our profession in many, many roles over the years. I have been President of the Iowa Chapter twice. I have been President of the Iowa Osteopathic Medical Association twice. I have served on and chaired the Iowa Maternal Child Health Advisory Counsel. I have represented Iowa at our Congress of Delegates and the AOA House of Delegates for over 20 years each. I have served on multiple ACOFP committees including the Federal Legislation and Advocacy Committee, the Rural Residency Taskforce, the Delphi Long-range Planning Committee, and the Preceptorship Committee. I have served on the Board of Governors since 2017. I went to DMU and completed an osteopathic rotating internship and an osteopathic family practice residency at Long Beach Memorial Hospital in New York. Most importantly, I have been a proud practicing full-time osteopathic family physician serving the residents of Chariton, Iowa, a rural town of 4500 in southern Iowa, for the last 31 years. I have precepted students for more than 25 years. I've delivered more than 700 babies, performed my own C-sections, postpartum tubals, and colposcopies, and took care of my own hospital patients. I stopped covering the emergency room just this past Christmas. I was Lucas County Medical Examiner for over 20 years. I was also a partner and part owner of a small group practice for many years. Like most of us, I eventually sold my practice and became an employee.

Like many of you, I am a family man who has seen my share of life's curveballs. (Sorry, I like baseball). I was married to, loved, and cared tirelessly for my first wife, Marilisa, for 23 years until she lost her battle with breast cancer at the age of 41. I was blessed to find love again with Suse, and we have been married 17 years this week. Together, we have raised seven children who have blessed us with loving generous sons and daughters-in-law, and eight wonderful grandchildren (so far?) They have all shared in the joys and the sorrows, rewards, and sacrifices that have come with

my lifetime in osteopathic medicine. I am grateful that many of them are here with us this week. I want them to know how much I love them and how proud I am of each and every one of them and the lives they have made. I am grateful to have my brother Michael, my sister Elizabeth, and their families, who closed their office and flew down from New York to celebrate today.

I am also grateful for my many extraordinary mentors and friends. Some are here today and too many are of blessed memory. Again and again, I have been able to benefit from their wealth of wisdom and experience. I'd like to thank Martin Diamond, David Leopold, Steve Rubin, my uncle Herb Cohen, Jeff Grove, Kevin de Regnier, Karen Nichols, Ira Monka, and Teresa Hubka. I'd also like to thank my partner of 31 years, Ken Anderson, my best friend these past 39 years, Doran Pruisner, my parents and grandparents, all of my fellow board members both past and present—and so many more. Their legacy of integrity, compassion, and duty has helped shape the servant leader I have become. I hope that I can adequately pay that debt forward to help the next generation of osteopathic students, physicians, and leaders.

Like most of us, I have seen my job get harder. Ever increasing paperwork and regulations, the explosion of technology into every aspect of our practices and lives. Increasingly intrusive, demanding, complicated, and inefficient EHRs, created not to make our lives easier or to improve the care of our patients but to collect data. Not only have they not improved care, but they have turned us into bad, expensive data entry clerks. Prior authorizations have delayed care, interfered with medical judgment, and damaged the doctor-patient relationship. That critical trust takes years to build and only moments to destroy. And then there's the increasing focus on production and numbers and the uncontrolled expansion of APNs, PAs, and other health professionals with less training and a never-ending hunger for increasing their scope of practice. Somewhere along the line, we all became providers. I don't know about you, but I didn't go to provider school. My diploma says "Doctor." Then there's the expansion of legislatively mandated CME topics, and a board certification process which seems to be constantly changing, confusing, expensive, and often unresponsive to our needs and concerns. AI is spreading like a fire across our profession, threatening to replace

or devalue the sacred importance of holistic care and human touch. A pandemic that threatened our lives, our health, and divided us as a nation. A pandemic that pitted healthcare workers and physicians against each other and our patients. Misinformation, social media, deep fakes, the attack on science, public health, and a world on fire!

Is it any wonder that burnout, malaise and anger are so pervasive and continue to rise in our medical students, residents, academics, and practicing physicians? None of these topics are new. In the past several years, we have had presentations touching on many of these at our conferences.

So where am I heading with this? Starting today, I want you to take a journey with me. A journey of mind, body, and spirit. A journey to find health. At this conference and throughout this year, we are going to talk about the hard stuff. We are going to share effective strategies. We are going to provide training and CME to help us learn to use these technological tools better and safer. We are going to talk about burnout, mental health, workplace culture, employment models, contracts, and even faith and medicine. For the next few days, we are all going to live in one of the "happiest places on earth." We're going to reconnect with old friends. We're going to make new friends. We're going to eat some good food. We're going to participate in some really high-quality osteopathic CME, and we're going to celebrate each other.

I have always enjoyed coming to our conferences. It has always felt like home and family. I enjoy sitting down next to someone I've never met knowing that, with all we have in common as osteopathic family physicians, the chances are good that I will like them, learn something, and make a new friend. I encourage all of you to do the same this week.

Throughout the year, the journey will continue. We will continue to have blogs, webinars, CME, and presidential messages. In June, we will be hosting our first annual destination CME, a cruise to Alaska. On sea days, we will be offering up to 15 hours of CME, enjoying entertainment and food. On days at port, we will be feeding our souls, experiencing some of the most beautiful and extraordinary wild places on earth—mountains, glaciers, wildlife, whales, and more. I urge you to consider joining us if you can.

In my year as President, I want to help us rediscover the joy of practice. Let's reclaim the feeling we had when we started on our journey in osteopathic medicine. We need to dig deep to rediscover the excitement, the passion, the enthusiasm, the awe.... the Calling.

In the coming year, my fellow Board members and I will be coming to visit many of you at state affiliate meetings, schools, and conferences. We will be expanding our partnerships and programs with your state associations.

We will continue to work with the AOA and AOBFP with a goal of trying to encourage them to make the certification process simpler, more meaningful, less expensive, less intrusive, and osteopathic. We will continue to advocate for legislation that benefits us and our patients.

So that's my message. That is who I am and how I got here. That is my why. But before I finish, I want something from you. I want you to practice, to teach, to study, to learn, to make new friends...to find your joy. I want you to tell us when we're doing right and I want you to tell us when we're not. I promise we will always get back to you as soon as possible. Sometimes you will like our answers and sometimes you might not, but we will do everything in our power to continue to make this your osteopathic professional home. Our incredible leaders and staff are dedicated, talented, and here to serve.

What else do I want? I want you to talk to our students, residents, and fellow physicians, especially our young physicians. I want you to talk to them about coming to one of our meetings. They need to experience the fellowship, friendships, CME, and the magic that happens when our osteopathic family is together. They need to see why it is so important to join and participate in our state and national associations. We are all in this together. Thank you for what you do each day for your patients, your communities, and for our college. Thank you for the honor of allowing me to be your President.

God bless all of you on your journey to joy. God bless the ACOFP, and God watch over and protect our troop.

Thank you.



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