

# **Exhibit C**

President's Message  
2017 HOD  
Friday, 7/21/17  
Boyd R. Buser, President, AOA

**President's Message Theme: Optimism**  
**2017 Annual Meeting Theme: Leading Change**

Thank you Speaker Morrison, and good morning delegates, Trustees, and guests.

A year ago, I stood at this podium and pledged to serve as the 120<sup>th</sup> President of this esteemed association. It has truly been an honor to serve the members of our profession, and to represent the osteopathic medical profession, and I will forever treasure the experience.

I thank you for your trust and for your support. I would like to acknowledge some very important people, without whom I would not have been able to perform this job.

The BOT, a group of independent thinkers and hard workers who are never afraid to speak their minds

Because of their support, counsel and friendship I was able to serve as your President.

We are blessed with an outstanding AOA staff, especially Adrienne WF and her Senior Leadership Team, who are always there, always available and always working on behalf of our leaders and all of our members.

I need to thank my Pikeville family who shouldered so much extra work to keep the KYCOM healthy and rolling, especially Dr. Bill Betz who served as acting dean while I was away doing the work of our association

And of course my wife Pam –

I will miss working closely with the leadership and remarkable staff of the AOA, but after having logged \_\_\_ travel days attending 37 affiliate meetings; visiting many Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine; traveling to 3 different continents, 9 visits to Washington D.C., and 1 United States Presidential Inauguration I will not

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miss airport check-ins, flight delays, missed connections, or airport luggage carousels. Those travails notwithstanding, this has been the experience of a lifetime!

During my inaugural message, I spoke about –

- Our ability to create our future
- the challenges before us, such as physician shortages, rising healthcare costs, and government “interference”
- And the work required to meet those challenges, as articulated in our Strategic Plan

While in some respects this year has passed quickly, we have accomplished much:

The successful launch of initiatives in Phase II, and I'd like to take a moment to list a few.

- We launched a new Member Value Services area, as a result of hearing what you said about the relevance and value of your AOA membership
- We created a task force to better align with affiliates, based on what our state and specialty partners are telling us they need
- We've begun to implement many improvements to our board certification services to make them more attractive and competitive in the marketplace
- We have expanded our partnerships internationally, focusing on increasing practice rights for DOs and developing new research opportunities
- And taking a detailed look at the organizational structure of our bureaus, councils committees and Board to ensure that this organization will be sustainable and relevant for generations to come

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Additionally, we operationalized key elements of Phase I --

- Continuing our public awareness campaign that garnered unprecedented results in social and traditional media **and** won numerous industry awards;
- We also increased our allocations in support of osteopathic medical research to more than \$1 million annually, for two consecutive years now;

Even with such an outstanding chronology of successes and accomplishments, there exists the opportunity to DO more!

That “nexus” of our amazing growth, increased public awareness of osteopathic medicine, and opportunities created by the SAS that I spoke about last year still exists:

- Continue visibility of the impact of osteopathic training;
- Continue raising awareness of osteopathic medicine in the public eye
- Continue expansion of Osteopathic Recognition in GME

I implored you back then to “let your DO out”, showing the world – through your actions – the healing, compassion and distinctive care that is osteopathic medicine.

That hasn't changed.

Today osteopathic medicine is still one of the fastest growing areas in the health care industry!

Forty years ago when I entered the profession as a first year osteopathic medical student, I never contemplated that the day would come when our numbers would

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surpass 100,000 practicing physicians, not to mention more than 25,000 students in the pipeline!

But although our profession is growing, our membership is not keeping pace with that growth.

Now, we must take the necessary steps to embrace and attract this expanding DO market.

And we continue to identify and implement opportunities to grow non-dues revenues.

Several months ago, the Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists put forward a strategy to enhance AOA board certification and OCC. One of the key elements of that strategy, which your Board of Trustees approved, was to develop more competitive price models through the separation of membership and board certification: de-coupling.

Four key findings drove this action by the Board:

1. The mandatory linking of certification exam costs and membership dues created a barrier between our association and DOs who trained in ACGME programs and became ABMS certified, and those who trained in AOA programs and became AOA certified. Current AOA processes make it difficult for ACGME-trained DOs to become AOA certified.
2. AOA and ABMS exam costs are comparable, but the added cost of mandatory AOA membership makes our certification more expensive than ABMS certification.
3. With a growing number of graduates each year, we have the potential to maximize the market by offering cost-effective, high-quality board certification. However, each year that we delay this action results in significant market opportunity lost, as several thousand DOs choose ABMS certification instead.

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4. We also know that many physicians who are currently certified by ABMS boards are seeking an alternative because of dissatisfaction with the ABMS system.

**AOA has an opportunity to compete for all physicians in the board certification market if we choose to expand the available options.**

A recent survey of MDs under 45 years of age, by Edge Research found 21% said they would be "very interested" or "extremely interested" in certification provided by the AOA.

The market is there. We must seize it. We have never been in a stronger position to move our organization ahead.

This action takes us forward. **We cannot cling to strategies that we know will not benefit us in the future.**

We must continue to show the world why we are distinctive, and we must also realize that with growth come unique opportunities.

We must take advantage of those opportunities by --

- Capturing and engaging the members of this growing profession; especially those under the age of 40 with a value proposition for membership that speaks to them;
- Working to ensure the distinctiveness of osteopathic medicine is acknowledged, taught and available for all medical professionals who seek to learn it;
- Advocating on the profession's behalf: Helping our elected officials understand and appreciate the value of OMT, the importance of meaningful reforms that maintain coverage and access to care for all, and the critical need for graduate medical education in teaching health centers; and

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- Recognizing the demands of our profession, we must work to ensure that wellness for ourselves remains as high a priority as it does for our patients.

As our profession grows, so too do the opportunities. Yes, change is hard, but I am optimistic and confident enough to know that the future is worth the dedication necessary to evolve!

**We** are the leaders of this most noble profession and together **we** can lead the change.

Together, **We** can Let. Our. D. O. Out!

**Thank you** for the opportunity to serve this great profession. God bless you all and god bless our osteopathic profession.