

Published by: Student Osteopathic Medical Association Political Affairs Task Force



External News

Article Recommendation: "A Caring Lens on the Opioid Crisis" – Time Magazine ([LINK](#))

This article published in Time highlights the work of photographer Jeffrey Stockbridge. His photos and journal entries of the people of Kensington Beach, Philadelphia are heart-wrenching and shed light on the reality of our country's opioid epidemic. His work and other initiatives similar (namely @kensingtonbeach215 on Instagram, viewer discretion advised) stir hearts to action and help families locate their loved ones that have fallen victim to addiction and homelessness.

Podcast Recommendation: S1E147 (24 min) "Harm Reduction's Road From Fringe to Federal Drug Policy" – Tradeoffs ([LINK](#))

Tradeoffs is a radio/podcast show that discusses the complexities of healthcare policy. This 24-minute episode is a discussion amongst experts and physicians in the fields of public health and medicine. They answer questions about our country's shift towards harm reduction in the face of our opioid epidemic.

Internal News

This year, SOMA presented five resolutions at the American Osteopathic Association House of Delegates (HOD). Of these resolutions, four were focused on Public Affairs and the final one was categorized as Ad Hoc, which is a category that encompasses materials related to physician practice issues, affiliate dynamics, insurance, and communications activities. This article will introduce the resolutions, present the AOA Board of Trustees recommendation, and discuss the final decision on the resolution. As a quick background for anyone unfamiliar with how the House of Delegates functions, resolutions are submitted by various organizations and are then reviewed by an AOA committee. These committees make a recommendation for each resolution, ranging from approval, disapproval, or referral back to the submitting organization. From there, the resolutions are voted on and, if approved, adopted as AOA policy.

The first resolution discussed on the HOD floor was H-434 "Recognizing the Disproportionate Prevalence of Cardiovascular Disease in the African American Population as a Public Health Issue." This amendment was originally recommended for disapproval by the Public Affairs Committee, however, discussion on the floor led to the amendment being edited to read "Recognizing the Disproportionate Mortality from Cardiovascular Disease in the African American Population as a Public Health Issue," after which the amendment was adopted.

Resolution H-435 "Standardized Screening for Intimate Partner Violence for all Individuals" was referred back to SOMA. In their explanatory statement, the AOA Committee explained that they support the spirit of the resolution but ask that SOMA provide clarification on the development of a screening tool and the feasibility of its implementation. They also asked that SOMA consider current AOA policy.

SOMA had another successful resolution in H-436, "Support for Increased Crisis Intervention Team Training for Law Enforcement," which was adopted with amendments. In this amendment, a group of lines were removed that the Resolution Committee felt gave a negative perception of law enforcement while not adding value to the resolve statement.

The final Public Affairs resolution, H-437 "Increased Research on the Public Health Impacts of Decriminalizing Possession of All Illicit Drugs," was approved as written.

The Ad Hoc resolution submitted by SOMA, H-626 "Expanding Scheduled Dialysis Services to All Patients with End Stage Kidney Disease," was disapproved. The Resolution Committee expressed their belief that AOA Policy H338-A/18 encompassed the spirit of the H-626.

Overall, SOMA and the COSGP (College of Student Government Presidents) did an amazing job representing the student voice. Special shout out to Monica Ketchum and everyone who put together the student rebuttals and spoke during the debate! Thank you for the time you all spent advocating for us. For further information on the 2022 AOA HOD Resolutions, check out this [link](#)!

TLDR:

Resolution #	Resolution Name	Final Action
H-434	Recognizing the Disproportionate Prevalence of Cardiovascular Disease in the African American Population	Approved
H-435	Standardized Screening for Intimate Partner Violence for all Individuals	Referred back to SOMA
H-436	Support for Increased Crisis Intervention Team Training for Law Enforcement	Approved
H-437	Increased Research on the Public Health Impacts of Decriminalizing Possession of All Illicit Drugs	Approved
H-626	Expanding Scheduled Dialysis Services to All Patients with End Stage Kidney Disease	Disapproved

Nominate an outstanding SOMA Member for Member Spotlight [HERE!](#)



Member Spotlight: *Monica Ketchum*

Monica currently serves as the Parliamentarian for the SOMA National Board of Trustees. The National Osteopathic Student Caucus (NOSC) was held before the American Osteopathic Association House of Delegates (AOA HoD) where the Osteopathic medical student opinion was voted upon. Monica did an excellent job representing the Osteopathic medical student opinion during the AOA HoD with her eloquently delivered remarks during debate. Today, she shares about her journey in advocacy.

1. How did you get into advocacy?

- o I became involved in advocacy during undergrad as a part of my premed club. A few of us went to a national conference in D.C. where they had an optional advocacy day. It seemed interesting and not something I had ever thought about before, so I thought I would try it. Being involved in that day gave me such passion and motivation that I knew it was something I wanted to continue to do.

2. What are some specific advocacy areas that you are most passionate about?

- o Most of the resolutions I have been a part of working on have centered around women's health including sexual assault awareness, abortion access, and intimate partner violence prevention, as well as using non-discriminating language. As parliamentarian, I have loved the opportunity to advocate on behalf of my fellow medical students and the issues integral to them.

3. What is one piece of advice you would give to someone who is interested in advocacy?

- o Just get involved! It can be incredibly scary to start something new, especially if you don't feel like you know what you're doing. I think this can be especially true for medical students. The people that I have met that are involved in advocacy are so welcoming, helpful, and just excited for you to be around that they will help you in whatever way you need. There are so many levels to be able to be involved from your local community to statewide and nationally. Reach out to the local professional societies or to me for how to get involved! Your voice matters, and I believe it is our responsibility as future physicians to be able to advocate for our patients.

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