



**Accreditation Council for
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**M.D.s and D.O.s Moving toward a Single, Unified Accreditation System for
Graduate Medical Education**

CHICAGO, October 24, 2012 - The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) have entered into an agreement to pursue a single, unified accreditation system for graduate medical education programs in the United States beginning in July 2015. Over the coming months, the three organizations will work toward defining a process, format and timetable for ACGME to accredit all osteopathic graduate medical education programs currently accredited by AOA. AOA and AACOM would then become organizational members of ACGME.

“This is a watershed moment for medical training in the U.S.,” noted Thomas Nasca, M.D., M.A.C.P., chief executive officer of ACGME. “This would provide physicians in the United States with a uniform path of preparation for practice. This approach would ensure that the evaluation and accountability for the competency of resident physicians are consistent across all programs,” he added.

Graduate medical education is the period of clinical education in a specialty that follows graduation from medical school, and prepares physicians for independent practice. Currently, ACGME accredits over 9,000 programs in graduate medical education with about 116,000 resident physicians, including over 8,900 osteopathic physicians (D.O.s). The AOA accredits more than 1,000 osteopathic graduate medical education programs with about 6,900 resident physicians, all D.O.s. The transition to a unified system would be seamless so that residents in or entering current AOA accredited residency programs will be eligible to complete residency and/or fellowship training in ACGME accredited residency and fellowship programs.

Among the topics of discussion for the three organizations will be:

- Modification of ACGME accreditation standards to accept AOA specialty board certification as meeting ACGME eligibility requirements for program directors and faculty;
- Programs in graduate medical education currently accredited solely by AOA to be recognized by ACGME as accredited by ACGME; and
- Participation by AOA and AACOM in accreditation of programs in graduate medical education to be solely through their membership and participation in ACGME.

“Americans deserve a health care system where continuously improving the quality of care and the health of our patients is the driving force,” stressed AOA President Ray E. Stowers, D.O. “A unified accreditation system creates an opportunity to set universal standards for demonstrating competency with a focus on positive outcomes and the ability to share information on best practices.”

Stephen C. Shannon, D.O., M.P.H., President of AACOM, adds that “AACOM is undertaking this historic initiative because we believe that a unified accreditation system will improve the quality and efficiency of graduate medical education.”

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The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) is a nonprofit organization responsible for the accreditation of over 9,000 programs in graduate medical education and about 700 institutions that sponsor these programs in the United States. Its accredited residency programs educate over 116,000 resident physicians in 135 specialties and subspecialties. Its member organizations are the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Hospital Association, the American Medical Association, the Association of American Medical Colleges, and the Council of Medical Specialty Societies. The ACGME’s mission is to improve health care by assessing and advancing the quality of resident physicians’ education through exemplary accreditation.

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) is the largest professional membership organization for osteopathic physicians (D.O.s), representing more than 100,000 D.O.s and osteopathic medical students. Headquartered in Chicago, the AOA serves as the primary certifying body for D.O.s; is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools; and has federal authority to accredit hospitals and other health care facilities.

The American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) serves as a unifying voice for osteopathic medical education. It represents the 21,000 osteopathic medical students as well as the administration and faculty of the 29 osteopathic medical schools in the United States. Guided by its Board of Deans and various other member councils and committees, AACOM promotes excellence in osteopathic medical education, in research and in service, and fosters innovation and quality among osteopathic medical schools to improve the health of the American public.