



Osteopathic International Alliance · 142 E. Ontario St., Chicago, IL 60611 USA

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Re: The Global Osteopathic Profession

To Whom It May Concern:

The Osteopathic International Alliance (OIA) is the leading organization for the advancement and unity of the global osteopathic profession. **As Chair of the OIA, I am writing to provide clarification regarding the significance of osteopathic healthcare and education.**

As an “organization of organizations,” the OIA unifies the osteopathic health care community by connecting schools, regulatory bodies, and regional, national, and multi-country groups. Our mission is to encourage systems of education and regulation that will ensure high standards for safe and effective health care from osteopaths and osteopathic physicians worldwide.

In 2018, the OIA was admitted into **official relations** with the World Health Organization (WHO) as a non-governmental organization, and maintains an active program of work with the WHO, including support for policies and programs, advice on matters relevant to the osteopathic profession, and representation at annual and other meetings.

Globally, there are **two distinct models of osteopathic education and practice** and, in some cases, the two models co-exist within the same country:

1. **Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)** – Fully licensed physician graduates of a US college of osteopathic medicine, who practice across all medical specialties in the US, as well as in some countries outside the US. Equivalent to a Medical Doctor (MD), with the difference that DOs receive *additional* education and training in osteopathic manual medicine that MDs do not.

Physician Osteopath (MD, DOM-EROP) – Fully licensed physicians, practicing across all medical specialties outside the US, who have completed formal post-medical (residency) training in osteopathy, and who practice medicine following the same osteopathic principles and philosophy as US-trained DOs. See the [European Register of Osteopathic Physicians](#) for core competencies and practice standards.

2. **Osteopath** - Practice does not encompass surgery or the prescribing of pharmaceuticals, but rather focuses on manual osteopathic treatments. Osteopaths train and practice exclusively outside of the US. This model is favored in all Latin American nations with osteopathic professionals, as well as Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and several other European countries (e.g. Switzerland, Denmark, France, Portugal, Iceland, Malta, Luxembourg, Finland, etc.), where osteopathy is regulated as a distinct health care profession.

Of note:

- Osteopathy is a **discrete clinical discipline** independent of other manual medicine modalities, such as physiotherapy or chiropractic.
- Osteopathy is a whole person, patient-centered approach to health care that **prioritizes scientific plausibility and evidence-based outcomes** in patient treatment.
- Osteopathic manual treatment encompasses all regions of the body. Osteopathic education, professional and international associations, and the **underlying philosophy of practice are unique**.

Currently there are two internationally accepted standards for training in osteopathy:

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** [Benchmarks for Training in Osteopathy](#) (Benchmarks). According to these Benchmarks, the practice of osteopathy is distinct from other healthcare professions that utilize manual techniques, such as physiotherapy or chiropractic, despite some overlap in the techniques and interventions employed.
- **Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN)** European Standard on Osteopathic Healthcare Provision (EN 16686), developed in partnership with the European Federation of Osteopaths (EFO) and the Forum for Osteopathic Regulation in Europe (FORE). The CEN standard sets a benchmark for high quality clinical practice, education, safety and ethics for Osteopathy in Europe, and has been published in 33 European countries.

The OIA supports following these standards in the training of osteopaths.

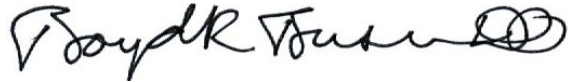
The curricula for the full-time training programs of osteopaths, as well as curricula for conversion courses for practitioners with prior degrees are well established. The United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, and other nations have accredited full-time university programs that grant Bachelor of Science and/or Master's degrees in Osteopathy. Other countries, such as France give governmental accreditation to private schools to deliver Master's-level diplomas. These graduates are registered, primary contact clinicians diagnosing and treating using osteopathic manipulative treatment, integrated with current medical knowledge and practice. (For additional information, we encourage you to review to the [Global Report on Osteopathy and Osteopathic Medicine](#).)

After degree completion, osteopathic professionals in these nations register with a governmental ministry of health. Osteopaths are able to provide health care that is eligible for insurance reimbursement, and patients do not require a referral from another medical practitioner to consult an osteopath.

Government regulation, defined education standards, and accreditation of training institutions are important factors to ensure public safety. **We encourage the Austrian Ministry of Health to adopt educational standards, registration procedures, and other practices that support osteopathy as a distinct profession.**

Thank you for your consideration of the above. Please feel free to contact us if any additional information from the OIA would be of use to you. We also welcome you to visit <https://oialliance.org/> for more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Boyd R. Buser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a stylized "R".

Dr. Boyd R. Buser
Chair