

Resolution 2026-06

Submitted For Consideration to the Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association House of Delegates

SUBJECT: Omnibus Resolution: Osteopathic Philosophy as Described by Andrew Taylor Still

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Check one:

- Resolution is intended for Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association
- Resolution is for consideration of the American Osteopathic Association House of Delegates
- Resolution is intended for both the Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association and for consideration of the American Osteopathic Association House of Delegates

1 I. OSTEOPATHIC PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

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3 Whereas, clearly establishing a distinctive Osteopathic professional identity will support the continued
4 growth and health of the Osteopathic medical profession, and

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6 Whereas, by studying its past, the Osteopathic medical profession can better describe itself and plan for
7 a robust future, and

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9 Whereas, the distinctiveness of the Osteopathic medical profession is based on the insights of Andrew
10 Taylor (AT) Still that led him to coin the term "Osteopathy," describe Osteopathic philosophy, and
11 establish the American School of Osteopathy and the Osteopathic medical profession, and

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13 Whereas, the most distinct element of the Osteopathic Oath reads, "... I will be ever alert... to develop
14 the principles of osteopathy which were first enunciated by Andrew Taylor Still.", and

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16 Whereas, to describe Osteopathic clinical practice AT Still wrote that:

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18 "The work of the osteopath is to adjust the body from the abnormal to the normal, then the
19 abnormal conditions give place to the normal and health is the result of the normal condition.,"¹
20 and

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22 II. LIFE, HEALTH, PATHOLOGY AND HEALING

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24 Whereas, the language used by Andrew Taylor (AT) Still to describe Osteopathic philosophy can be
25 translated into in modern scientific terminology, and

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27 Whereas, to describe Osteopathic philosophy AT Still wrote that:

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29 "Life is matter in motion,"² and

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31 "When all parts of the human body are in line we have health. When they are not the effect is
32 disease. When the parts are readjusted disease gives place to health,"¹ and

34 III. ORIGIN OF THE TERM OSTEOPATHIC, THE OSTEOPATHIC STRUCTURAL EXAM, AND
35 OSTEOPATHIC MANIPULATIVE TREATMENT

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37 Whereas, all current forms of diagnosis such as the stethoscope, imaging, labs and electrophysiologic
38 tests ultimately evaluate the aggregated structure of atoms composing the body, and

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40 Whereas, such forms of diagnosis did not exist at the time that AT Still described Osteopathic
41 philosophy, and

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43 Whereas, AT Still clinically applied Osteopathic philosophy by using his hands to palpate the position of
44 bones within the patient’s body to diagnose a loss of structure or pathology, thus identifying an area
45 within the body that was “not in line,” and

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47 Whereas, AT Still used his hands to reposition the bones within the body back “in line” to heal the
48 patient, and

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50 IV. BODY, SPIRIT AND MIND

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52 Whereas, Andrew Taylor (AT) Still wrote,

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54 “First, there is the material body; second, the spiritual being; third, a being of mind which is far
55 superior to all vital motions and material forms, whose duty is to wisely manage this great
56 engine of life.”³, and

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58 Whereas, the Tenets of Osteopathic Medicine acclaim that, “The body is a unit; the person is
59 unit of body, mind and spirit,”⁴ and, therefore be it

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61 I. OSTEOPATHIC PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

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63 RESOLVED, that

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- 65 • the identity of the Osteopathic medical profession is distinguished by the application of Osteopathic
 - 66 philosophy as described by AT Still (OPATS) in patient care and research efforts, and,
 - 67 • a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine perceives clinical care through the lens of OPATS seeking to
 - 68 evaluate, maintain, and if necessary restore the structure and function of the patient’s body, and, be
 - 69 it further

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71 II. LIFE, HEALTH, PATHOLOGY AND HEALING

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73 RESOLVED, that

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75 The AT Still quote, “... life is matter in motion,” can be translated as follows:

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- 77 • The word “matter” can be substituted with the word “atoms,” leading to “... life is atoms in
 - 78 motion.”

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- 79 • Per the laws of physics atoms cannot move themselves, being inert atoms only move as the result
80 of an external force, leading to "... life expresses a force on atoms to put them in motion."
- 81 • As organisms do not create the matter or atoms to form their bodies, but rather aggregate
82 preexisting atoms from the Earth's environment, the quote can be further translated: "... life
83 expresses a force on environmental atoms to put them in motion to aggregate an organism's
84 body."
- 85 • When an organism dies, the force expressed on atoms by life is no longer present and the atoms
86 that were aggregated to form an organism's body lose aggregated structure, fall apart, and return
87 to the environment.
- 88 • Throughout an organism's life span, the atoms of which its body is composed do not change, are
89 neither created nor destroyed, but are put into motion by the force of life to serve as building
90 blocks of an organism's body.

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92 Turning to the second AT Still quotation, the "parts of the human body" that must be "in line" to have
93 health are the inert atoms that have been aggregated by the force expressed by life to form the body.

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- 95 • If those atoms have been aggregated together into a functional structure to form the body from the
96 molecular to the gross anatomical level, the body will work normally, is healthy.
- 97 • If the atoms that have been aggregated to form the body are not "in line", are not aggregated in a
98 functional structure, the result is loss of function or pathology.
- 99 • When the atoms that compose an organism's body have been restored from a dysfunctional to a
100 functional aggregated structure, when they have been put back "in line," the result is a return of
101 function or healing.
- 102 • All forms of diagnosis evaluate the aggregated material structure of the body, and all forms of
103 healing restore functional aggregated structure to the atoms forming the body.

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105 Based on this translation, four concepts describing the clinical application of OPATS within all medical
106 specialties and all healing professions can be outlined:

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- 108 • "Life," the sum of all homeostatic processes in the body, expresses a force that absorbs, excretes
109 and changes the molecular structure of atoms within the Earth's environment to form, or aggregate,
110 an organism's body;
- 111 • "Health" is the state of normal physiologic function resulting from the appropriate aggregated
112 material structure of the organism and its parts;
- 113 • "Pathology" is a loss of normal function due a loss of aggregated structure, or increased entropy,
114 within the aggregated matter forming an organism's body, and;
- 115 • "Healing" is the restoration of the functional aggregated structure of the matter forming the
116 organism resulting in a return to normal function, and be it further

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118 III. ORIGIN OF THE TERM OSTEOPATHIC, THE OSTEOPATHIC STRUCTURAL EXAM, AND
119 OSTEOPATHIC MANIPULATIVE TREATMENT

120

121 RESOLVED, that

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123 The term “Osteopath” describes the use of bones (“osteo”) as reference points within the body palpated
124 to identify a loss of aggregated structure in the body (“pathology”). Combining “osteo-” and “-path”
125 leads to the term “osteopath,” and
126

127 AT Still invented the Osteopathic structural exam and Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT) as
128 applications of Osteopathic philosophy, establishing the first of all modern form of diagnosis and
129 treatment to evaluate structure within the Body, and be it further
130

131 IV. BODY, SPIRIT AND MIND
132

133 RESOLVED, that
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135 The Osteopathic concept of “body-spirit-mind” can be described with modern scientific language:
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- 137 • The “Body,” including the brain, is an aggregation of inert atoms from Earth’s environment.
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- 139 • “Spirit,” which includes nonmaterial concepts such as “life” and “consciousness,” likely is not
140 produced by the inert atoms that are aggregated to form the brain but may be a distinct form of
141 energy that was released during the Big Bang that did not become atoms.
142

143 Approximately 5% of the energy released during the Big Bang became matter, became atoms,
144 therefore 95% of the universe identified as “dark energy” could be described as “non-material.”⁴
145 While scientific evaluation of the nonmaterial has just begun, “Spirit” as described by AT Still may be
146 a form of the 95% of energy in the universe that did not become atoms.
147

- 148 • “Mind” arises from the bidirectional interactions of expression and receptivity between the material
149 “Body” within Earth’s environment and the non-material “Spirit.” As examples, speech is an
150 example of Mind involving a vibration of atoms within the Earth’s atmosphere containing
151 information expressed by Spirit through the Body, while the Mind-based activity of hearing occurs
152 when the information encoded in those vibrating atoms moves from the Body to Spirit, and be it
153 further
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155 ACTION ITEMS TO APPLY OSTEOPATHIC PHILOSOPHY AS DESCRIBED BY AT STILL
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157 RESOLVED, that
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159 OPATS will guide future scientific inquiry and discovery suggesting new structures of matter with new
160 biological functions and a new paradigm in biological sciences that moves beyond atoms to evaluate the
161 interaction of the material and dark matter, the nonmaterial, within life forms, and
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163 The following efforts will be initiated:
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- 165 • Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association:
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167 1. Develop and disseminate OPATS through multiple forms of media to specifically define Doctors
168 of Osteopathic Medicine (DO’s), including the:

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- 169 • the historic origin of the term “Osteopath”, the Osteopathic Structural Exam and OMT, and
170 • the concepts of Life, Health, Pathology and Healing, and Body, Spirit and Mind.
- 171 2. Incorporate OPATS into marketing, member recruitment, public policy efforts, annual
172 conferences, grants, and other events.
- 173 3. Develop an OPATS resident toolkit that applies the concepts of Life, Health, Pathology and
174 Healing within each specialty, focusing on Arizona’s medical schools, residencies and fellowship
175 programs.
- 176 4. Create an OPATS category in the annual conference poster fair.
- 177 5. Support the incorporation of OPATS concepts in affiliate organizations.
- 178 6. Work to establish the Osteopathic definition of Health in Arizona statute, and establish Health as
179 the goal of medical care:
180 Health: Adaptive and optimal attainment of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and
181 environmental wellbeing resulting from the maintained functional aggregated structure of
182 matter forming an individual’s body.
- 183
- 184 • American Osteopathic Association
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- 186 1. Develop multiple forms of media that define DO’s through OPATS, including the Osteopathic
187 Brand Campaign and press releases that definitively answer the question, “What is a DO?”,
188 including the:
- 189 • the historic origin of the term “Osteopath”, the Osteopathic Structural Exam and OMT, and
190 • the concepts of Life, Health, Pathology and Healing, and Body, Spirit and Mind.
- 191 2. Develop an OPATS resident toolkit that describes the application of OPATS within each medical
192 and surgical specialty.
- 193 3. Create a new category for OPATS in all AOA-related student- and resident-based poster and
194 presentation activities.
- 195 4. Support the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners in developing COMLEX content
196 assessing osteopathic medical students’ understanding of inductive reasoning and OPATS.
- 197 5. Direct the National Osteopathic Advocacy Center and other public policy activities to advocate
198 to legally define “Health” in federal statute, to define “Health” as a human right, and to
199 establish “Health” as the goal of the health care system in the United States.
200 Health: Adaptive and optimal attainment of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and
201 environmental wellbeing resulting from the maintained functional aggregated structure of
202 matter forming an individual’s body.
- 203 6. Support AOA-related specialty colleges and affiliates in incorporating OPATS in their activities,
204 especially defining the distinctiveness of residency and fellowship programs with Osteopathic
205 Recognition.
- 206 7. Develop a long-term, sustainable research effort to identify and characterize the interaction of
207 dark energy with atoms, especially within living organisms.