



Physician Resource Guide

2025 Update

Physicians in Practice Committee

MISSION

The American Academy of Osteopathy has developed this “Physicians in Practice Resource Guide” to provide information and assistance to physicians at all career stages for establishing, growing, and managing successful practices. This guide is tailored for the osteopathic physician to help support a practice that integrates osteopathic manual medicine, whether in a manipulation-based practice, a primary care setting, or a specialty practice with a manipulation component.

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Practice Establishment

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

Just as you must assemble a qualified team of osteopathic professionals to care for your patients, you need a strong professional team in place to help guide your financial, legal, and operational success.

Core Team Members:

- Certified Public Accountant (CPA): For business structure, tax strategy, and payroll.
- Attorney: For entity formation, contracts, and compliance.
- Financial Planner: For debt management, retirement, and investment strategies.

Areas for Expert Guidance:

- Personal and business insurance (life, disability, malpractice, property)
- Tax planning and returns
- Student loan debt management and repayment strategies
- Retirement planning (401k, SEP-IRA, defined benefit plans)
- Estate planning and will preparation
- Practice valuation, acquisition, or sale
- Selecting Advisors: Interview several of each type of professional. Make sure that they have worked with other healthcare providers and understand your unique situation (small business, OMM integrated practice, etc.).

BUSINESS ENTITY DETERMINATION

Business entity decisions impact your personal asset protection and your overall tax strategy.

Common Entity Types:

- Professional Corporation (PC): A traditional corporate structure.
- Professional Limited Liability Company (PLLC): Offers flexibility and pass-through taxation.
- S Corporation: A tax election for PCs or LLCs that can avoid double taxation.

Key Considerations:

- Neither a PC nor a PLLC protects against your own personal malpractice.
- State laws vary and many states do not recognize PLLCs.
- Tax consideration are a major differentiator.
- Action: Consult with your attorney and CPA to determine the best entity for your specific situation.

EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN)

What is it: An EIN (also known as a Federal Tax ID Number) is a nine digit number assigned by the IRS to identify a business.

When it is Required For: All entities other than sole proprietorships with no employees.

Uses: Opening business bank accounts, hiring employees, and filing tax returns.

How to Apply: Apply online for free on the [IRS website](#).

STATE LICENSURE

Process: The process to be licensed by your state medical board varies by state.

Timing: Apply for licensure 4-6 months prior to your desired start date. Boards are taking longer than in the past to process applications.

Resource: The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) provides a link to all state medical boards on their website. [Click here FSMB](#).

NATIONAL PROVIDER IDENTIFIER (NPI) NUMBER

What it is: NPI stands for National Provider Identifier. All healthcare providers need an NPI number in order to bill insurers for the services they provide to patients.

How to Apply: Apply online at the [NPPES website](#). It is free and will be sent to you right away.

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION (DEA) REGISTRATION

Requirement: Registration with the DEA is required for all health care providers that prescribe, dispense, or administer controlled substances.

What You Need: Your state license, your NPI number, and your business address and phone.

How to Apply: [DEA Registration Application](#)

Fee: \$888 for a three-year registration.

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

Policy Types:

- **Occurrence:** Covers any claim that occurred during the period that the policy was in effect, regardless of when the claim was filed. Premiums are higher for an occurrence policy.
- **Claims-Made:** Only covers claims filed while the policy is in effect. If you cancel your policy or stop your malpractice insurance, you must purchase “Tail Coverage”, which is a one-time large fee.
- **Member Benefit:** The AOA and AOA endorse malpractice insurance carriers that understand OMM. The AOA can provide member-discounted insurance rates upon request.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS (EHR)

Selection Criteria: Choose an EHR that is user-friendly, supports OMM documentation, and promotes interoperability. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) now operate under the Promoting Interoperability program, which may offer incentives for eligible clinicians.

Cybersecurity: Ensure any selected system has robust security features and complies with the latest HIPAA security standards.

BUSINESS BANKING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Separate Accounts: Open your own business checking and credit card accounts as soon as you have your EIN.

Bookkeeping: Implement accounting software (QuickBooks, Xero, etc.) from the very first day to track your income and expenses.

Business Credit: Begin to establish your own business credit so you can finance the purchase of additional equipment or office space to help you grow in the future.

Networking & Marketing

ATTRACTING REFERRALS

Physician Liaison: If you are building up a new practice or significantly growing your patient base, a professional physician liaison can be a good investment. They can take on the task of building relationships with referring providers, promoting your expertise in OMM and managing the feedback you get.

Grand Rounds & Presentations: Do presentations at local hospitals, community education centers or specialty society meetings. Market yourself as an expert in conditions that have shown to be highly effective when treated with OMM (i.e. low back pain, migraines, pediatric issues, etc.).

Direct Outreach: Cold call to introduce yourself to primary care docs, chiropractors, PTs and midwives in your geographic area. Send them a one page handout that explains who you are and how the referral process works.

MARKETING YOUR PRACTICE

Digital Presence:

- **Professional Website:** Make sure you have a website that is mobile friendly and explains OMM. Share patient testimonials. Offer a “About Osteopathic Medicine” section.

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO): SEO is how patients find you on the internet. Some terms to target in your website and materials are “osteopathic manual treatment”, “OMT”, and your city so patients will be able to find you.

Community Engagement:

- Volunteer as a team physician for your local high school or sports teams.
- Host a free stress management, posture clinic or common condition workshop.
- Partner with other local wellness businesses (yoga studios, personal trainers).

Marketing a Cash-Based Practice:

- Be up front. Have a posted fee schedule that is clear to your patients.
- Educate patients that you will provide them with a detailed superbill (complete with CPT & ICD-10 codes) that they can submit to their insurance for potential out of network reimbursement.

Integrating OMM

PRACTICE BENEFITS OF OMM

- Enhances patient satisfaction and retention by offering a unique, hands-on treatment option.
- Provides an additional revenue stream through billable OMT procedure codes (98925-98929).
- Reduces reliance on pharmacologic management for musculoskeletal pain and other conditions.
- Increases professional fulfillment by practicing the full scope of osteopathic medicine.

SCHEDULING AND WORKFLOW INTEGRATION

Start Small: Incorporate 1-2 body region treatments for appropriate issues (e.g., sinusitis, simple back strain) into a standard 15-20 minute visit.

Dedicated OMT Visits: For complex cases, schedule 30-45 minute appointments to perform a comprehensive E/M service and a full-body OMT treatment.

Efficiency: Develop a systematic approach to the OPP structural exam and common treatment techniques to stay within time constraints.

EDUCATING PATIENTS ABOUT OSTEOPATHIC TREATMENT

Leverage AAO/AOA Resources: Direct patients to the AOA's "What is a DO?" page and use patient brochures available through the AOA.

Informed Consent: Briefly explain what OMT is, what the patient might feel during treatment, and potential temporary reactions (see below).

Verbal Explanation: Use simple analogies, such as "releasing tension," "improving fluid flow," or "helping the body's own healing mechanisms."

WHAT PATIENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OMM

Setting Expectations:

- **Temporary Soreness:** It is common to feel sore for 24-48 hours after treatment, similar to post-exercise soreness.
- **Hydration:** Encourage drinking water to help the body process metabolic byproducts released during treatment.
- **Treatment Course:** Explain that chronic conditions often require a series of treatments to achieve sustained improvement.

Practical Instructions:

- Attire: Advise patients to wear loose, comfortable clothing (e.g., gym attire) to appointments. Have patient gowns or scrubs available.
- Fragrance-Free: Request that patients avoid wearing strong perfumes or colognes out of consideration for others with sensitivities.