

EDITORIAL

Making Disaster Medicine Every Physician's Second Specialty

Gilbert E. D'Alonzo Jr, DO

I am proud to announce that through its publications, the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) is partnering with *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness (DMPHP)*. Our mutual goals are to make disaster medicine every physician's second specialty and to ensure that all health care professionals adopt an integrated and holistic approach when responding to disasters. Osteopathic physicians, or DOs, are likely to quickly realize that the mission of *DMPHP* complements that of the AOA's own publications. Just as the AOA's flagship scientific publication, *JAOA—The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*—is dedicated to publishing research and other scholarly contributions that explore the discipline of osteopathic medicine, *DMPHP* is dedicated to publishing articles on the discipline of preventing, preparing for, and responding to natural and man-made public health crises.

Conceived and tempered in disasters and other public health emergencies, the osteopathic medical profession has long recognized the vital obligations the entire medical community has to responding to public crises. The founder of osteopathic medicine, Dr Andrew Taylor Still, began searching for a new, more holistic way to practice medicine after watching 3 of his children die in a spinal meningitis epidemic in 1864.^{1,2} During World War I, osteopathic medicine was tested on a national level for the first time as the "Spanish flu" pandemic hit the United States.^{3,4}

Throughout the next 9 decades, osteopathic physicians were among the health professionals who responded to disasters and other public health crises. More recently, DOs have volunteered their services after such natural disasters as Hurricane Andrew in 1992⁵⁻⁷; the Northridge, California, earthquake, and the Piedmont, Alabama, tornado in 1994⁸; the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami⁹; and Hurricane Katrina in 2005.¹⁰⁻¹⁴ DOs were among the first responders to the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in 1995.^{15,16} On September 11, 2001, DOs rushed to Ground Zero in New York City and to the Pentagon building in Arlington, Virginia, after the terrorist attacks.¹⁷⁻²² In 2010, DOs and osteopathic medical students have been mobilizing to care for the victims of Haiti's earthquakes.^{23,24}

Despite our profession's long history of responding to disasters, osteopathic physicians face the same limitations as other health care professions do when called on to apply their everyday clinical skills to mass casualty situations without benefit of formal education in disaster medicine. AOA publications' official affiliation with *DMPHP* affords us the opportunity to empower

DOs with resources to prepare them to respond to future disasters in a more disciplined, integrated, and effective way.

As of May 2009, the osteopathic medical profession has more than 67 000 physicians and nearly 17 000 medical students, all of whom could benefit from the affiliation between AOA publications and *DMPHP*.

Although the AOA Board of Trustees voted to formalize the affiliation just last year, DOs are already benefiting from it. Besides extending to AOA members the same *DMPHP* subscription rate that members of the American Medical Association enjoy, *DMPHP* encouraged DOs to tap its resources related to pandemic influenza so that they could prepare to treat patients for the latest H1N1 infections. These resources are especially valuable to osteopathic primary care physicians, who constitute approximately 60% of the osteopathic medical profession.

Similarly, following the Haiti earthquakes, *DMPHP* invited DOs to participate in its webinar for medical responders headed for Haiti, access its earthquake-related articles, and sign up for its roster of medical volunteers who wish to respond to disasters like the one in Haiti.

AOA publications are looking forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship with *DMPHP* as we work together to encourage all health care professionals to consider disaster medicine to be their second specialty. We share the goal of preparing health care professionals to meet the needs of patients even under the most dire of circumstances. And we share the belief that when health care professionals respond to crises, they fulfill their highest calling and demonstrate the best that medicine has to offer.

Received for publication January 29, 2010; accepted March 31, 2010.

About the Author

Author Affiliations: Dr D'Alonzo is the editor in chief of the *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*; professor of medicine, Temple University School of Medicine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the deputy director of the Temple Lung Center's Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine.

Correspondence: Address correspondence and reprint requests to Gilbert E. D'Alonzo Jr, DO, Department of Publications, American Osteopathic Association, 142 E Ontario St, Chicago, IL 60611-2864.

Author's Disclosures: The author reports no conflicts of interest.

REFERENCES

1. Still AT. Chapter VI. *Autobiography of A.T. Still*. Rev ed. Kirksville, Mo: Published by author; 1908:82-89. http://www.interlinea.org/atstill/Autobiography_Revised_V2.pdf. Accessed March 31, 2010.
2. Still CE Jr. Chapter Five. *Frontier Doctor—Medical Pioneer: The Life and Times of A.T. Still and His Family*. Kirksville, Mo: The Thomas Jefferson University Press; 1991:62.
3. Smith RK. One hundred thousand cases of influenza with a death rate of one-fortieth of that officially reported under conventional medical treatment [reprint from *J Am Osteopath Assoc*. 1920;20:172-175]. *J Am Osteopath Assoc*. 2000;100(5):320-323 <http://www.jaoa.org/cgi/reprint/100/5/320>. Accessed March 31, 2010.
4. Patterson MP. The coming influenza pandemic: lessons from the past for the future. *J Am Osteopath Assoc*. 2005;105:498-500. <http://www.jaoa.org/cgi/content/full/105/11/498>. Accessed March 31, 2010.
5. Bade DJ. Riders of the storm: DOs rush to provide relief to Hurricane Andrew victims. *The DO*. 1992;33(11):60-65.
6. Bade DJ. A hurricane's hard lesson: SECOM students pass the test, aid Andrew's victims. *The DO*. 1992;33(11):66-67.
7. Bade DJ. The aftermath: DOs, students describe Andrew's overwhelming devastation. *The DO*. 1992;33(11):68-70.
8. Bouley J. Picking up the pieces: DOs give emergency care to earthquake, tornado victims. *The DO*. 1994;35(5):110-115.
9. Greenwald B. Answering the call: osteopathic medical profession unites to help tsunami victims. *The DO*. 2005;46(2):22-25, 27-30, 32-33. http://www.do-online.org/TheDO/wp-content/uploads/pdf/pub_do0205call.pdf. Accessed March 31, 2010.
10. Sinco P. 'This is what we do': DOs answer Hurricane Katrina. *The DO*. 2005;46(10):34-40. http://www.do-online.org/TheDO/wp-content/uploads/pdf/pub_do1005katrina.pdf. Accessed March 31, 2010.
11. Sinco P. DOs respond to needs of hurricane victims. *The DO*. 2005;46(11):30-34,40-41. http://www.do-online.org/TheDO/wp-content/uploads/pdf/pub_do1105katrina.pdf. Accessed March 31, 2010.
12. Greenwald B. DOs rebuild, reflect in Katrina's aftermath. *The DO*. 2005;46(12):26-30. http://www.do-online.org/TheDO/wp-content/uploads/pdf/pub_do1205katrina.pdf. Accessed March 31, 2010.
13. Greenwald B. A first responder tells his story. *The DO*. 2005;46(12):31-34. http://www.do-online.org/TheDO/wp-content/uploads/pdf/pub_do1205responder.pdf. Accessed March 31, 2010.
14. Greenwald B. When the levee breaks: what went wrong—and how to make it right. *The DO*. 2006;47(1):44-49. http://do-online.org/TheDO/wp-content/uploads/pdf/pub_do0106levee.pdf. Accessed March 31, 2010.
15. Bouley J. Scene of the crime: DOs rush to bomb site to render aid. *The DO*. 1995;36(7):34-38,40.
16. Bouley J. Code: disaster: DOs treat bombing victims at downtown hospital. *The DO*. 1995;36(7):48-51.
17. Goetz J, Vitucci N. Terror in the Big Apple: few survivors to treat, say grieving New York DOs. *The DO*. 2001;42(11):26-32.
18. Goetz J. Inside the Pentagon on 9-11: DOs witness Pentagon attack. *The DO*. 2001;42(11):34-35,37.
19. Vitucci N. Bringing order out of chaos: fire department's DOs manage medical relief. *The DO*. 2001;42(11):38-41.
20. Goetz J. Relief for relief workers: DOs provide OMT to rescue workers in New York City. *The DO*. 2001;42(11):42-45.
21. Goetz J. Probing the depths of disaster: DO, canine companion offer aid at ground zero. *The DO*. 2001;42(11):48-51.
22. Vitucci N. Student aid takes on new meaning. Youth of profession help in New York City. *The DO*. 2001;42(11):52-55.
23. Wickless LA. Profession responds quickly to Haiti earthquake. *The DO* Web site. <http://www.do-online.org/TheDO/?p=7961>. February 18, 2010. Accessed March 31, 2010.
24. Sinco P. Back from Haiti: Sidney Coupet, DO, MPH. *The DO* Web site. <http://www.do-online.org/TheDO/?p=3001>, February 2, 2010. Accessed March 31, 2010.

Correction

Errors in Figure 2 and in Table. In the Commentary titled "Priorities for Mortality Reduction in Haiti," by R. Garfield, published in the March 2010 issue of *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness* (2010;4[1]:18-20), legends in the bar graph in Figure 2 were mislabeled. "Communicable diseases," "Perinatal, maternal diseases," and "Nutrition-related diseases" should have read "Injuries," "Communicable, Perinatal, Maternal, and Nutritional Conditions," and "Noncommunicable Diseases." In addition, a line with data on diarrheal diseases was omitted from the Table.