

Washington Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery



The Washington legislature passed the 1890 Medical Practice Act, a revision of 1881 territorial legislation, which created a nine-member Board of Medical Examiners consisting of five medical doctors, two homeopathic doctors and two osteopathic doctors. In 1917, the state legislature passed a bill creating a board of osteopathic examiners, but the governor vetoed it. Two years later, a five-member board of osteopathic examiners was created. The [licensing ledger](#) from August 1919 lists the first 30 osteopathic physicians licensed in Washington. In 1921, the 1919 law was repealed and the board abolished. The state director of licensing was given authority over the osteopathic profession.

In 1927, the Osteopathic Examining Committee was established. In 1959, osteopathy and osteopathy surgery were combined and a one-year internship was established. Four years later, standards of professional conduct were established. In 1971, osteopathic physician assistants were formally established. In 1979, the Osteopathic Examining Committee was changed to the [Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery](#). The board is made up of six osteopathic physicians and one public member.

The mandate of the Washington Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery is to protect the public's health and safety and promote the welfare of the state by regulating the competency and quality of professional health care providers under its jurisdiction. The board's responsibilities include establishing, monitoring and enforcing qualifications for licensure of osteopathic physicians and physician assistants, establishing and monitoring compliance with continuing education requirements, ensuring consistent standards of practice, developing continuing competency mechanisms, investigating and making recommendations related to complaints against physicians and physician assistants. There has been significant growth in the number of licensed osteopathic physicians in Washington in the last decade. In 2001, there were 713 licensees and in 2011, there are 1,261 licensees, an increase of 76.9 percent.