Promoting children's health should be the primary focus of any practice. While DRGs are a hospital reality, implementation of a resource-based relative value scale for physician services seems imminent. This proposed redistribution of medical moneys, being developed by Harvard University through a study commissioned by the Health Care Financing Administration, may be a boost to primary care practitioners and others who provide time-intensive, cognitive-type services. However, procedural biotechnology experts stand to lose monetarily if such changes occur.

While the debate surrounding physician reimbursement continues, we must maintain our efforts to enhance child healthcare on the local, regional, and national levels. Participation in organizations such as school boards, PTAs, and youth groups affords us the opportunity to serve our communities. In addition to such "grass roots" activism, membership in osteopathic professional organizations provides us with an avenue to effect change. The American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians (ACOP) is one organization whose primary focus is to foster and stimulate improvement in all areas of child health and well-being. The ACOP, which marks its 50th year in 1990, welcomes all licensed physicians interested in children's health as members.

As of now, NOM week may be over, but our commitment to meet the challenge of children growing up healthy should know no time constraints.

RONALD V. MARINO, DO
Special focus editor

Dr Marino is Director of Ambulatory and Behavioral Pediatrics at Winthrop-University Hospital, Mineola, NY, and a member of the JAOA Editorial Advisory Board.

AOA joins fight against sexually transmitted diseases

While the AIDS epidemic commands the attention of the medical community and the media, the incidence of other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

quietly festers. The incidence of *Chlamydia*, genital herpes, gonorrhea, genital warts, and syphilis is increasing at an alarming rate in the United States: According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the number of syphilis cases increased from approximately 70,000 in 1986 to 103,000 in 1988. The incidence of drug-resistant strains of gonorrhea rose from 22,000 in 1987 to 31,000 cases in 1988. Each year, approximately 3 to 4 million *Chlamydia* infections occur. Likewise, 750,000 new cases of genital warts and 500,000 cases of symptomatic genital herpes are diagnosed annually.

These statistics reveal only part of the problem. The real crux of the issue can be attributed, in part, to public misinformation. A survey commissioned by the Burroughs Wellcome Co found that of the polled 632 adults between the ages of 18 and 49, 62% never questioned a sexual partner or potential partner about having an STD. Twenty-seven percent believed that STDs can be contracted from a toilet seat or other surface, and 12% thought that a person cannot contract STDs through a single sexual encounter with a familiar companion.

This survey represents part of an educational campaign designed to encourage sexually active individuals to conduct a regular genital self-examination (GSE[™]). Recognizing the importance of this campaign, the American Osteopathic Association, along with the American College of General Practitioners in Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery (ACGPOMS); the American Academy of Dermatology; the American Academy of Family Physicians; and the American Social Health Association, has joined the Burroughs Wellcome Co in its education efforts.

To shed light on this current health crisis, the sponsors have produced a pamphlet, "Genital Self-Examination GSE[™] Guide." The pamphlet describes, in easy-to-understand language, the causes and symptoms of the five major STDs previously mentioned. It details a step-by-step self-examination procedure in which men and women can check themselves for possible STD signs and symptoms. Patients who think they may have an STD are encouraged to seek medical attention, not only for diagnosis and treatment, but for advice on how to prevent the spread of the disease. Physicians may

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Please see adjacent page for brief summary of prescribing information.

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editorials

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obtain free copies of this pamphlet by calling (800) 234-1124, or by writing to: GSE, PO Box 4088, Woburn, MA 01888-4988.

The osteopathic medical community remains committed to this educational campaign. David Condoluci, DO, panel member and AOA delegate, and Royce Keilers, DO, President of the ACGPOMS, represented our profession at the press conference, which kicked off this campaign on July 20.

As promoters of health and disease prevention, we have an obligation to do more than pass out these pamphlets. As Dr Condoluci emphasizes, "We need to constantly stimulate dialogue so that people feel comfortable talking about these diseases, so that they feel comfortable enough to seek medical attention early."

THOMAS WESLEY ALLEN, DO