



# **COSGP**

COUNCIL OF OSTEOPATHIC  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENTS

A COUNCIL OF THE  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

## **Translating Osteopathic Understanding into Community Health**

Protocols and Standards, edited July 2011

TOUCH (Translating Osteopathic Understanding into Community Health) is a national initiative of the Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents (COSGP). The goal of the program is to encourage and recognize osteopathic medical students to work towards improving the health of their local community through service. The program recognizes these efforts both locally and nationally. Creating a solid foundation of standards in which to acknowledge students is an essential part of substantiating their commitments. In accordance with the osteopathic philosophy of treating the whole patient, service goes beyond mere health promotion and can include a wide array of involvement that has a strong positive impact on peoples' lives.

### Standards:

1. A minimum completion of fifty (50) hours of community service will be required to receive credit for the TOUCH program.
  - 1.1. A record of completed hours must be submitted to the College of Osteopathic Medicine Student Government
    - 1.1.1. The record must be submitted on the standard TOUCH participation form or other official means.
    - 1.1.2. The COM Student Government will certify that the record is complete in accordance with the standards herein.
  - 1.2. The TOUCH year will extend from April 1st to the March 31st of the next year. The required hours must be completed within the current academic year.
    - 1.2.1. Hours completed for this honor must be completed following matriculation into medical school, so hours completed by first year medical students during the summer before matriculation are not valid.
      - 1.2.1.1. This will cause a shortened TOUCH year for first year medical students (Matriculation - April 1st of the following year).
      - 1.2.1.2. Exception: Hours for large medical mission trips that take place during the summer before matriculation can be submitted for TOUCH hours on an individual basis to each COM's SGA.
        - 1.2.1.2.1. This exception is meant to give credit for medical volunteering and work in providing care.
        - 1.2.1.2.2. Sporadic volunteering over the course of the summer and non-medical volunteering are not valid for TOUCH hours.
    - 1.2.2. Completed hours may not be carried over from one academic year to the next.

- 1.2.3. Student names and hours must be submitted to the COSGP Student Services Committee by the appropriate deadline.
    - 1.2.4. Student names and hours must also be submitted to their local representative or to the online forms within ONE (1) month of the activity or date of service.
  - 1.3. COM student organizations that sponsor and organize community service activities will be encouraged to submit the necessary forms acknowledging the students' involvement.
2. For the purposes of the TOUCH program, "community service" will be defined as any activity that works to improve the health and wellness of a community. This includes local, state, national, and international activities. The parameters of this definition will encompass the following:
  - 2.1. Community service activities can be associated with both COM student organizations and external organizations.
  - 2.2. Required community service by the COM will count toward TOUCH hours after the first 10hrs of the required community service. Those hours acquired thereafter are deemed TOUCH hours.
  - 2.3. Leadership responsibilities in a COM student organization will not count towards TOUCH hours unless those responsibilities involve participation in a specific community service activity.
    - 2.3.1. Normal student organization activities (such as meetings, bringing in speakers, etc.) are not considered community service.
  - 2.4. Credit for planning a community service activity will only be given for hours involved in the preparation of materials and setup for an actual event.
    - 2.4.1. Administrative tasks that do not take place at the event will not count (i.e. paperwork, filing, organizational tasks).
    - 2.4.2. Administrative tasks as part of the event (checking students in, registration) are valid for consideration.
  - 2.5. TOUCH credit will only be given for fundraising if it is associated with an actual activity/event.
    - 2.5.1. Simply collecting money for a philanthropic cause will not suffice as service to the community.
    - 2.5.2. Fundraising does not necessarily require direct community involvement and can be COM events as long as the money raised is to benefit an external organization.
  - 2.6. TOUCH credit will not be given for volunteering in research, as TOUCH is meant to encourage activity in the community
3. With the assistance of the COM SGA, the COSGP Student Services Committee will have the discretion to grant or deny credit towards TOUCH hours based on the parameters defined in sections 1 and 2.
  - 3.1. The COM Executive Board will have the ability to verify completed hours.
    - 3.1.1. Following a review of each individual's completed form, the COM Executive Board will certify each student's completion of the program.
  - 3.2. Any COM student, faculty member, or administrator will be entitled to review all records pertaining to the TOUCH program.

- 3.2.1. The COM Student Government is required to maintain records of all matters involving the TOUCH program, including meeting minutes, photocopies of both complete and incomplete submitted forms, and records of students who have completed the program.
  - 3.3. In the event of a dispute regarding granted or denied hours, the contesting student will have the right to meet with the COM Executive Board. The final decision will be made by the COM Executive Board with a simple majority.
  - 3.4. All records submitted are subject to formal review by COSGP Student Services Committee.
4. If the standards in sections 1 and 2 are met with satisfaction, the student will receive recognition signifying their completion of their commitment to community service. A letter of commendation will also be sent to the Dean from the President of AACOM suggesting the Dean include the student's commitment to service in his/her Dean's letter.
  - 4.1. The COM [insert name of designated student in charge of your COM's TOUCH program i.e. VP of Community Outreach] will be responsible for maintaining a record of students who have successfully completed the program to better facilitate validity of completion.
  - 4.2. Those students completing 50 or more hours of community service for the TOUCH year will receive Silver-level recognition. Those completing 100 or more hours will receive Gold-level recognition. The individual from each COM who completes the greatest number of hours will receive Platinum-level recognition.
    - 4.2.1. Regarding Platinum status: in the case of a tie, all students at the COM whom achieved the same maximum number of hours will receive Platinum recognition.
  - 4.3. Recognition may include, but is not limited to: certificates, plaques, trophies, or other materials as deemed appropriate by the COSGP Student Services Committee.

Please refer any questions about the TOUCH program to the COSGP National Programs Representative at [COGPPProgRep@aacom.org](mailto:COGPPProgRep@aacom.org) or COSGP National Secretary at [COGPPSec@aacom.org](mailto:COGPPSec@aacom.org).