

# AAP News™

## Consider teaming up with D.O. for tough cases

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**Editor's note:** For more coverage of the 2021 AAP National Conference & Exhibition, visit <https://www.aapublications.org/news/2021/08/18/nationalconference2021>.

As a college athlete, Jennifer A. Belsky, D.O., M.S., FAAP, struggled with multiple injuries. When she visited the team doctor, she was intrigued that the physician, who was a D.O., not only prescribed pain medications but also provided immediate relief using osteopathic techniques.

A pre-med student, Dr. Belsky started shadowing the team physician and ended up as a doctor of osteopathic medicine herself.

Dr. Belsky will explain what D.O. pediatricians can offer children and their families to complement their routine medical care during the on-demand session "Healing Hands: Osteopathic Approach to Pediatrics" (OD0161). She also will describe simple techniques

the majority of D.O. pediatricians can perform in the office and review the osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM) literature.

The session is aimed at any pediatrician or pediatric advanced practitioner who could make osteopathic medicine referrals or wants to learn more about the difference between M.D. and D.O. physicians, said Dr. Belsky, a member of the AAP Section on Osteopathic Pediatricians Executive Committee.

There are nearly 135,000 osteopathic physicians in the U.S., according to the American Osteopathic Association. Among those who reported a specialty, about 7,500 are pediatricians.

“We have a unique set of skills that may be able to help many pediatric patients, from babies suffering from torticollis and plagiocephaly to teens suffering from chronic headaches and back pain,” said Dr. Belsky, assistant professor of pediatrics, Division of Hematology/Oncology, Indiana University School of Medicine and director of the pediatric lymphoma program at Riley Hospital for Children.

One case Dr. Belsky shares that highlights the benefits of OMM involved an infant who was diagnosed at birth with a non-operable facial mass and required intense chemotherapy. A side effect of one of the medicines was neurotoxicity resulting in constipation. Few medications for constipation were approved for her age, and home remedies like prune juice didn't help. After three months of treatment, she suffered from pneumatosis and doctors had to stop the lifesaving chemotherapy medicine.

Dr. Belsky then began treating the baby with OMM techniques for constipation and she was able to restart chemotherapy.

“After four weeks of weekly OMM treatments during her regularly scheduled visits, she was having soft, normal stooling habits,” she said. “I was even able to teach the family a few techniques for home, which gave them a ‘tool in their toolbelt.’”

Dr. Belsky will encourage attendees to “consider utilizing a D.O. for tough cases that may be refractory to standard medical therapy or kiddos looking for less pharmaceutical options or even just adjunctive therapy to medications.”