

National and Chapter news

AΩA expands its national community with two new chapters

Alpha Omega Alpha (AΩA) Honor Medical Society continues to strengthen its national community of physician leaders with the addition of two new Chapters. California Northstate University College of Medicine (CNUCOM) in Elk Grove, California, and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) School of Medicine in Edinburg, Texas, have been officially chartered as the Society's 139th and 140th Chapters, respectively. Together, these new Chapters reflect AΩA's ongoing commitment to recognizing institutions that cultivate excellence in scholarship, leadership, professionalism, service, and compassionate patient care.

The Society's continued growth extends beyond its expanding Chapter network. During the 2025–26 academic year, AΩA welcomed 5,149 new members across all membership categories, reflecting the breadth of its national community and its commitment to recognizing excellence throughout every stage of a physician's career.

This year's inductees include 3,765 medical students, 723 residents and fellows, 494 faculty members, 109 alumni, and 58 chief residents. Together with the addition of two new Chapters, these members strengthen AΩA's nationwide community of physician leaders dedicated to scholarship, professionalism, service, leadership, and compassionate patient care.



AΩA's 139th Chapter | Theta Chapter of California: California Northstate University College of Medicine

On January 30, 2026, California Northstate University College of Medicine officially became the 139th Chapter of Alpha Omega Alpha and the Theta Chapter of California. The designation marks a significant milestone for the medical school, which has rapidly established itself since opening in 2015.

"This achievement reflects the remarkable progress of California Northstate University College of Medicine

and the caliber of its students and faculty," said Brad Barth, MD, MSLOD, Executive Director of AΩA. "AΩA chapters are established only at medical schools that demonstrate sustained excellence in scholarship, leadership, professionalism, and service. We are proud to welcome CNUCOM as the Theta Chapter of California."

Located in Elk Grove, just south of Sacramento, CNUCOM earned full accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) in July 2025. The institution has developed a curriculum centered on clinical excellence, community engagement, and service while preparing students through a combination of case-based, problem-based, and team-based learning.

Students complete their clinical education through affiliated health systems across Northern and Central California, including Kaiser Permanente, Dignity Health, and Sutter Health. The school's educational model emphasizes longitudinal research, community service-learning, and social accountability throughout all four years of medical education.

The institution also continues to grow physically and academically. Construction is expected to begin in 2026 on a new \$1 billion medical campus that will include a 400-bed teaching hospital, academic facilities, student housing, and research space on the site of the former Sacramento Kings arena. The Class of 2024 demonstrated the program's success with a 95 percent residency placement rate across a broad range of specialties.

"Achieving AΩA Chapter status is a powerful affirmation of our mission and the hard work of our students, faculty, and staff," said Richard S. Isaacs, MD, FACS, Dean of California Northstate University College of Medicine. "This recognition underscores our commitment to academic excellence, ethical leadership, and service to our communities."

Membership selection for the inaugural Chapter follows AΩA's holistic approach, recognizing students not only for academic achievement but also for leadership, professionalism, integrity, and service. The Chapter's selection process emphasizes transparency, diversity, and broad eligibility while ensuring careful review by the faculty selection committee.

"The establishment of our AΩA Chapter is both an honor and a responsibility," said Mark Sheffield, MD, Councilor of the CNUCOM Chapter. "We look forward to recognizing students who exemplify the highest ideals of medicine and to fostering a culture of scholarship, leadership, and service within our institution."



AΩA's 140th Chapter | Kappa Chapter of Texas: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine

On May 6, 2026, Alpha Omega Alpha welcomed its 140th Chapter as the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine became the Kappa Chapter of Texas.

Founded in 2014, UTRGV School of Medicine serves one of the nation's most medically underserved regions while advancing medical education, clinical care, and biomedical research across South Texas. Since welcoming its inaugural class of 55 students in 2016, the school has become a cornerstone of health-care education in the Rio Grande Valley, earning full LCME accreditation in 2023.

"We are pleased to welcome a new Chapter of AΩA at UTRGV," said Barth. "UTRGV's commitment to innovation, academic excellence, and compassionate care—reflected in its state-of-the-art facilities, expanding clinical and research programs, and dedication to serving its community—makes it a natural fit for AΩA's mission and values."

The school organizes its work around five strategic mission pillars: Education, Clinical Care, Discovery, Leadership, and Service. Through its clinical practice network, UT Health RGV, faculty physicians provide care at more than 20 locations across the Rio Grande Valley, offering more than 30 medical specialties and expanding access to high-quality healthcare throughout the region.

The establishment of the medical school itself represents decades of advocacy by community leaders and healthcare professionals who recognized the need for academic medicine in South Texas. Today, students benefit from an integrated, competency-based curriculum that combines foundational biomedical sciences with early clinical experiences, interprofessional education, and sustained community engagement. The program prepares graduates to deliver evidence-based,

patient-centered care while addressing the unique healthcare needs of underserved populations.

"The establishment of an AΩA Chapter at our school reflects the strength of our students, faculty, and our institutional commitment to excellence, leadership, and compassionate patient care," said Everardo Cobos, MD, Dean and Department Chair of Medicine and Oncology. "We are honored to join a tradition that recognizes physicians who lead with both intellect and humanity."

Selection for membership in the UTRGV chapter will recognize students who demonstrate the qualities of exemplary physicianship, including scholarship, trustworthiness, compassion, empathy, leadership, service, and excellence in patient care. The chapter will celebrate individuals who embody the values that have defined AΩA for more than a century.

"Becoming a part of the AΩA community is a meaningful milestone for UTRGV," said Carlos Ayala, MD, Councilor of the UTRGV Chapter. "This Chapter will celebrate students who embody scholarship, professionalism, service, and the values at the heart of medicine."

Strengthening the AΩA Community

The addition of California Northstate University College of Medicine and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine brings Alpha Omega Alpha's network to 140 Chapters nationwide. Although each institution serves a distinct region and community, both share a commitment to educating physicians who combine academic excellence with integrity, leadership, service, and compassionate patient care.

As these new chapters welcome their inaugural members, they also strengthen AΩA's enduring mission: recognizing and developing physician leaders who uphold the highest ideals of the profession while advancing the health and well-being of the communities they serve.

AΩA programs and awards

AΩA Professionalism Award

Deadline: October 13, 2026

This national award recognizes outstanding faculty and educational programs that demonstrate best practices in teaching medical professionalism. One program is selected annually to receive a \$10,000 award.

Chapter Support Award

Deadline: Ongoing

Chapter Councilors may nominate outstanding Chapter support staff whose dedication and service contribute to the success of their local AΩA Chapter.

Carolyn L. Kuckein Student Research Fellowship

Deadline: January 19, 2027

Medical students at schools with active AΩA Chapters may apply for one of up to 50 fellowships of \$7,000 to support research in basic science, clinical medicine, health services, or the social sciences. Funding includes support for conducting research and travel to present findings.

Richard L. Bynny Fellow in Leadership

Deadline: To Be Determined

Designed for mid-career physician leaders, this program supports continued leadership development with up to four awards of \$30,000 for individuals demonstrating exceptional promise in academic medicine, health systems, or community leadership.

Helen H. Glaser Student Essay Award

Deadline: December 1, 2026

Medical students are invited to submit original, nontechnical essays related to medicine. Up to five winners receive \$1,500, and winning essays are published in *The Pharos*.

Medical Student Service Leadership Project Grant

Deadline: February 16, 2027

Each Chapter may nominate one student-led community service project. Selected projects receive \$9,000 over two years (\$5,000 in year one and \$4,000 in year two) to support initiatives that promote leadership through service.

Alpha Omega Alpha Poetry Award

Deadline: November 3, 2026

Medical students are encouraged to submit original poetry related to medicine or the human experience. Winning poems receive cash awards and publication in *The Pharos*.

Postgraduate Fellowship

Deadline: May 25, 2027

Residents and fellows may apply for one of up to five \$6,000 fellowships to support research or scholarly projects, particularly those focused on leadership, professionalism, or teaching.

Robert H. Moser Essay Award

Deadline: October 20, 2026

This \$4,500 national essay prize honors outstanding writing celebrating physicians whose lives have enriched medicine and society through service, leadership, or scholarship.

Robert J. Glaser Distinguished Teacher Award

Deadline: April 9, 2027

Presented in partnership with the Association of American Medical Colleges, this award recognizes four exceptional medical educators annually. Each recipient receives \$7,500, with additional awards benefiting their institution and local AΩA Chapter.

Visiting Professorship

Deadline: Ongoing

Each AΩA Chapter may host one nationally recognized visiting professor annually. The program supports lectures, grand rounds, and small-group educational activities that enrich the academic experience for students, residents, and faculty.

Volunteer Clinical Faculty Award

Deadline: Ongoing

Chapters may recognize up to five volunteer clinical faculty members annually for their outstanding commitment to teaching medical students and residents.

AΩA Stories Award

Deadline: January 12, 2027

Open to medical students who have completed at least three months of clinical clerkships, this writing competition celebrates narratives that embody AΩA's motto, "Be worthy to serve the suffering." Selected stories are recognized nationally and published by the Society.

To learn more about AΩA awards and programs visit www.alphaomegaalpha.org/programs

