

August 6, 2018  
Dr. Dale Anne Featheringham

## **RAISE THE ROOF! AAO SEES PROGRESS IN D.C.**

Hello GLAO members,

I am excited to begin serving in my new role as the GLAO representative on the Council on Governmental Affairs. I am grateful to Dr. Phil Beckwith for his many years of exemplary service on the council, including serving as the chair for the last two years. I am glad to have his guidance and support as he moves on to be the PAC chair, and am grateful that he will be around to help me as I begin serving on this council.

It has been a busy time for the Council on Government Affairs. To start off the summer, the Professional Advocacy Conference was held in D.C. just after the AAO Annual Session. COGA and PAC met with our legal counsel at Arnold and Porter in the morning before the start of the conference to discuss relevant federal and state issues. Holding the Annual Session and the advocacy meetings in conjunction with one another allowed more AAO members to be involved, without increasing the cost as money was saved on travel. A record number of members participated in the advocacy conference this year, which allowed us to take our message to a record number of legislative offices. The main issues that were discussed with legislators were the RAISE Act, student debt and loan refinancing, and the medical device tax, which leads to the big news...

### **It felt like Christmas in July, as two issues that have been hard-fought battles for the AAO were moved forward!**

First, a version of our **RAISE Act** was passed in the House of Representatives! In its current form, the bill would allow individuals to roll over FSA funds to a maximum balance of \$7,950, tripling the current maximum balance of \$2,650. This essentially eliminates the current “use it or lose it” mandate.

The bill must still pass in the Senate and then be signed by the President, so we aren't across the finish line yet. Also, the wording may continue to change. But the fact that we have gotten this far is a huge win for the AAO, its members, and most importantly, for our patients and their families. It is exciting to see that a bill that came out of COGA/PAC gained support from the rest of the dental community and other medical professionals, then gained support from legislators on both sides of the aisle, and finally made it through the House. The progression of RAISE through the House would not have been possible without many visits to the Hill by AAO members and our DC legal team. Thank you for the PAC support that makes these visits possible. Without PAC contributions, our message wouldn't have been able to be heard.

Please read the press release from Rep Stivers (R-OH) which mentions the AAO.

<https://stivers.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=399604>

In July, I had the opportunity to go to the National Republican Committee's Summer Conference at Nemacolin Resort in Pennsylvania. The timing for this meeting was perfect, as it fell during the thick of the negotiations on the RAISE Act. I had the opportunity to personally thank Representative Steve Stivers for his many years of work as the lead sponsor for this bill. Mr. Stivers introduced the bipartisan bill, and relied heavily on AAO's position papers and perspectives as he worked to champion its passage in the House.

But that isn't the only good news...additionally, on July 24 the House passed a permanent repeal of the **medical device tax**, another item that has been a primary focus of AAO advocacy efforts. We'll hope that this tax, which has been repeatedly deferred through "band-aid" legislation, will go away forever by its passage in the Senate in the near future.

Both of these accomplishments support our belief that *relationships matter* in Washington, and that the success of us moving our issues forward depends on us having strong relationships with legislators through our Hill visits, by providing timely, accurate, and comprehensive information to legislators on our issues, and by utilizing our PAC dollars wisely to show our support to candidates who value the same things that we do- namely, protection of our patients and protection for small businesses.

A final issue that is of concern to our members is the rise of do-it-yourself (DIY) orthodontics. Our AAO Board of Trustees has been sharing our concerns about DIY orthodontics and dentistry with the ADA. Hopefully you caught the full-page ad that appeared in the Wall Street Journal on August 3<sup>rd</sup> informing the public about the risks associated with DIY dentistry. Also, the ADA launched a public awareness video that is on youtube, and is developing resources for patients about DIY dentistry that will be available in the fall.

One final comment- we currently have a second dentist from Ohio running to be President of the ADA. Dr. Ron Lemmo, from Cleveland will be running for President-Elect of the ADA this fall. He currently serves as the ADA Treasurer. The current ADA President, Dr. Joe Crowley, is also from Ohio and will finish his term in October. It is great to see ADA Leadership coming out of our Great Lakes area, and I am hopeful that Dr. Lemmo will be successful in his campaign for this position.

Have a great rest of the summer, and I look forward to seeing you in Toronto in the September.

Dale Anne Featheringham