

COGA Report to GLAO 8/28/20

Due to Dr. Dale Ann Featheringham resigning her position on COGA to assume her new role as Trustee At-large, I was appointed to fulfill the remainder of her 2-year term. As I have not yet attended any council meetings, this report will be very basic.

COGA representatives were involved in several meetings with governmental regulators advocating for orthodontists in Washington during the pandemic. They effectively showed that orthodontists should not be treated the same as dentists in that we do many procedures without generating aerosols and that our patients need to be seen when in appliances to avoid problems.

The 2020 Professional Advocacy Conference was well attended once again. I believe that we had the highest number of orthodontic residents ever attending the conference. We had our list of key talking points on Student Debt bills, Flexible Spending Account bills, etc. and we were instructed to stick to those talking points, but we were often asked to respond on our thoughts about DIY orthodontics.

I will say that I have attended many Professional Advocacy Conferences over the years and I really do enjoy learning about how government works and how we can make a difference for our profession by showing up on the hill and speaking with one big voice. Make a small, medium or large Political Action Committee (PAC) donation and receive an invitation to the conference. Attendees meet for a half day briefing and instructional session, go to dinner and listen to several congress representatives and senators, attend a dessert reception at our Lobbying group where you will get to talk to more Senators and Congress people, go to the hill the next day with your geographic cohort for short appointments with senators, congress people and/or staff members. Always remember to wear very comfortable walking shoes as you will be speed walking from appointment to appointment between the Senate side buildings and the Congress side buildings. Yes, it is two days out of the office for a good cause. If you like, you will even receive a stipend for your travel.

Spread the word that this council position will be open in 2 years and if someone is interested they should start attending the conferences before applying for the position.

Sincerely,

Valerie Martone