

Trustee Report: August 2020

“Our Members Come First”

Over the past 18 months, a major area of focus at the AAO has been to make sure that our members are aware of the vast amount of opportunities and resources available to allow each of us to be successful in our orthodontic careers, despite the challenging times.

As devastating as the Covid-19 pandemic has been for the entire globe, it has created a great opportunity for the AAO to develop a new level of communication with our members. Since the middle of March our AAO, the AAO leadership and our dedicated AAO staff have worked tirelessly to provide our members resources for navigating office closures, PPE shortages, office re-opening, government financial relief programs, and many other topics. Several of these initiatives were driven by the AAO Covid-19 Task Force, that is comprised of orthodontists, educators and industry experts.

You may have noticed that in addition to significantly increasing the amount of content available to members, the communication frequency with our members was also significantly increased. At the height of the Covid-19 crisis, daily e-blasts were sent to in an effort to be a trusted source of support and stability for our members as they were making tough decisions about how best to handle their practices. As offices reopened, this was reduced to three messages each week and finally, we are back to sending a summary AAO News e-mail each week.

In addition to providing resources for members about managing issues related to the pandemic, the AAO News also provided information about the **AAO Consumer Awareness Program** including the award-winning campaign “**Happy Mouth Now**”. This light-hearted, parody video series addresses the potential dangers of not seeing an orthodontist in person for orthodontic treatment. **This all-digital campaign has been wildly successful, recently surpassing 10 million total views across Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.** Additionally, the #1 advertising trade publication frequented by global advertising and marketing professionals, **Adweek**, recently highlighted the “Happy Mouth Now” campaign, praising it as the AAO’s “most significant foray into content marketing.”

Other AAO initiatives have also been reported in the AAO News: most notably **advocacy efforts** and successes at the state and federal levels were reported, as well as the Innovation and Transformation Department of the AAO has announced the launch of new **endorsed programs** for members, and new investments that were made by AAO. Finally, **educational opportunities** including Covid-19 webinars, online webinar resources, the AAO 2020 Virtual Annual Session and future opportunities in all of these areas are continually highlighted and promoted in the AAO News.

To make communication as simple and current as possible, the AAO is currently rolling out a text-message opportunity to keep you posted about current AAO and orthodontic news in real time. I would encourage each of you to sign up for this service.

“Our members come first” is an AAO core value and as such, the AAO News is one source of up to date information for our members. AAO efforts to maintain its position as the go-to source for orthodontic industry information is synergized by access to the AAO member website, AAO continuing education opportunities (virtual and face to face), the AAO News, the AAO app and now via the AAO texting. The AAO provides the most complete and accessible set of resources available in one convenient place, allowing us to make the best decisions for our practices at every stage of practice, and through every challenge that we may face.