

# COMEJC Report to the GLAO

Stephen J. Belli, D.D.S., M.S.

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## **Alternative Membership Models**

In response to the evolving demographics and practice needs of AAO members, Brandon Hackworth presented on tiered dues structures as a possible alternative to AAO's current membership model. A tiered model would offer a base level membership universal for all members, along with a higher tier(s) which add more value for increased cost. Given the recent growth of dental/orthodontic group practices, including dental support organizations (DSOs), the topic of group/volume discounts was also discussed. As suggested by the council, one possible concern with this offering to consider is orthodontists forming a group to get discounts. The council directed staff to provide specific examples and options for AAO, including financial implications. Staff will report back with more information during a conference call in April 2019.

## **Ethics Promotion**

As part of COMEJC's efforts to educate patients about AAO members' commitment to ethical behavior, which includes a pledge to adhere to AAO's Principles of Ethics, Ms. Maassen suggested for staff to work with the council to develop an article on the topic for AAO's consumer blog. For the purpose of increased member awareness, a suggestion was also made to include a link to the Principles of Ethics within the AAO eBulletin

## **Female Accommodations**

Also directed by the BOT, the council discussed considerations for accommodating female members who need flexibility in maintaining membership in the AAO to help them balance the demands of practicing and raising children. COMEJC voted to recommend adoption of a dues waiver to the HOD financial policy for members (regardless of gender) who significantly reduce their practice time to serve as the primary caregiver for an immediate family member. This will be presented as a resolution to the 2019 House of Delegates (HOD).

## **Degree Initials for Orthodontic Specialists**

In August 2018, the BOT requested for COMEJC to consider whether AAO should explore the possibility of additional degree initials (behind "DDS") to help consumers more easily distinguish between dentists and orthodontists. As part of the discussion, the council reviewed information and examples of initials used by international orthodontists (including Canada) and other medical specialties. Generally, feedback received from international orthodontists concluded that international consumers do not know what the initials/credentials mean.

Consensus among the council was for AAO to encourage greater utilization of the AAO member logo rather than pursuing a new set of initials.

## **Component Membership Requirement**

Currently, five of the eight AAO constituent societies do not require component membership. The council reviewed data on the number of AAO/constituent members who are not members of their component societies to determine whether to pursue a change in Bylaws to make component membership a requirement or encourage all constituents to require component membership. Within the constituent societies that do not require component membership, 6.6% of members do not belong to their component organizations. Consensus among the council was not to pursue further action at this time

## **Membership Trends**

- AAO's total membership number declined in 2018 for the first time in recent history. This was primarily due to a significant drop in International Student Members.
- Retention of active members has remained strong at 97.1% in 2018, though it has decreased by nearly two percentage points since 2000.
- Active membership has remained flat for the past several years, with only a modest increase from 2017 to 2018.
- Due in part to dedicated win-back campaigns, AAO has had greater success with reinstating former members in 2017 and 2018.

## **AAO Market Share of U.S. Orthodontists**

The American Dental Association (ADA) recently published its year-end number of U.S. orthodontists, which AAO uses to calculate its market share number each year. As of December 31, 2018, AAO's updated market share is 86.6%, down from 87.5% in 2017. The year-to-year decline is due to an increase of 121 orthodontists, while the AAO's active member count increased by 17. The council expressed interest in determining the market share of other dental or medical specialty groups

## **Member Renewals and Drops**

For the 2018-19 membership year, a total of 1,529 members were dropped, an increase of 30 from 2018. Areas of concern by the council include International Members and active members within five years of graduation. Mr. Hackworth reported that follow-ups will continue to encourage members to rejoin, and exit surveys are also being sent.