

February 1, 2019
Dr. Dale Anne Featheringham

COGA REPORT

I hope everyone is staying warm amidst the polar vortices that are hitting our Great Lakes region! However, things will be heating up for COGA as we travel to Washington, DC for our winter meeting and the Professional Advocacy Conference on February 26-27. Thank you to our Great Lakes members that have taken time out of their busy schedules to attend.

I wanted to give a recap of AAO “wins” on the federal level in the past year:

Federal Policy Wins

- **Action for Dental Care Act- signed into law**
 - Both the House and Senate passed the Dental Care Act. This bill will allow organizations to qualify for oral health grants to support activities that improve oral health education and dental disease prevention nationwide among those who are currently underserved. The legislation aims to reduce emergency room visits for dental conditions and would increase access to care for the elderly in nursing homes, as well as the blind and disabled. In October 2018, President Trump signed the bill into law.
- **Skinny RAISE- passed in the House**
 - The RAISE Act calls for elimination of the “use it or lose it rule” under which employees forfeit their FSA balance at the end of the year.
- **Repeal of Medical Device Tax- passed in the House**
 - In 2010, Congress imposed a 2.3% excise tax on medical device manufacturers and importers. In practice, this tax has been passed along to small business medical providers, such as orthodontists, who have been forced to choose between absorbing the cost or passing the cost along to their patients. Currently, the medical device tax is suspended through calendar year 2019.
- **5 Year Suspension of Medical Device Tax- passed in the House**
 - This bill extends the moratorium on the medical device excise tax for an additional five years, or until Dec 31, 2024.
- **Delay of Cadillac Tax- passed in the House**
 - The bill delays implementation of the excise tax on high-cost employer-sponsored health coverage until calendar year 2023.

Election Results

- AAOPAC **contributed \$605,500 to federal candidates**

- Funded **141 candidates** (116 in the House (35 Democrats, 81 Republicans) & 25 in the Senate (14 Democrats, 11 Republicans))
- Of the 141 candidates funded by AAOPAC, **107 won their race**
- Overall **success rate of 76%**

Increasing Awareness of Advocacy Efforts

At our fall meeting, we discussed the fact that advocacy is frequently cited as one of the main reasons that members join the AAO. Katie Maassen, the AAO's Director of Marketing and Communications discussed the marketing tools that are currently used to further the AAO's advocacy efforts:

- Member Content Channels- Email, Practice Management Bulletin, Videos and Podcasts, Social Media, the AAO App, Mailed Materials, AAO website
- Member website update
- Member promos (i.e., video campaign about advocacy efforts)

We appreciate Katie's efforts to help keep members informed of how our council, the AAO staff, and member volunteers are working to protect the interests of our practicing orthodontist members.

Once again, a thank you to the Great Lakes members that are attending the Advocacy Conference this month. If you couldn't make it this year, please consider attending next year.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Anne Featheringham