

Orthodontists in 2020

The specialty of orthodontics is the best and oldest specialty in dentistry. The women and men who have become specialists are some of the brightest people in the professions. There is a reason for that. The extensive amount of information and knowledge required to both identify the occlusal problems and the cause of those problems is enormous. We hold ourselves out to be more than simple “repair mechanics” but rather occlusal design engineers restoring the natural occlusal balance with the finest esthetic results. We have benefited with over 100 years of cutting-edge research and technological advancements at universities and industry to understand the best approach to diagnosis, treatment and available techniques and appliances. We can now employ CBCT x-rays, digital scanning, CAD/CAM design of surgical plans and plastic aligners to move teeth. We have a strong national association, the AAO, and an award winning, peer-reviewed Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics, providing us the latest information and current knowledge needed to practice. But, where is that leading our specialty into the future?

The Orthodontic specialty is under assault. Diagnostics, professional supervision and oral health consequences appear to no longer matter? A repair mechanic is all that is now required and it can all be done online with a visit to CVS or a mailed-in self-made jaw mold. The public and professional respect for the complexity of orthodontics has been greatly diminished. State Dental Boards are limited in their ability to react when their state laws are not as specific as they should be and when individual Board members are targeted with lawsuits. Most orthodontists maintain their ethical core and continue to provide ideal care. Others dismiss their training and knowledge and resolve only the smile as quickly as possible adhering incisors exclusively with bonded retainers. Some of our members have fallen to apathy and are simply trying to finish their time in practice and retire.

Apathy is a social disease that we can cure! We must remember and capture the enthusiasm that we had when we first started our careers. Use the newest techniques that are now available but assure you can achieve the results you know are stable. Work with your state or provincial governments to strengthen dental laws and assure they are followed. All of us have children with parents who are influential people; we must get the message out to them. Send them a snail-mail letter, not an email. A simple letter will have lasting impact every time that leader looks at it, it won't be deleted or saved and forgotten somewhere. Read the AAO newsletters that are sent to your email inbox. Learn what is being done on the state, regional and national level to educate the public and the legislators on the value of orthodontic treatment managed by orthodontic specialists.

With MASO, GLAO, Military and residents there will be over 200 doctors at our meeting. In 2019, the GLAO has 979 active Members. Don't let apathy be your legacy. Get involved again! Meet your colleagues for some excellent summaries of current critical information and relax. "Resort Casual" is just that. A Caribbean shirt/top and shorts are acceptable. You have earned it. This is an economical, office and family friendly meeting and may be the last resort meeting the GLAO holds for the foreseeable future.

The meeting is in 6 weeks on the **12th -15th September** at the **Marriott Harbor Beach Resort in Fort Lauderdale, Florida**. Make the call and register today. The rates go up on August 12th. Go to the GLAO website and register you, your family and your staff for the meeting at: www.glao.org.

If you have a family, bring them with you for some relaxing fun and education. Otherwise next year's annual session will be in Cleveland, Ohio, so save the dates. **Become involved with our specialty.**