

Ontario Report – February, 2021

The Ontario Association of Orthodontists has been working diligently on behalf of our members both at the forefront and behind the scenes on a number of issues that affect orthodontists across Ontario. Certainly, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected us all and the OAO continues to collaborate with our affiliated organizations, the Canadian and American Association of Orthodontists as well as the Ontario Dental Association. Of equal importance and particularly significant, the OAO has been active with the provincial regulators for both dentistry and dental hygiene, as well as with our provincial Ministry of Health and Long Term Care regarding orthodontics as an essential service during the pandemic, helping to keep our offices open over the past 9 months, particularly important during the most recent lockdowns in December and January.

Our OAO President, Dr. Shervin Abbaszadeh, along with the OAO Board and executive team have been providing excellent leadership to our Ontario members as they continue to work on a number of other files that affect our members, including the DTC issue, insurance concerns, education for membership and patient complaints. Specifically, in the past few months, the OAO has been working with AAO legal counsel along with a health care lawyer in Ontario to voice concerns over a Canadian insurance company adding DTC orthodontic care to their coverage packages.

Recognizing the difficulties the pandemic has layered upon many of its members, the OAO has reduced its annual membership fee by 25% for this coming year. This year will also see the OAO providing 4 complimentary online education sessions for membership as well. Beyond this, 2021 will see a revamp to the association's website allowing for a direct appointment request link from members listing – a big benefit for our members.

Never before has the value of our professional associations been more evident. The AAO/GLAO, CAO and OAO have represented the interests of Ontario orthodontists commendably over the course of the pandemic, providing leadership, resources and a pathway forward for our specialty. I encourage you to continue to support all of our orthodontic associations so that you may continue to enjoy the benefits that membership brings with it.

The next meeting of the OAO is our Biennial Scientific Session which is tentatively scheduled for May 28 – 30, 2021 at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Details can be found on the OAO's website, www.oao.on.ca. All orthodontists from the Great Lakes region are encouraged to attend.

Please do not hesitate to contact me (drdrew@smithorthodontics.ca) if you have any questions regarding the Great Lakes Association of Orthodontists. It is my pleasure to serve with the OAO Board as Ontario's link to the GLAO.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Drew Smith

Ontario Component Director, GLAO