

COGA and AAOPAC have been tasked to reevaluate their mission and vision. These two groups are meeting on a more frequent basis to define the goals and expectations of their councils and their members. In the past, COGA and AAOPAC focused predominately on Federal advocacy. Now we are shifting toward more state and regulatory advocacy to be more effective.

Your AAO Advocacy Team has created a new publication, known as “The Dashboard”, that will be released quarterly and at the end of the fiscal year. The Dashboard will highlight our advocacy priorities, interactions, and successes. A common statement from members is “The AAO should be doing more to combat _____.” Most members are surprised to see all that is being done on their behalf and we will be able to better show the efforts through the new Dashboard. You will be able to see how our members have been engaged in advocacy and learn how to be part of the process. For example, the AAO Advocacy Team has connected directly with 15 Attorneys General growing relationships with the AAO to share consumer protection concerns relating to mail-order orthodontic patient health and safety issues. The team provides helpful and factual information to Attorneys General, state dental boards and legislators. See OrthoFacts.org for more information that you can use yourself when asked about DTC products.

The AAO has advocated for more direct-to-consumer oversight for patient health and safety by the FDA and FTC regarding medical devices and helped to secure members of Congress to request the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conduct an investigative study. The GAO agreed to the request and will be proceeding with the investigation this summer.

Please consider donating to the PAC to help with our advocacy efforts. Even a small amount is helpful. Members who make donations will receive an invitation to our Professional Advocacy Conference in the spring!

Thank you for allowing me to serve on this council. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Valerie Martone