



AAO Council on Government Advocacy  
Dr. Valerie Martone

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Please notice **Dr. Phil Beckwith**, AAOPAC GLAO representative, hiding in the lower right corner of the photo, steps from the West Wing of the White House. I am in the red coat. We were thrilled to be on the back steps of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) beside the White House West Wing entrance. We could have tiptoed across the parking lot and snuck in but there were just too many big, black cars. A day in the life of a COGA and AAOPAC member with the AAO Advocacy Team and Alexandra Campau, from Cozen O' Conner Public Strategies! One more reason to want to participate on a Council. I have completed my 2-year chair position and my council term expires in 2 years. The GLAO will be looking for a new council member so be alert for the application process. You may contact me for more information.

The COGA and AAOPAC members met at the EEOB with Ms. Grace Bruno from the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Grace is a political staff member who focuses primarily on health care. We met in the War Room, which is no longer the "War Room." The room was elaborate and had a masculine, heavy feel to it and we sat at the biggest wooden table that I have ever seen. We were meeting with Grace to present the recent AAO Position Paper on Artificial Intelligence. Almost all staff members we met with on the hill for the Professional Advocacy Conference wanted a copy of our position paper because AI is a subject that congress is eager to learn more about before considering new legislation.

The AAO Position Paper is called "Responsible Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Orthodontic Clinical Practice." A shout out to GLAO's **Dr. Anthony Puntillo**, a member of the Task force on Artificial Intelligence and AAO Committee on Technology Chair, **Dr. Lisa Alvetto** who participated in the development of this paper. The paper is a "living" document

and will need to be updated as AI changes. The bottom line is that an orthodontist should be in command of the AI being used in orthodontic practice.

The Professional Advocacy Conference was held in DC this March and was well attended. Members of Congress were welcomed to our reception. For the day programming, we heard speakers from the Dept. of Education, the IRS, and a member of Congress. I keep seeing the value of relationships with members of Congress and government agencies. For example, The Under Secretary of the Dept. of Education explained the reasoning behind the Big Beautiful Bill and what this Administration wanted to accomplish for graduate education. He left without taking any questions for all of the residents in the room. Because we now had a connection though, the Under Secretary did contact our VP of Advocacy, Mr. Nathan Mick, to let him know of the news to be released the following day regarding student loans and repayment.

COGA and AAOPAC members were busy during the 2026 AAO Annual Session. The House of Delegates participates in a \$500 AAOPAC delegate challenge. Of course, the GLAO Delegation once again rose to the challenge with 100% participation. Dr. Phil Beckwith made sure we opened our wallets. Many fun and interesting things were happening at the AAOPAC Lounge, members only by AAOPAC contributions. Phil and I got to play in the human slot machine to gain prizes and it was hilarious. AAO military members were honored with special AAO Challenge coins delivered by our AAO President at the time, Dr. Steve Siegel. I cannot tell you more without an AAOPAC contribution!

AAO members say the greatest value of membership is advocacy. Advocacy allows us the ability to educate, have a seat at the decision-making table and advocate for our members and patients. AAOPAC, not member dues, allows us the ability to advocate for all of our members. Please consider making a contribution so we can make a difference for you.

Respectfully submitted,  
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GLAO Representative to the AAO Council on Government Advocacy

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