

November 2020 Council on Governmental Affairs Report

The Council on Governmental Affairs (COGA) has been very active advocating for AAO members. Two members of COGA were selected as members to the AAO COVID-19 Task force. The COVID-19 Task Force, the AAO Legal and Advocacy staff and the AAO's federal lobbying team, Cozen O'Connor, advocated with the CDC, OSHA and HHS on multiple occasions on behalf of orthodontists. The CDC acknowledged that orthodontic treatment was an ongoing active process, unlike some other dental procedures, and that orthodontists perform aerosol and non-aerosol generating procedures. The team focused on getting orthodontic offices open and ensuring the guidance from the CDC and OSHA was clear. Other areas being advocated for orthodontists include the Paycheck Protection Program, availability of PPE, being included in the Provider Relief Fund through HHS, and being deemed essential workers. Thanks to the whole team for ongoing monitoring of COVID-19-related issues and advocating on our behalf.

The 2021 Professional Advocacy Conference will be held virtually on February 22-23. The saying goes: "if you are not at the table, you will be on the table." We lobby congress on issues important to orthodontists. AAOPAC contributors, both large and small, will receive invitations to attend. At the end of the day on Monday, February 22nd, invitees will meet with COGA/AAOPAC members, the AAO Legal and Advocacy staff where the Cozen O'Conner team will give their assessment of the Washington environment and how it impacts the AAO's federal priorities. A guest speaker, a member of Congress, will also address the group. The next day, Tuesday, February 23, attendees will be divided into small groups, by home state (or nearby states), and attend scheduled, targeted meetings with members of Congress to discuss the AAO's federal priorities. If this sounds daunting, do not worry. You will receive instructions for the meetings and there are usually experienced members in your group. Congress wants to hear from you. You are small business owners, tax payers, healthcare providers, participants in higher education and student debt. In the past years we have had a large number of residents attend and we hope that they will continue to attend. If you would like to attend this conference, contact me or any member of COGA/AAOPAC for more information.

Respectfully submitted,
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