

February 5, 2021
Dr. Aron Dellinger

The COC met virtually on 2-5-2021 to discuss the past years performance of the AAO Consumer Awareness Program, and the status of communications between the AAO and its' members.

2020 was an interesting year all the way around and even before COVID hit changes had been implemented regarding the budget of the COC. The budget for the Consumer Awareness Program (CAP) was decreased significantly from 2019 to 2020. The reason the budget was reduced had several contributing factors, in general, our marked research indicated that there is a diminishing return at higher spend levels for online advertisement. Additionally, the past 4 years of higher CAP spending had resulted in a reasonably permanent increase in AAO material showing up in "organic" (free-no spend required) web searches. This increased visibility required no advertising spend.

Year-end CAP highlights:

30% year over year increase in "organic traffic" to the AAO website (this is a result of web search results getting clicked that lead to our page and is totally unpaid!) Example- As of the writing of this report performing the google search "Is it safe to go to the orthodontist now?" results in the AAO webpage being the first hit!

The AAO webpage consumer blog had 300K organic visitors!

Ad campaigns resulted in 314 million impressions (unique viewers served)!

Ad campaigns resulted in 2.8 million visitors to the AAO webpage!

38% increase in clicks from our ads to the website was achieved! AND 26% increase in clicks on "find an orthodontist"

950K views of the "doctor locator" page on the AAO website!

125% increase in clicks directly to member doctor websites!

The COC has done a comprehensive evaluation of the current budget and projects that at the present levels the AAO will continue to gain visibility in the market place. Decreasing the budget is not recommended and may result in loss of valuable presence in the competitive orthodontic market place.

Three major ad campaigns were run this past year. “Happy Mouth Now”-a parody on DIY treatment, “The Precocious Kid”-focused on the importance of seeing an orthodontic specialist by age 7, and a “Social influencers” campaign- featuring social influencers and their opinions and experiences with orthodontists as specialists in creating healthy smiles. These campaigns reached hundreds of millions of consumers and were viewed and shared by hundreds of thousands of those individuals. Due to reduction in spending the ad views were down a bit from 2019’s high of 1 BILLION views, but the improved content quality and better targeting of our audience resulted in many more consumer viewers clicking the link to the AAO website, and also resulted in time average time on our website increasing dramatically.

Member communications through our AAO bulletin and membership renewal communications emails also resulted in an excellent rate of membership renewal. In the last year our AAO member renewal rate increased over the previous year. Significantly important is that our new and younger member renewal rate improved this past year in spite of all of the demands and challenges that 2020 presented.

This has been an interesting and challenging year for everyone. Happily, I report that the AAO has been working hard to keep our businesses relevant and out front in the marketplace of orthodontic providers.

Aron Dellinger COC representative to COC (COC council chair)