

AAO Delegate Report
2016
Orlando, FL

This year in Orlando the AAO House of Delegates reviewed many new and old topics that directly or indirectly effect the practice of orthodontics in our state. I would like to focus on two topics that are becoming major issues and will continue to prompt discussion at future meetings.

The first topic involves the definition of eligibility for membership to the AAO. Historically the language in our bylaws reads that you need to practice orthodontics **exclusively** to be a member of the AAO. In response to numerous concerns regarding student debt and the need for young orthodontists to practice outside the scope of orthodontics while developing a practice to support themselves and their families, along with many other factors, a bylaws amendment was floated to change the word **exclusive** to **primary**. This would allow individuals to practice orthodontics and other dental activities without running afoul of membership guidelines. While, in theory, this made sense some members felt it would be diluting the specialty and others felt that you could remove this language all together making the main requirement for membership the graduation from an accredited program. The other issue is that while nationally this might work, this also becomes a state's rights issue. A state, such as Kentucky, mandates that regardless of wether you are an AAO member or not and regardless of what we stipulate the components of membership are we still can not practice outside the scope of orthodontics IF we have obtained a specialty license. Unfortunately, there is not a one size fits all solution. This issue was sent back to the Board of Trustees for further review.

The second topic is the Responsible Additions and Increases to Sustain Employee Health Benefits Act of 2015 or RAISE Act. Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) introduced the RAISE Act, legislation which was originally drafted by the AAO, into the U.S. Senate on July 14th. Essentially, if the RAISE Act becomes law the current FSA cap of 2,550.00 will increase to 5,000.00. This new cap could be increased by 500.00 per dependent over two dependents. In addition, unused benefits would not be lost, they would be rolled over indefinitely. This House bill has 76 sponsors and is now supported by the ADA. The adoption of this bill would have a significant impact on us and our patients.

These were only two topics of many that were discussed. For more information please go to the AAO web site and learn more about how your association is helping you. As always, I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to serve and look forward to doing so in the future.

Sincerely,

Chris Howell DMD, MS