

CAO News

The Canadian Association of Orthodontists is the national organization of educationally qualified orthodontic specialists. We are dedicated to the advancement of orthodontics and the promotion of quality orthodontic care in Canada. By representing the orthodontic specialty in Canada it is the official voice of Canadian orthodontists.



Dr. Donald G. Robertson
CAO President



Dr. Gerald A. Zeit
CAO Editor

Message from the president and the editor

Although modern orthodontics originated around the turn of the 20th century, it wasn't until mid-century that the Canadian Association of Orthodontics (CAO) was established. The date can be pinpointed to May 1949, when 14 founding members gathered to form the fledgling CAO at the Commodore Hotel, in New York City, in conjunction with a meeting of the already well-established American Association of Orthodontists.

Today, CAO is involved in many aspects of professional life. The association supports its members and their patients through continuing education opportunities at the CAO annual convention. The association also provides support for education and research through the Canadian Fund for the Advancement of Orthodontics. Bulletins are published semi-annually and a CAO Web (www.cao-aco.org) site is maintained for the public and the membership. A well-maintained membership directory facilitates the continuation of care for patients who

relocate from one part of Canada to another.

As the official voice of Canadian orthodontists, CAO acts as a media contact and information resource for public issues relating to orthodontics. It also acts as a contact for the federal and provincial governments and other third parties.

Orthodontics remains the only specialty in Canada that is unburdened by fee guides or procedure codes. In addition, CAO strongly encourages the non-assignment of third-party benefits. For these reasons, patients seeking specialist orthodontic care in Canada remain free to make their own treatment choices and to establish treatment plans exclusively between themselves and their practitioner. We believe patients should remain free of third-party influence, yet still maintain full access to any personal benefit plans that might apply.

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing orthodontics in Canada is the escalating shortage of orthodontic educators. At present, as many as 40 full-time teaching positions remain

vacant in graduate orthodontic departments across North America. Without qualified educators, the future of the specialty is clearly at risk. This is a problem that is beginning to affect all fields of dentistry, including general practice. CAO has taken a leadership role in initiating and coordinating orthodontic educator conferences in an attempt to address this problem and seek solutions.

In the interest of optimal patient care, orthodontists in Canada are committed to maintaining an ongoing and mutually supportive relationship with our friends and colleagues in general dentistry and the other specialties. We are especially proud to be able to be a part of *JCDA* with the publication of this special orthodontic edition. Many thanks are extended to the numerous contributors and to Dr. John O'Keefe, editor-in-chief of *JCDA*, for his support, expertise and hard work.