

COUNCIL ON COMMUNICATIONS (COC)

Consumer Awareness Program (CAP)

The CAP is now in its 13th year. Its purpose is to raise awareness among consumers about the benefits of orthodontic treatment provided by AAO orthodontists. This contributes to meeting the AAO's mission as stated in our Strategic Plan: to advance AAO members' success through education, advocacy and research that drive excellence in patient care.

CAP outreach includes paid messaging (advertising) and public relations (stories in the news media). Paid messages are delivered digitally using search engines (Google, Yahoo!, Bing), websites and social media ads. We also work with other online avenues to distribute more modern content; for example, we worked with BuzzFeed to develop three videos, which were released in the 2017-18 fiscal year. Those videos can be viewed here: buzzfeed.com/aaortho

The advantages of digital marketing are many. Vast amounts of data about consumers enable us to tailor and deliver messages to a variety of audience segments, based on gender, age, household income, whether there are children in the household, and an array of other factors.

Whether paid or unpaid, all messages drive consumers to aaoinfo.org where they can learn more about orthodontic treatment provided by AAO members, and then locate nearby AAO members through the "Find an Orthodontist" search.

Messaging is doing a phenomenal job of driving record numbers of traffic to the website. Here is a recap of FY 2017-18 results:

- 800+ million online ad impressions (an impression in digital advertising is the number of times an ad appears on a screen to a user)
- 120+ million unique consumers reached
- AAO ads appeared through search engines (Google, Yahoo!, Bing) more than 7 million times
- More than 50% of these ads appeared in searches for people who were Googling information on a direct-to-consumer orthodontic products
- "Likes" on consumer Facebook page grew by 2,500%
- 5.5+ million visits to the consumer website
- 75,000+ active searchers on the "Find an Orthodontist" feature on the consumer website

Getting visitors to the website is half the battle. The other half is giving them useful information. Our goal is that aaoinfo.org becomes "the" resource for consumers who have questions about orthodontic care. With that result in mind, the COC has enhanced the site's content. Blogs have been added, and they can be credited with significantly increasing the amount of time visitors spend on our site. Most recently we added *The Parent's Guide to Orthodontics* – a comprehensive resource for parents that answers their questions before, during and after orthodontic treatment. A guide for adult orthodontics will be added to the site, and there are plans to increase the frequency of blog posts.

The “Find an Orthodontist” service has been enhanced, making consumers’ ability to contact AAO orthodontists nearly effortless. Based on search parameters, those who use “Find an Orthodontist” receive a list of AAO members. They can search through the list and gather phone numbers or click on members’ website links; they can also click a button to request an appointment, fill in a form, and the form is delivered to the member via their business e-mail address. If visitors are accessing “Find an Orthodontist” through a smart phone, they can click an icon and place a call to the orthodontist’s office. About 90% of website visitors come to the site via a mobile device.

How to Make the CAP Work for You

Here are a few simple steps you can take as an AAO member to make the CAP work for you.

- Make sure the AAO has your practice website address. The URL appears with your name and other contact information when you are “found” on “Find an Orthodontist”, and when it is clicked, it links to your website.
- Make sure the AAO has a business e-mail address on file. If an interested consumer wants to request an appointment through “Find an Orthodontist”, their completed form is delivered only to your business e-mail address.
- Follow the AAO’s consumer social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube).
- Share AAO-created content for consumers on your social media outlets and/or website.
- Make sure the AAO member logo appears “above the fold” on your practice website. (If you need files, login to [aaoinfo.org/members](https://www.aaoinfo.org/members) and go to <https://www.aaoinfo.org/practice-management/market-your-practice/member-logos>.)

2018-18 Plans

For the current fiscal year, plans call for:

- Optimizing overall digital marketing strategy
- Improving online ranking through SEO for free (organic) traffic
- Creating better user experience for website visitors – create content with the user in mind
- Adult’s Guide to Orthodontics
- Increase frequency of blog posts
- Restructuring of website content
- Improving consumer engagement and quality of experience
- Increasing usage of “Find an Orthodontist”
- Agility in messaging – testing to see what resonates with consumers
- Better inform members of how CAP is working for them
- Public Service Announcement – Donated Orthodontic Services
- A series of TV and radio public service announcements (PSAs) on the AAO’s Donated Orthodontic Services Program have been produced and are expected to be distributed to stations in July, pending reviews.

The PSAs will promote the DOS program, discourage people from attempting to move their own teeth, and raise awareness of orthodontic care and AAO orthodontists. Shining a light on pro bono work provided by DOS volunteers will position orthodontists as caring members of their communities whose concern extends to the well-being of children who could not otherwise afford orthodontic treatment.

Upcoming Meetings

The COC meets monthly via telephone conference call. A face-to-face meeting will be held in St. Louis December 7-8, 2018.

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