

Dr. Jay Philippon – The Canadian Association of Orthodontists: Building Partnerships

Dr. O'Keefe: Today I welcome Dr. Jay Philippon. He's an orthodontist in Duncan, BC, and he's the immediate past president of the Canadian Association of Orthodontists. He's here today to share with us what the organization is, what it does, and what are the big issues on the plate of this organization at these times. Welcome, Jay.

Dr. Philippon: Thank you very much, John. It's a pleasure to be here. Appreciate your time.

Dr. O'Keefe: Jay, what is CAO and what do you do for your members and for others?

Dr. Philippon: Can I read you our mission statement first here, John?

Dr. O'Keefe: Please.

Dr. Philippon: The CAO is the national organization and official voice for registered orthodontists with orthodontic specialists and is dedicated to the promotion of the highest standards of excellence in orthodontic education and quality orthodontic care. Basically, we are the member services organization that advocates for our members in a number of areas, including government, such as DRAs and keeping them informed of the concerns we have for public health.

Dr. O'Keefe: Right.

Dr. Philippon: We engage with the public through our advertising campaigns and delivering our message to patients, specialists, and non-specialists. We engage in education via different webinars that expose our members to different techniques and procedures, and our annual scientific session that with lectures and social events. I think that our scientific session is the most important event in our calendar year. Not only for education purposes, but it allows our members to re-engage with colleagues and to meet new members. We also engage with students to ensure that they are aware of the resources that are available through the CAO to help them when they're new in their practice lives. A new initiative that we've had for the last couple of years is Smiles 4 Canada, is a way for giving back to our country through the Canadian Foundation for the Advancement of Orthodontics. We accept applications from families across Canada yearly that [who] may not otherwise be able to afford orthodontic treatment. I'm sure, I'm convinced that most orthodontist, if not all, will, provide their community with pro bono cases and give back to the community. But this puts a face to our efforts on a national program. We've been up and running for almost two years now and we're seeing finished cases and receiving letters that express extreme, sincere gratitude for our work and how our Smiles 4 Canada doctors have changed people's lives. So, it's a wonderful program that

the CAO has initiated. Lastly, we also advocate for First Nations populations, member taxation, issues with GST, HST; and maintaining relationships with insurance providers in Canada.

Dr. O'Keefe: Wow. You've been busy in your past year of presidency. What are you most proud of?

Dr. Philippon: I'm most proud of a couple of things. I think I've been involved with a couple of things that have made the CAO better for our members. Firstly, at our [inaudible] meeting in February, we engaged in a strategic planning session that I believe will re-energize the CAO. From that session we identified opportunities for the CAO to become more inclusive by reorganizing our committee structures. Currently our committees are our, basically, board member populated. They have one or two committees that have other people involved, but we're going to expand that to bring people, members that don't want to necessarily produce, have that time commitment as a board member, but have, are able to bring new ideas and ideals to the orthodontic community. The other thing I believe we also improved; we've improved the governance of the CAO. We've changed the, how the line officer's structure is set up. The executive portion of the board is has composed of five, line officers. When I joined there were two vice presidents, one president-elect, one president, one past president. Dr. Odegaard is my immediate past president, who was my immediate past president, and I discussed how we really developed a much greater appreciation for the board when we became president. And while the first vice president may get involved in a committee or two, they really don't get, she or he really doesn't get the, how the board is structured and understand the full working in the board. And we're limited by our bylaws and our economics to five offices, so I decided to work to change how the structure [works] by adding a second past president and then limiting the first vice president. So, we still have the same number of people on the line and we accomplish that change in at our AGM just over a week ago in Fredericton. And I believe keeping the experience for two years rather than one will be invaluable for the board and the CAO.

Dr. O'Keefe: Now, you really have piqued my attention with a few of the things there. I'm sure lots of us would love to know how you're getting people in and that light-touch sort of way--the people who've got less time because you know, volunteerism has its limits, and I love the way that you're not putting out past presidents to pasture because there's the old joke is you get to learn really how an organization works when you get to be president and then you're gone.

Dr. O'Keefe: Exactly. Yeah, and it was quite selfish on my part too because Dr. Odegaard has been phenomenal on the board and keeping him around another year is, I think, even better than keeping me for another year. But we're in the process of developing these committee structures and, again, that's probably going to be a

very important part of the two past Presidents, Dr. Odegaard and I are going to work together to begin that process, and we've got a fantastic line and board that is coming up a lot younger than, than me with my lack of hair here.

Dr. O'Keefe: We have the same barber, right?

Dr. Philippon: We're going to create a very strong and energized CAO. Another progress this year that I don't really think I can take full credit for is our consumer, awareness program. A company out of Toronto called Black Jet productions, has been involved--and they've been with us for a couple of years now--but this past year, they created this very lovable robot called Ortho-bot 5,000. And his point is that human teeth need human orthodontists. And that's a response to the direct-to-consumer care that has come to Canada. And unfortunately, that was, if you're asking me, sort of, what I've been busy with in my year as presidency [President]. That really hijacked my presidency, I think. We, we knew that they were coming to Canada and it started in the U S several years before Canada, and my two immediate predecessors, including Dr. Odegaard and [inaudible] from Alberta, they had written letters to people involved to try to get them to understand what our concerns from the CAO perspective were. And there wasn't a lot of response until last fall when they came to Canada. At that point, I increased our letter campaign to all the stakeholders including Health Canada, DRAs, provincial health ministers, all member service organizations including CDA and provincial counterparts. We approached this a little bit differently than the US who were very adversarial against these companies, and we took a more behind the scenes approach because we needed to understand how these companies operate. And, basically, they operate as a dental supply company. They put all the onus and all the liability and risk on the dentists that approve their treatment and treatment plans. And most members service organizations across Canada have warned their members that are opening themselves to this type of treatment [they] will open themselves to question of quality and standard of care. And this is what we've been preaching: that without proper examination, collection of diagnostic records, and proper informed consent and detailed note taking during monitoring of treatment, the standards of care are being breached. For the CAO, it's a question of quality of care, honesty and marketing, and ensuring that our members have the ability to counter any false or misleading claims. And just making sure that the patients are fully informed.

Dr. Philippon: Right now, direct-to-consumer care companies claim that they treat patients at more than 60% less than what is charged by an orthodontist, but we're not comparing apples to apples. We're, when reading some social media complaints and responses from the dental, direct-to-consumer care companies, they claim that they're not correcting bites and that they only treat mild to moderate cases. Well, orthodontists, we treat bites. So, that's number one. Number two: we treat from mild to moderate to extremely difficult cases. And in my office, my mild to moderate cases, their fees are not that much higher than what the

direct-to-consumer care companies are charging. So, we're not getting that information--we need to get that information to the patients. And so, as I said, my mandate was hijacked by other issues, by direct-to-consumer care and [as a result] other issues were left on the back burners, such as connecting with a new and younger members and creating avenues for our members to better serve their patients, and working to improve access to care for Indigenous populations.

Dr. O'Keefe: Right. Certainly, you've had a very, very busy year and I congratulate you for looking so well at the end of it.

Dr. Philippon: I appreciate that, thank you. I look little bit like the Ortho-bot 5,000 right now, honestly.

Dr. O'Keefe: I certainly appreciate the fact that your message is so positive and that you're keen to inform the public about the perspective of orthodontists and the rest of the dental profession. Have you got any insights about how we can do better with spreading a positive message of this nature? About the personal touch of dentistry to the Canadian public? What have you learned in your year?

Dr. Philippon: I think I'd like to let everybody know that as a CAO specialist we are committed to providing the GPs that refer to us and their referred patients the best possible treatment available. This is aided by ensuring that we're provided with the most up-to-date treatment information through our ongoing webinars and our scientific sessions and corporate relationships. As far as our CAO members and non-members are concerned, we'd like them to know that we strive for the best membership experience possible for Canadian orthodontists, and that only a CAO, and only the CAO can provide a Canadian orthodontist with information expertise in the Canadian environment.

Dr. O'Keefe: Any final message to the dentists of Canada?

Dr. Philippon: I think that, we at the CAO appreciate our dental referrals. We love to work with them to create a much more positive outcome for their patients in terms of life

changing smiles and bites that make their lives much better. So, I appreciate the time that you've allowed me to spend with you and it's, I just, I really enjoy being an orthodontist. I enjoyed my year as President and the time I spent on the board and look forward to another couple of years as Past President.

Dr. O'Keefe: Well, Dr. Jay Philippon, I just want to say that it's a delight to speak with you today. I've just been on the CAO website before I came on here and I saw that there's a, a prominently placed positioned statement from the Canadian Dental



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Association, and it's just another manifestation of the great partnership between our organizations, part of the circle of care moving oral health forward in Canada.

Dr. Phillipson: Very true. Thank you very much.