

The President's Message – From Pandemic to Endemic



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Congratulations to our 54 new ABE Diplomates, who were honored at the Grossman Ceremony in Phoenix during this year's AAE Annual Meeting. Since AAE 2021, the ABE has examined 220 candidates for the Written Exam, reviewed 69 Case History Portfolios, and provided approximately 250 in-person Oral Examinations in St. Louis, MO.

The restoration of in-person Oral Exams fall 2021 was a significant challenge after an entire year of missed opportunity, due to the pandemic. Thanks to the hard work from our board of directors and creative staff, we were able to examine an unprecedented 170 candidates over 4 long days. Without the devoted and tireless volunteerism of our Past Director Examiners, we could never have accomplished such a lofty goal. While unsustainable as a regular biannual exam, as a one-time administration, it provided additional opportunities for postponed candidates to get back on track in their Board-certification journey.

While the Oral Exams continue to be held in St. Louis, the testing location changed effective March 2022, from the American Board of Orthodontics to the Sheraton Westport Plaza. The examination space is conveniently collocated adjacent to the candidate hotel, eliminating travel between housing and exams. Covid-19 protocols to include proof of vaccination or negative PCR tests and masking will continue to be required for the near future, aligning with other specialty boards.

Last year we mentioned that the AAE Foundation had charitably provided the ABE with a \$59K donation to facilitate our mission. These funds continue to be used for upgraded technology, supporting our completely digital Case History Portfolio platform, and our continuously evolving electronic candidate and exam registration, recertification tracking, and annual dues collections. Past, current, and future Diplomates continue to benefit from the Foundation's generosity.

Your ABE Board of Directors continues to evolve with some of the best and brightest, dedicated to serving its constituents. Several members have been recognized in recent years as AAE award winners such as the Coolidge award (Clara Spatafore 2021) and Osetek award (Avina Paranjpe '19, Anibal Diogenes '21, and Kent Sabey '22). We also welcome our highly qualified 2022 newly elected directors, Drs. Joseph Dutner, Garry Myers, and Renato Silva.

It has been an honor and the pinnacle of my career to serve with my fellow ABE Directors. Their tireless commitment and unbridled enthusiasm for accomplishing our mission is unparalleled. Additionally, the continued dedication of our Past Directors is most worthy of our admiration; without their selfless allegiance to the ABE, we simply could not meet our obligations. Finally, we would be helpless of course, without the lean, accomplished, and faithful ABE staff who maintain our organization on a daily basis. Thank you Ivana, Patricia, and Kerri, for your sustained team effort, unwavering loyalty, and particularly for keeping me out of trouble for the past 6 years.

Finally, we were officially notified last May of renewed specialty status approval by the National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards. As part of the ADA's requirements for specialty recognition, every 10 years each specialty needs to demonstrate Board-certification for a "significant number of additional dentists" to warrant continued ADA approval. While we have made great strides organizationally to increase our Diplomate core volume as a specialty, currently our Board-certified percentage of eligible AAE members sits at 27%. As we transition globally from a pandemic to endemic environment, let's move into an era of our new normal by collectively striving to create a continued persuasive and anticipated environment for Board-certification among endodontists, with increasing rates at a predictable manner, such that we may continue to thrive as a specialty.