



Fostering excellence and encouraging continual learning in Orofacial Pain

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.....Let's get to know each other
.....Let's get other health care providers to learn about who we are
..... Let's get other health care providers to learn what we do



In an effort for transparency and to allow our Diplomates some knowledge of how ABOP is working on the behalf of its Diplomates, the following transcript of opening remarks to the new Board of Directors is provided.

Salient points in this address include, let's get to know each other, let's get other health care providers to learn who we are and what we do, and that there are no bad ideas, so feel free to reach us at abopmanagement@gmail.com. We are here for you. Make sure to put abopmanagement@gmail.com in your address book so that you receive our communications, and make sure to keep us apprised of your current contact information, including email address.

Good Sunday morning to you all,

Monday June 3, is the first day of the new administration of ABOP, and hopefully marks a new beginning as we come out of the turmoil of the recent past.

To our current Board members who came through the dark days of litigation, you know well that ABOP has worked diligently for 25 years to maintain the highest level of integrity, ethics and science. We certify minimum competency in temporomandibular disorders and orofacial pain, based on psychometric testing that meets or exceed industry standards. We were challenged, we stood tall, we maintained our

integrity and our standards, and through it all, ABOP maintained its credibility as the premier Board in the field of temporomandibular disorders and orofacial pain.

To new members of our Board of Directors who may not be aware of the tradition and history; you are now included among the ranks of some of the most renowned clinicians, educators and researchers in the field, as a member of the ABOP Board of Directors. The responsibility that you have accepted cannot be taken lightly. As the inevitable march toward specialty gains strength, you, along with the rest of the members of the Board, will be responsible for actions of the American Board of Orofacial Pain and how it is accepted among the other specialties in dentistry and among other healthcare providers. The manner in which we conduct ourselves, with professionalism, integrity and strength will carry us through. I congratulate our new members of the Board for being selected and accepting this role, especially at this time when specialty seems imminent.

The members of the Board cannot be fully aware of the efforts Tony Schwartz, Jeff Okeson and I have invested over the past several years. The sacrifices, personal and professional, that Tony made to save the Board cannot be calculated in numbers or dollars, but in blood and sweat. He, and Eva, who stepped in to become our executive director pro bono in a time of need and minimal finances, literally pulled us out of what would have certainly been the end of the Board. There are no words that can express our collective thanks to Tony, Eva and all of those who stood strong with us during this battle.

It is a new time, and we are in a better place. It's time to look forward rather than back. For the past 25 years, this Board has not been a proactive entity, but merely a testing agency for minimum competency. Some of our diplomates ask, "What do I get as a diplomate of the board, what good does it do me?" As the fog lifts over the storied battlefield of the past few years, we see the hope of specialty and the recognition of the field with ABOP at the head of the charge, holding our banner high. However, it seems that only we know each other, and that is in only some cases. We must become more visible. We must let the public and the healthcare professions know that there is such an entity as the American Board of Orofacial Pain, what its mission is, and why it is important to seek an ABOP Diplomate when searching for an orofacial pain specialist.

Yes, I've used the word specialist. In the past I would never have let that word cross my lips, but now because of the efforts of the American Board of Dental Specialties, which recognized the ABOP as the certifying board for OFP, OFP is accepted in several states as a specialty, but only for our Diplomates. The AAOP has recently applied to the National

Council on Dental Specialties to accept orofacial pain as a new specialty field in dentistry. Dental Anesthesia has already been accepted, only the second specialty granted in many years, with Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology being the other. It seems that the climate is right for acceptance of our application shortly, as it will be reviewed this year. Therefore, you as members of the Board of Directors of the American Board of Orofacial Pain must be keenly aware of the importance of your position on the Board and the role that ABOP plays in maintaining the quality of patient care and access to care for the orofacial pain patients.

As the future rolls out before us, I hope to make our presence more visible in the next two years, as well as make the quality and psychometric construct of our examination more well-known among the dental and medical profession, while gaining more credibility with the public and healthcare professions so that referrals for patients with orofacial pain can be made with confidence to ABOP Diplomates.

Pain can be limitless and overbearing. Worldwide it affects young and old, is not gender specific and while serving as a defense mechanism, can go awry, and become a disease in its own right. There are students, faculty and clinicians who seek to take the American Board of Orofacial Pain examinations from around the world. The recognition of ABOP Diplomate status offers credibility to many government agencies, universities and healthcare organizations worldwide.

In 2013-2014 the International Association for the Study of Pain recognized orofacial pain as a worldwide health problem and dedicated a full year to its study. ABOP has Diplomates from all corners of the world and we must always welcome our colleagues from everywhere.

There will be much more to discuss, and I welcome your suggestions and ideas. No suggestion or idea is without merit. First on the list is how we can increase our visibility. We will begin with this type of newsletter or communication between our Board of Directors and the Diplomates. Try to think of what we can do to make our training and our emerging specialty known to those who need our services.

Thank you all for the confidence in trusting me with this position, which I served once before in more peaceful times, but now realize that we must be more proactive to survive and grow. I'm sure we will not always agree, but that is why we discuss and vote. While we may disagree, we are still on the same team, and above all, still colleagues and friends. All I ask is for nonbiased opinions thinking only for the good of the ABOP as we move on.

With thanks and respect to all,

Gary M. Heir, DMD



Let's work together.

"There are many ways to reach the top of the mountain. But there is only one mountaintop to reach."

Weldon Bell