

## **XVII. CALL FOR PROPOSALS (CFP) TO STUDY THE BUSINESS OF ORTHODONTIC PRACTICE**

American Association of Orthodontists Foundation (AAOF) announces its interest to fund investigator-defined applications for studies in business of orthodontic practice. This call is in response to the current healthcare landscape and rapidly changing market conditions for orthodontic treatment provided by the orthodontists. It is expected the focus and study methods of these applications will be varied. Below are some possible areas of investigation to guide the creativity of investigators.

### BACKGROUND:

AAOF is committed to support the studies to advance biological, diagnostic, material, and therapeutic elements of orthodontics. Recently, in addition to these academic topics, the need to also understand and adapt to changes in the marketplace became obvious. The Foundation has long considered orthodontic practices as business establishments, where services are delivered for esthetics and healthcare.

Competition to provide orthodontic services are now different due to the advent of digital technology, artificial intelligence, advertising, and pricing. In such a business climate the distinction between orthodontic treatment and tooth movement could become indistinguishable. Also not made clear is the “burden vs. benefit ratio” of moving teeth. Outcome measures have not been proposed.

### Areas of Interest:

AAOF is requesting to study: market-related forces, conditions of profitability, recruitment and conversion of patients, efficacy and outcomes assessment of treatment, flow of patients, assignment of tasks to office staff, burden of obsolete office equipment and technology, applications of robotics, applications of artificial intelligence and remote monitoring, creation of novel software, development of standards of excellence in orthodontic treatment, education of the public, promotion of healthier orthodontic treatment with mediums different than teleorthodontics, kiosk, DIY promotions, impact of awareness of straight teeth due tooth movement done outside of orthodontic offices, and the like topics. Whereas, RCTs might be too costly for AAOF funding, evidence-based proposals (using cross-sectional or prospective clinical cohort study designs, evaluation of existing publicly available datasets/registries, and retrospective evaluation of electronic dental health record datasets), to justifiably define the parameters of excellence in orthodontic treatment within the framework of “patient desires” are also appropriate to investigate. Creation of a registry of patient complaints kept by AAO, FTA, FDA (eg: MAUDE, Best Business Bureau) is also appropriate. Also appropriate is the effects of population increase in the cities and suburbs on teleorthodontics, kiosk or DIY tooth-movement vs. traditional orthodontics offices. Exploratory/developmental research proposals are also welcome.

The applications can be submitted under the Center Award, Biomedical Research Award, Post-doctoral Fellowship Award, Orthodontic Faculty Development Fellowship Award, and Research Aid Award categories.