

## **American Association of Orthodontists Donated Orthodontic Services Program Expands**

### **Pro Bono Care to be Offered Nationwide to Qualified Patients**

**St. Louis – February 1, 2016** – The [American Association of Orthodontists](#) (AAO) announces it will expand its [Donated Orthodontic Services \(DOS\) program](#) nationwide to provide opportunities for low-income children across the country to receive pro bono orthodontic treatment. The program previously operated in nine states.

“Every child should have the opportunity to have a healthy, beautiful smile that will have a positive impact throughout their lives,” says Morris N. Poole, DDS, president of the AAO. “Thanks to the generosity of AAO member orthodontists who donate their time and talents to the program, more young patients will have the opportunity to achieve a functional bite, an attractive smile and good oral health.”

The DOS program is designed to provide orthodontic treatment to economically disadvantaged children that lack insurance coverage or who do not qualify for other dental health assistance where they live.

DOS is administered by the Dental Life Line Network (DLN), an organization that helps match patients who need care with doctors who can provide it. Applications are available at <https://www.mylifemysmile.org/#dos>. Qualifying criteria include a low-income threshold and an examination by a general dentist to assess overall oral health. Applicants must be patients of record of a general or pediatric dentist or a dental clinic. Dr. Poole notes that many accepted patients come into the program as a result of a referral from their family dentist.

“We are working hard to make the program as inclusive as possible,” says Dr. Poole. “A \$200 program administration fee is required at the time of application. While it’s a relatively low fee, we appreciate that it may be a stretch for some families. To that end, provisions are in place to provide assistance, which is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.”

DOS typically advises that patients who have special needs seek orthodontic care through medical insurance or state-funded programs such as Medicaid.

As the DOS program builds its network of volunteer orthodontists nationwide, it expects to offer free treatment to 250 young patients in the coming year. Since 2009, nearly 500 patients have been treated in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, New Jersey, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Michigan and Virginia.

Mindful of children who do not live near a volunteer orthodontist, the DLN will attempt to identify a nearby orthodontist who is willing to offer them pro bono treatment.

In states with two or more pro bono programs, Dr. Poole recommends that families apply for only one program at a time, leaving the option open to apply for alternative programs in the future if an application is declined.

Dental industry partners supporting Donated Orthodontic Services include Dentsply GAC International and Align Technologies.

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**About the American Association of Orthodontists:** Founded in 1900, the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) is the world's oldest and largest dental specialty organization. It represents more than 18,000 orthodontist members throughout the United States, Canada and abroad. The Association encourages and sponsors key research to enable its members to provide the highest quality of care to patients, and is committed to educating the public about the need for, and benefits of, orthodontic treatment.

Orthodontists are uniquely qualified specialists who diagnose, prevent and treat dental and facial irregularities to correctly align teeth and jaws. After graduating from dental school and then completing the required two-to-three years of specialized education in an accredited orthodontic residency program, orthodontists are eligible for membership in the AAO.

For more information about orthodontics or to find AAO member orthodontists in your area, please visit [mylifemysmile.org](http://mylifemysmile.org).

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