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## LEGALBITE

# AAID's Legal Efforts: Valuable for Members, the Profession, and the Public

**Editor's Note:** We asked Dr. Bill Anderson, new chair of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry's Legal Oversight Committee, to give his perspectives as he takes the lead on AAID's organized legal activities to improve the status of Implant Dentistry. The following are his answers with only minor editing for clarity and length.



Dr. Bill Anderson

*Dr. Anderson, you are the new Chair of the AAID Legal Oversight Committee but not a neophyte on the committee. How long have you been a member of the LOC?*

I started on the LOC when I was appointed to the Board of Trustees as the Central District Trustee in 2019 by Dr. Suhail Mati when he was the Central District President and have been on it since then.

*What issues has the LOC devoted its attention to over the past few years that you have served on it?*

For the most part while I have served on the LOC our focus has been on seeking the ability for Diplomates of the ABOI/ID to advertise as specialists in a few states. The AAID has been actively involved in legal efforts to benefit patients who need dental implants.



These efforts are key to providing access to care by qualified health care professionals.

**Expanded Access to Care:** AAID's advocacy has contributed to expanding Medicaid dental coverage in some states, including coverage for dental implants. This helps low-income patients access necessary dental treatments.

**Professional Standards and Certification:** By setting high standards for implant dentistry and offering certification programs, the AAID ensures that patients receive care from highly qualified professionals. This reduces the risk of complications and improves overall treatment outcomes.

**Patient Education and Resources:** The AAID provides extensive resources and information to help patients understand their treatment options, the benefits of dental implants, and how to find qualified implant dentists through the AAID's website.

**Legal Advocacy:** AAID's legal efforts often focus on protecting the rights of patients and ensuring that they have access to safe and effective dental implant procedures. This includes fighting against restrictive regulations that could limit patient access to qualified implant dentists.

*You were a member of your state's dental board for several years as well. When it comes to the issues of concern to the LOC., particularly specialty status for implant dentistry, how does that prior service help AAID?*

I had the pleasure of serving on the Ohio State Dental Board until 2019 after being appointed by Governor John Kasich in 2016. I had been asked to serve because of my certifications with AAID and educational background specifically in implant dentistry.

At my first OSDB introductory meeting, I was subjected to a barrage of questions about dental implants, dental implant surgery, implant restorations, and why Ohio should recognize it as a specialty. I was met with heavy opposition from other board members, specifically one who was a specialist in another field of dentistry.



While on the OSDB, I had the opportunity to see what the opposition was and what groups wanted to suppress our education and skills as a specialty group. Much of the pushback came from other special interest groups and specialists. Rarely was the argument about patient care or access to care, as certain groups promote as their key reason for opposing AAID and its initiative, but rather why the opposition believed they should be the ones who are designated as implant providers. Those same individuals had a hard time answering, "Why is it that you want to take credit for all of implant dentistry when you only perform half of the services?"

*What are your goals for the LOC over the coming year?*

I am currently working with our legal counsel and board to get specialty status in Ohio and South Dakota. Ohio has come a long way since I served on the Ohio State Dental Board, and we continue to vigorously pursue a change in Ohio's specialty advertising regulations

Once this is completed to our satisfaction, my goals are to focus on finalizing the same legal

battle in South Dakota. In years past, we have been successful in gaining recognition in every state we have challenged in the courts.

*How do AAID's legal efforts benefit patients who need dental implants?*

The AAID has made significant legal efforts that benefit the profession of dentistry, and implant dentistry in particular, in several ways. These efforts in turn allow patients to get the care they so desire and receive it from a doctor who's been properly educated, clinically trained, and examined.

**Recognition and Standardization:** AAID's legal advocacy has helped establish implant dentistry as a recognized specialty. This recognition ensures that practitioners meet high standards of education and practice, which enhances the overall quality of care provided to patients.

**Professional Autonomy:** By challenging restrictive regulations, the AAID supports the professional autonomy of dentists. This allows qualified practitioners to offer a wider range of services, including advanced implant procedures, without unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles.



**Educational Opportunities:** AAID's efforts have led to the development of comprehensive certification programs and continuing education opportunities. These programs ensure that dentists stay updated on the latest advancements in implant technology and techniques, fostering professional growth and improving patient outcomes.

**Legal Protections:** AAID's legal initiatives often focus on protecting the rights of implant dentists. This includes defending against unfair legal challenges and advocating for policies that support the practice of implant dentistry. Such protections help create a more stable and supportive environment for practitioners.

**Public Awareness and Trust:** Through its legal and advocacy efforts, the AAID promotes public awareness about the importance of choosing certified implant dentists. This builds trust in the profession and encourages patients to seek care from qualified professionals.

*How do AAID's legal efforts benefit the profession of dentistry as a whole and implant dentistry in particular?*

Our Academy has built its foundation on education and educational leaders. We have some of the greatest pioneers, authors, clinicians, and visionaries in implant dentistry. This leadership continues to grow from within and will continue to flourish, benefiting dentistry and patients seeking professional care. We have earned this recognition through our legal push and outstanding representation in the courts that we rightfully deserve. In time, the opposition and political self-serving backers will have to accept us in ALL states as the specialist we are.

*The Board of Trustees recently approved a one-time \$100 assessment for credentialed members to help fund AAID's specialty recognition activities. How will those funds be used and how will AAID members benefit?*

The Board of Trustees discussed this assessment at great length. We agreed that this fee would ultimately help the legal efforts for the benefit all members of the AAID.

This Academy offers the highest level of training and the highest levels of bona fide credentials an implant dentist that one can obtain. It is through these credentials that our members can advertise to the public that they have received the necessary education, training, and skills required to perform modern day implant dentistry. But these advertisements for patient care and public information would never have been possible without AAID's legal efforts.