

## North Dakota – Fall 2023 Component Report

Emerson Ehlis, Director

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Dan Keith for his years of dedicated service to the Midwestern Society of Orthodontists. As he steps back to prioritize his family and growing practice, we want to express our gratitude for his invaluable contributions and commitment to the organization.

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Dennis Sommers has graciously accepted the position of delegate. Dr. Sommers' wealth of experience and dedication to the field of orthodontics will undoubtedly serve our component and the MSO admirably.

Furthermore, we take immense pride in congratulating Dr. Brian Jesperson from North Dakota, who will be receiving the prestigious MSO Earl E. Shepard Distinguished Service Award. This recognition is a testament to Dr. Jesperson's exceptional contributions to orthodontics and his unwavering dedication to the MSO and local communities.

**Assignment of Benefits:** NDDA lobbying efforts resulted in the unanimous passage of the Assignment of Benefits bill. Despite robust opposition from the insurance industry, this legislation allows out-of-network dentists to directly file claims with dental insurance companies. Even more notably, it mandates direct reimbursement to the dental provider, regardless of their network status. This victory ensures greater flexibility for dental practices and improved patient care by streamlining the claims process.

**Dental Medicaid Codes:** We successfully lobbied for the passage of several crucial dental Medicaid codes, including Case Management, Screening & Assessment, and Asynchronous Teledentistry. These additions to the Medicaid code will enhance the services available to Medicaid patients in North Dakota, improving access to dental care and facilitating timely interventions.

**Increased Dental Medicaid Funding:** In collaboration with key stakeholders, we secured a remarkable 22% increase in Medicaid funding. This significant budgetary increase will provide essential support for dental services in our state, ensuring better access to care for Medicaid beneficiaries.

**DCB CODA RDA/RDH Program in Minot:** Our dedicated lobbying efforts led to full funding for the Dakota College of Bottineau (DCB) CODA RDA/RDH program in Minot. This outcome is another step toward addressing our ongoing dental workforce shortage.