



Oral Surgery, Oral Medicine, Oral Pathology, Oral Radiology, and Endodontology

EDITORIAL

A message from the American College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons President-Elect, Joel L. Rosenlicht, DMD

There is no question that we are embarking on changing times in our specialty. For more than 30 years the American College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons has been at the forefront of change, expanding our scope and redefining who and what oral surgeons are and do. In fact, it was the American College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons that initiated our name change to oral and maxillofacial surgeons. With health care on everyone's mind and issues of the scope of procedures being determined by the legislators and nonoral surgeons, it is no wonder that many of us who practice oral and maxillofacial surgery are very concerned. Our concern also comes from perception, whether real or imagined. Our patients often feel the same way: confused about who the most appropriate practitioner would be for their problem, who should evaluate their facial pain, correct their facial deformity, or treat their fractured face. It also is unfortunate that many of our dental colleagues do not realize our scope and what we can offer patients.

The news of Michael Jackson's death and the publicity regarding Propofol may also now effect the public awareness of anesthesia, who should administer it, and where it should be done. As these issues arise, all of us who practice oral and maxillofacial surgery must unite to preserve our right to continue the full scope of our education. In these confusing and uncertain times, we need to unify our specialty by supporting each other. We also must recognize that our scope is so extensive

that our need to stay current and competent has never been greater. The readers of this journal, members of such fine institutions as the American College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, are to be commended for being part of organizations that reflect the education and dynamic future of head and neck specialists. Working together and supporting our needs offers a great future.

This journal exemplifies just how diverse the scope of dentistry is and how intertwined we are as dentists with medicine. As specialists we are an integral part of our patients' health. Many people visit their dentist more frequently than they might see their physician. Our capacity to see and diagnosis dental problems gives us a window of opportunity to find early or ongoing medical issues with patients. All dentists are part of a health care team, and when medical issues may be unveiled in the dental office, appropriate patient education and referrals can save lives.

Let's always remember how important dentistry is as a medical discipline and the effect we are able to have on patients' well-being.

*Joel L. Rosenlicht, DMD
President-Elect
American College of Oral and Maxillofacial
Surgeons*

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