

Recertification Upholds Highest Standards of Patient Care

Orthodontists from contrasting practices share their reasons for recertifying

Two orthodontists with distinctly different practices in far-apart sections of the country come to the same conclusion: keeping their American Board of Orthodontics (ABO) certification current through recertification is important to the quality of their practices.

Dr. Kevin Badii grew a solo orthodontic practice into nearly two dozen multispecialty dental offices and a dental service organization based in Orange County, Calif.; he continues to operate a multispecialty practice there today. In contrast, Dr. Jennifer Loucks Buren practices with her father in a traditional two-doctor orthodontic practice Newton, Iowa, a town of 15,000, with a satellite office in nearby Grinnell, Iowa. Both Dr. Badii and Dr. Buren achieved recertification from the ABO in 2020.

Large Practice

Over the last decade, dentistry has seen the development of large multispecialty practices where patients can access all their dental and specialty services under one roof. Dr. Badii is an example.

Currently, Dr. Badii owns and operates OC Smile Dental & Orthodontics, a multi-location large group practice serving Orange County. Specialties offered including orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, oral surgery, periodontics, endodontics, cosmetic dentistry, implantology and restorative dentistry.

“Our model at OC Smile is patient convenience. We make it easy to get your general dentistry and specialty care in the same office,” Dr. Badii described. “Patients are comfortable with our office and our staff. We emphasize outstanding patient care and service.”

After completing orthodontic residency in 2009, Dr. Badii began his one-doctor orthodontic practice and soon grew it into a large multispecialty practice with 23 full-service dental offices across Southern California. The practice employed 50 dentists and dental specialists and included a centralized dental service organization (DSO) business to help manage the individual dental offices. Those businesses were privately held by Dr. Badii and sold to a super-regional DSO in 2017. After a short break from clinical practice, Dr. Badii started his current practices which he intends to pass on to his children.

Throughout the evolution of his practices, ABO certification has remained a pillar.

“Certification has always been very important to me,” Dr. Badii said. “I want to treat to the highest standard, the ABO standard.”

He originally attained certification in 2010, less a year after completing residency at the University of Connecticut. With the 10-year mark coming in 2020, it was time to recertify. There was no hesitation.

“By maintaining certification and practicing to the ABO standard, I am in my own small way helping to uphold the standards of the profession for the benefit of the patient,” Dr. Badii emphasized.

Small-Town Practice

Dr. Buren has practiced with her father, Dr. Carney Loucks, since completing residency at the University of Iowa in 2006. They see patients three days a week in Newton and one day a week in Grinnell, population 9,000, about 20 miles away.

“Grinnell is my parents’ hometown and I grew up in Newton. My dad and I both attended Grinnell College. So, our practice is definitely a hometown affair,” Dr. Buren said.

ABO certification runs in the family. Dr. Buren noted: “My father became board certified in 1988 and has always spoken so highly of the achievement and of its significance, I always knew it was something I would pursue.”

With her original 2011 certification coming due for renewal, she started the recertification process a year early.

“I’m very proud of my status as a Diplomate,” she said. “Going through initial certification was a lot of work, but I benefited tremendously from preparing my cases and looking so critically at my treatment plans, treatment progress/delivery and case finishes. Becoming board certified has made me a better orthodontist.”

The Recertification Process

Two steps are required to achieve ABO recertification:

- Successfully complete a case examination. This can be done either by taking an online Board Case Examination with 50 multiple-choice questions and a 90-minute time limit, or by providing a case report from the last 10 years with a difficulty index of 10 or greater.
- Complete continuing education credits and online exams from four issues of the *American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics*.

For details including schedules of upcoming exam dates, visit the [ABO website recertification page](#). [Find a concise description of the requirements in this brief video](#). [See the Board Case Examination Study Guide](#).

Both Dr. Buren and Dr. Badii found the recertification process very straightforward. “Everything was very clear, easy to follow,” Dr. Badii said.

The two noted that the biggest ingredient in preparing for the exam was their efforts in practice over the past 10 years to maintain current knowledge of the profession and keep up with new diagnostic and treatment tools.

“Many of the exam questions pulled from my dental and ortho education and clinical practice experience,” Dr. Buren commented.

Importance to the Profession

ABO President Dr. Valmy P. Kulbersh praised the efforts of those newly certified and recertified. “Congratulations to Dr. Badii, Dr. Buren and the other orthodontists who have attained recertification or first-time certification this year. By achieving and maintaining board certification, they have demonstrated their commitment to excellence in practice. This elevates the quality of orthodontic care received by our patients and ensures it meets our profession’s accepted standard.”

Dr. Buren summarized the importance of recertification to her as a professional. “While it’s absolutely possible to be an excellent orthodontist without ever becoming certified, I feel that putting in the time and effort needed to achieve certification demonstrates a commitment to the specialty that benefits all of us, especially in a time when so many non-specialists (and even non-doctors) are providing orthodontic treatment.”

Added Dr. Badii, “Recertification is important to me because I want to maintain the integrity of the profession of orthodontics and that of dentistry as a whole. I believe that specialty dentistry should be done by dental specialists and to the standards established by their respective boards.”

He continued, “The ABO’s standards are the best and highest in the industry. I encourage my colleagues to know the standard and set a goal of treating all their patients to that standard.”