

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

This is an important subject, but this commentary is inappropriate for publication in JADA, and may even be seen as self-serving considering the author and his affiliation with an organization that he is promoting in this commentary.

"Both State Medical and Dental Boards have recently learned an expensive lesson about exercising their responsibility to protect the public at the expense of free trade." Unclear what the author is referring to. Do we know how dentistry as a whole responded to these court decisions? This type of discourse - "learned an expensive lesson" - is not appropriate unless it can be substantiated with data.

"...serious allegations have been leveled against some of these companies." And, ...? What were these allegations? Does the author condone or condemn these allegations? If these allegations are pertinent to the discussion, the author should elaborate.

"Over 60 percent (1,972) of the counties in the United States do not have an orthodontist's office.¹⁴ A national network of affiliated state licensed dentists and orthodontists have treated patients via the teleorthodontics platform provided by SmileDirectClub during a 3.4-year period and served 1,655 counties out of the 1,972 underserved US counties.¹⁵ This represents an 84% geographic increase in access to elective orthodontic care in the US."

This is unfortunately another example of the author skewing the discussion.

1,972 counties do not have an orthodontist. But, how many individuals in these counties accessed orthodontic care? Unless this is known, it is impossible to know the percentage of increase in access to orthodontic care. Bottom line, counties not having an orthodontist doesn't equal no orthodontic care. The author use counties (84% of 1,972 is approx. 1,655) to explain another, completely different data set – access to orthodontic care.