

new dentist NEWS

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MEMBER RESOURCE

- ▶ *ADA New Dentist News* is a quarterly publication, distributed as a wrap on *ADA News* as a member resource for new dentists and dental students. For more information about ADA membership or other ADA resources, especially for new practitioners, please contact the ADA Committee on the New Dentist at 312-440-2779 or by e-mail at newdentist@ada.org.



ADA 19th New Dentist Conference: Sweet Home Chicago

Mark your calendar for the ADA 19th New Dentist Conference, June 23-25, 2005 at the Westin River North in Chicago, IL, home of the ADA Headquarters. Registration materials are now available. The early-bird registration deadline is 12:00 p.m., May 13. Visit www.ada.org/goto/newdentconf for more information and to register for this spectacular conference! Contact the ADA Committee on the New Dentist at 312-440-2779 to request a brochure or register over the phone.



American Dental Association
www.ada.org

Bringing technology into practice

Today's dental school graduates grew up with computers, video games, CDs and DVDs. After spending 20 some years living in a high tech home, no one needs to tell you the importance of having a high tech dental office. You know why, but do you know how?

Appointment books and paper files have gone the way of the public phone booths and cameras that needed something called "film." They sure are quaint, and were probably very helpful – in their day. But today's world is all about cell phones, digital cameras, and paperless dental offices. These innovations make life easier, and much more efficient.

Just ask Dr. Jay Nesvold. He may be a lot like you, only upgraded. As a 2001 graduate of the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry, he's had nearly four years of real life experience as an associate practicing in a nearly state-of-the-art office. Now, as he prepares to open his own practice from scratch in Portsmouth, NH, he's implementing the knowledge he's gained from studying the types of technology available to the dental professional and the options for incorporating it into a practice.

At minimum, said Dr. Nesvold, today's dental office should include computers in every operatory with the use of some sort of intraoral camera. "The ultimate in high-tech would be a paperless office where all items of a traditional dental chart are digital," he added. That means all images, photos or radiographs would be digital along with any correspondence with specialists and records of treatment.

"I am planning my new office this way, thus minimizing the use of paper," Dr. Nesvold said, adding that new dentists shouldn't take the term "paperless" literally. "There will always be some paper, but there should be no paper associated with any record of the patients' existence in the practice. All of it would be on the computer that runs the office software," he said.

Dr. Charles Samaras agrees, saying he prefers the term "chartless." And file-less. "Never buy a file cabinet, you'll never need it," he advises.

Dr. Samaras, Director of Practice Management at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in Boston, said dentists should strive for a chartless office from day one.

"A paper chart is the most inefficient way to handle an office," he said. "Only one person can look at it at a time." With a virtual chart, multiple workstations can access the same chart concurrently.

To achieve this, new dentists are looking at an initial investment of between \$20,000 - \$30,000 for computers and software.

Add a website, allowing patients to learn about you, your staff and the treatments you offer, and one \$3,000 intraoral camera (Dr. Samaras believes one is enough because it can be easily moved between operatories), and you've got yourself a high-tech office. Remember, adds Dr. Samaras, who lectures on high tech dentistry at dental schools across the country, the payments can be made over five years, so it shouldn't be a financial struggle for new dentists just starting out.

Dr. Nesvold borrowed a lump sum of money to set up two operatories with all the technology he plans to use in the future. "For a new start-up practice there is no other way to go," he said. Besides, "the time involved in learning how to use the technology is offset by the slow start in acquiring a patient base," he said. "There is a lot of time to progress through the technology learning curve."

With just the right technology, you can ease work flow and maximize profits by increasing patient acceptance. With an intraoral camera, for example, a dentist can show patients things that may still be asymptomatic.

Dr. Nesvold agrees. "Patients are very educated consumers today and they appreciate a dentist who is up on technology. I feel that efficiency and acceptance can be improved upon as can quality of

Continued on page 3



Dr. Samaras (left) and Dr. Nesvold (right)



Network News

Across the country, state and local new dentist committees continue to provide valuable resources and activities for new dentists and dental students in their district. Network News highlights a few of these exciting and valuable programs.

District 1 (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)

The Spring 2005 Journal of the Massachusetts Dental Society included articles of interest to new dentists, including "Negotiating Associate Agreements," "Family Life Balance," "Legal Tips for Buying a Practice," and "Tax Tips for Buying a Practice."

District 2 (NY)

The New York State Dental Association presented a resume writing course for graduate program applications for NYU dental students. The Queens County and Ninth District Dental Societies hosted a resident/new member nights to promote resources and benefits for new dentists.

District 3 (PA)

The PDA House of Delegates passed a resolution providing for a Board of Trustees position for a non-voting member from the Young Dentist Committee. Smart Start Programs were held at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Pittsburgh.

Dr. Gregg Liberatore,
Chair, CND



Dr. Teri Barichello,
Vice-Chair, CND

District 4 (DE, DC, FDS, MD, NJ, PR, VI)

A Junior Dental Officer retention meeting was held for U.S. Dental Corps representatives in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard to discuss issues concerning the retention of new dentists in the military.

District 5 (AL, GA, MS)

The Mississippi Dental Association sponsored a reception and dinner following successful Smart Start and Transition Programs. The Georgia Dental Association continues to recruit new dentists for its mentor program.

District 6 (KY, MO, TN, WV)

The Missouri New Dentist Committee hosted a series of study group meetings. Topics included internal and external marketing. The Kentucky New Dentist Committee will host a new dentist conference on practice management with speaker Dr. Roger Levin.

District 7 (IN, OH)

The Ohio Dental Association will host a free seminar for member dentists interested in starting a new practice. Topics will include legal issues, office technology, financing, taxation, construction and design, dental supplies, insurance products and marketing. The ODA also hosted a Lunch and Learn program for OHSU dental students on recent legislative issues.

District 8 (IL)

The Illinois State Dental Society will host "Field Trip to the Future" for fourth-year dental students. The program will include tours of the ADA Headquarters and luncheons with ISDS and ADA leadership.

District 9 (MI, WI)

The Wisconsin New Dentist Committee is planning a new dentist and dental student happy hour in conjunction with the New Dentist Conference.

District 10 (IA, MN, NE, ND, SD)

The University of Minnesota will host the Smart Start and Transition Programs for first and fourth year students respectively. The Nebraska New Dentist Committee hosted a new dentist luncheon during its state dental meeting.

District 11 (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA)

The Montana Dental Association amended its constitution to add a new dentist member to their Board of Trustees. The Washington State Dental Association formed a Task Force of New Dentists to explore recruitment and retention of new dentists in the state.

District 12 (AR, KS, LA, OK)

The Arkansas Dental Association hosted a Lunch and Learn at the University of Tennessee to discuss dental employment opportunities in Arkansas. New dentist leaders in Kansas are spearheading the 4th Annual Mission of Mercy project in February.

District 13 (CA)

California's component new dentist committee leaders will participate in the California Dental Association Scientific Session. The program will include clinical and practice management courses and a reception.

District 14 (AZ, CO, HI, NV, NM, UT, WY)

The University of Nevada Las Vegas hosted the Smart Start and ADA SUCCESS programs. The Wyoming New Dentist Committee hosted a lunch reception for new dentist members at its state meeting.

District 15 (TX)

The Texas New Dentist Committee will distribute "survival kits" to WREB candidates on examination day. The San Antonio New Dentist Committee hosted several programs, including "Clinical Dentistry in the Real World," "Preventing Fraud in Your Office," and "Predictable Anterior Esthetics and Porcelain Restorations."

District 16 (NC, SC, VA)

The Virginia Dental Association sponsored a Real World Tour in Richmond. The VDA also makes available information on its mentoring program on the Association's website.

District 17 (FL)

Florida's Annual Meeting included a tour of offices and a new dentist reception.

COMMENTS

Please send comments to:
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2004-2005 ADA COMMITTEE ON THE NEW DENTIST

Chair	2nd District	Vice-Chair	11th District	1st District	3rd District	4th District	5th District	6th District	7th District	8th District	9th District	10th District	12th District	13th District	14th District	15th District	16th District	17th District																		
Gregory R. Liberatore, D.D.S.	Teri Barichello, D.M.D.	Jennifer McConathy, D.D.S.	Laurene A. Grabill, D.M.D.	Ender Ozgul, D.D.S.	John Dale Dumas, D.M.D.	J. Christopher Smith, D.D.S.	Shiva V. Shanker, D.D.S.	Brandon Maddox, D.M.D.	Kate C. Gilson, D.D.S.	Benjamin D. Jensen, D.D.S.	Matthew F. Krische, D.D.S.	Natasha A. Lee, D.D.S.	Timothy D. Kneller, D.D.S.	Jennifer J. Barrington, D.D.S.	Wilson O. Jewell, D.D.S.	Stephen J. Zuknick, D.M.D.	shanker.4@osu.edu	opnwid4me@hotmail.com	kgtoothdoc@yahoo.com	drbjensen@iw.net	mkrische@rocketmail.com	natashadds@yahoo.com	knellerdds@msn.com	jjbdds@charterinternet.com	wojewell@aol.com	sjzmd@aol.com	(614) 688-3398	(217) 546-4738	(262) 542-0431	(605) 665-7479	(785) 842-0705	(415) 731-9311	(303) 696-9364	(972) 923-0374	(910) 791-2401	(813) 685-0809

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care and accuracy of diagnosis," he said.

Dr. Samaras adds that intraoral cameras and computerized records of treatments can also aid in a dentist's risk management. Should the need arise, "these will help a jury understand a treatment," he said.

The first step for newly graduated dentists should be to learn all they can about technology before making any decisions. Dr. Nesvold is happy with his choice of working as an associate first. This allowed him to learn more about dentistry and technology, and to save up some money to begin his own practice.

If this isn't feasible, Dr. Samaras said, "at least, seek advice from the experts." ❀

ADA RESOURCES PREPARE DENTISTS FOR CYBER JOURNEY

Experts agree that new dentists need to start out on the right technological foot.

Begin learning about how to create a high tech office by checking out resources available through the American Dental Association:

— **2005 Annual Session.** This year's Annual Session and Technical Exhibition, scheduled for Oct. 6-9 in Philadelphia, will include a Technology Day. This program will highlight various technologies for the dental office. Check out the Meetings and Events section of ADA.org for more information.

— **The Journal of the American Dental Association.** JADA offers several supplements and special reports on technology in the dental office. Subjects covered include integration, boosting efficiency, improved patient care, digital imaging, office design, and practice development. JADA also offers continuing education courses that cover bringing technology into the office. Visit ADA.org for archived issues.

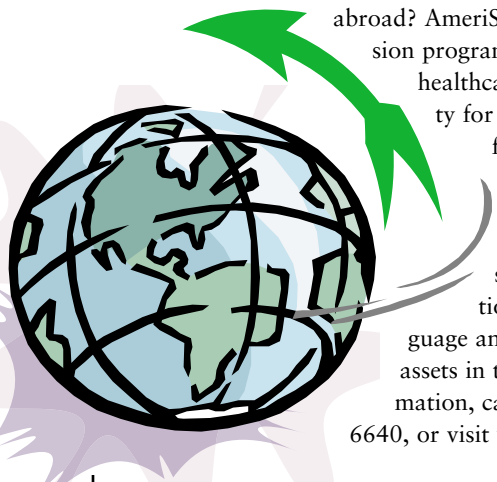
— **The ADA Catalog.** Several titles on building technology into a dental practice are available. One noteworthy ADA publication, "Dental Office Design: A Guide to Building, Remodeling and Relocating," was quoted by dentist and architect Dr. Michael Unthank as "the single best resource text available for any doctor considering a change in their office environment." The 2002 publication is \$59.95 to members and \$89.98 to non-members. Another helpful selection is "Develop a Dynamic Web Site for Your Practice." This manual helps you sort through your online options then guides you through every step needed to build an effective site. The manual will help you review, deploy and maintain the site. The package is \$39.95 for members and \$59.95 for nonmembers. View the catalog at www.adacatalog.org for more information. ❀



News You Can Use



Looking to expand your horizons and work abroad? AmeriSpan's SALUD medical immersion program offers those in various healthcare fields a unique opportunity for personal enrichment and professional development while working in Latin America or Spain. Participants will gain new skills and perspectives, including international work experience and language and cultural skills, valuable assets in today's world. For more information, call AmeriSpan at 800-879-6640, or visit www.amerispan.com. ❀



What's old can be new again



DR. PAUL FEUERSTEIN

It's old. It's gold. And now it's yours.

With more and more Baby Boomer dentists retiring each day, today's graduates have the opportunity to purchase a well-established, if slightly used, dental practice. That's the good news and the bad news, said Dr. Paul Feuerstein, ADA Seminar Series Speaker, technology editor for *Dental Economics* and author of several articles on technology in dentistry.

With a few exceptions and plenty of concessions, new dentists can successfully purchase old practices and transform them into the high tech office they desire. They must, however, know what kind of technology they'll want to bring in, factor in the money they'll need to spend on technology when they make their purchase offer, and be certain that the practice they are considering buying can handle the upgrades structurally and logistically.

Dr. Feuerstein said any technology plan must include computers. "There should be screens everywhere but the bathroom," he said. There should be a computer at the front desk where appointments can be made, insurance information electronically filed and bills generated and paid. In treatment rooms, he added, there should be digital X-rays and computers to aid in diagnosis, treatment, patient education and treatment acceptance.

With a few exceptions and plenty of concessions, new dentists can successfully purchase old practices and transform them into the high tech office they desire.

Ideally, Dr. Feuerstein said, a dentist should be able to enter information about a patient during an exam and send it to the front desk computer in the time it takes a patient to leave to operatory walk down the hall and prepare to pay for the visit.

In reality, practices available for purchase are not going to be fully computerized, he said.

There will be file cabinets and paper charts, manila envelopes and maybe even an appointment book.

The 10-year-old St. Paul, Minnesota, practice purchased by Dr. Todd Porter, a 2001 graduate of the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry, didn't have an appointment book, but the latest dental technologies were missing and the décor definitely needed a makeover. It became his two years ago and since then he has been bringing it into 21st Century both in style and substance.

His first addition was a diagnostic laser, which has allowed him to greatly improve his diagnostic procedures.

Initially, however, it caused problems for the patients. "I saw that some patients had been under-diagnosed. When I told them they needed treatment, they said their other doctor told them they were fine," Dr. Porter

recalled. "I worried they'd leave the practice."

Dr. Porter educated many patients by sharing reprints of journal articles about laser technology. Some patients did, however, leave the practice because, they told Dr. Porter, "This is not how the previous dentist did things."

"I simply came to realize that not all patients are ready for technology. I encourage them to seek care in a setting more suited to their values," Dr. Porter said. "As more and more offices become updated, the disparities between practitioners who are early adapters and late adapters will diminish," he added.

Firmly believing that technology can improve patient care, Dr. Porter then brought in a water laser that would allow him to treat the conditions detected by the diagnostic laser.

Other offerings have included implant dentistry, sedation and third-party payment options, all of which Dr. Porter's patients have come to embrace.

When changing a practice, there will be growing pains. But if you present yourself in a caring and professional manner, many patients will come to appreciate what you have to offer, said Dr. Feuerstein.

Some problems are better avoided. As Dr. Feuerstein explained, "old offices weren't designed with computers in mind," he said. "You might not be able to get what you want in the patient room. You'll have to be creative. The worst case would be if you had to get a laptop or had to put the computer on the wall."

Certain types of construction, Dr. Feuerstein said, including those made from concrete, can be difficult to redesign. "This should be a consideration when buying a practice," he said.

Both doctors agree that incorporating the best technology has to offer is the only way to outfit an office today. ❀



DR. TODD PORTER

What's your number? Knowledge of numbers key to reaching private practice success



DR. BLATCHFORD

Many new dentists struggle with running their practices. Numbers can be a mystery to them that they don't have time to unravel after practicing dentistry all day.

Dr. Blatchford has worked with thousands of dentists to help them solve this mystery with a result of less stress and more enjoyment and profit in their dental practices.

As a featured speaker at the ADA 19th New Dentist Conference this summer, Dr. Blatchford will present the practice management program "Measuring Success – Know Your Numbers." The conference is scheduled for June 23-25, 2005 at the Westin River North Hotel in Chicago. There, Dr. Blatchford, who graduated from Loyola University of Chicago Dental School in 1970 and practiced in Corvallis, Oregon, will introduce attendees to the information, specifically numbers, they need to not only create an efficient practice, but truly enjoy the profession of dentistry as well.

So what are these numbers that you don't know? The number of hours most dentists work a week to net \$140,000 a year. The amount of money dentists could be making if they were more efficient. The cost of running a practice at any given hour of any given day. The cost of performing specific procedures such as crowns or implants.

Knowledge of just these few numbers can turn a so-so practice into a highly efficient dentistry machine – a level currently reached by a mere 10 percent of dentists, according to Dr. Blatchford.

"Most dentists, 85 percent of them, open their practices and remain practicing at a technical level throughout their careers," said Dr. Blatchford. That's understandable, yet regrettable. "Many dentists avoid the management side of dentistry. Those who can embrace the idea of managing a business can net twice, even three times the amount they presently earn."

In his presentation, Dr. Blatchford will explain that new dentists need to define who they are as an office, what they do, and for whom they do it. Those attendees who respond that they have a valuable service to provide will be on the right track to a successful and enjoyable practice.

Next, new dentists need to look behind the scenes of their practice and understand how it works. Don't rely on staff members. You must know how much it costs to do specific procedures, prophys, crowns. In short, expenses minus lab equals cost of procedure. With that knowledge, you can determine how much it costs to run your practice by the hour, and from there you can make sure you're scheduling profitably, he said.

By being engaged in the business side of running a dental practice, dentists can lower their overhead and make wise decisions about the mix of treatment staffing and case presentations.

The result will be not only a greater net income, but also a practice that operates more smoothly and that can offer better treatment, attracting patients who see value in your work.

According to Dr. Blatchford, it's never been more important for dentists to understand the business end of their profession. "There's more competition for people's discretionary income. The business environment continues to change and dentists need to change with it. We have to market today. That was unheard of when I started my business," he said.

For more information about the ADA 19th New Dentist Conference, or to register for Dr. Blatchford's course and other CE workshops, visit www.ada.org/goto/newdentconf or call the Committee on the New Dentist at 312-440-2779. ❀

ADA Membership: What's in it for You?

The news is brand new: the number of new dentist ADA members continues to rise! As of December 31, 2004, 68.3% of licensed new dentists are ADA members. Membership overall stands at 71.4%.

According to Dr. Gregg Liberatore, chair of the ADA Committee on the New Dentist, there are two big reasons for the increase: Greater outreach initiatives and obvious member value.

"Those first few years after graduation from dental school are very tumultuous," he explained. "Most new practitioners intend to be ADA members someday, but there are so many transitions to go through...everything from getting a license to trying to settle on a type of dental career. Plus, many new dentists are also dealing with two careers and family responsibilities. Membership isn't always top of mind."

Organized dentistry offers a ready-made network of colleagues – both other new dentists and more established dentists who really know the ropes. The latest scientific, clinical and professional information, as well as how-to resources through the ADA Catalog, are a big benefit for new dentists in any dental occupation. And many new dentist members appreciate the confidence of using ADA life and disability insurance or financial services through ADA Member Advantage.

"Plus, the ADA is working behind the scenes, every day, to help new dentists," Dr. Liberatore commented. "We have better professional products today because of all the research the ADA scientists do. Our lobbyists in Washington D.C. and in state legislators work hard to make sure regulations that affect dentistry – on issues like wastewater, HIPAA privacy, and ergonomics – make sense. And the ADA's really been effective in facilitating more freedom for dentists to relocate, which is huge for new graduates. Both for initial licensure and licensure by credentials, the change I've seen since I graduated in ten years ago has been amazing."

Visit ADA.org for information on additional membership benefits, volunteer opportunities, and how to join the ADA. ❀

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Business Plans: Building a Solid Foundation

If you're starting a practice, a business plan is an invaluable tool that communicates your vision and helps keep you on track. It requires a realistic look at almost every phase of planning and operation, including cash flow projections. It demonstrates that you have thought through the growth of your practice, shows that you have the potential to make a profit and how you will do it — a key element to securing your financing. Your business plan is, quite simply, the foundation for your future success.

Although there is no official formula, your business plan should cover, at minimum, the following:

- **Business Profile**
Describe your practice location, including an analysis of the market and local competition. Discuss your practice size, legal and business structures.
- **Marketing Overview**
Define your patient profile and market share. Discuss your brand and marketing plan.
- **Finances & Expenses**
Include cash flow projections and capital and operating expenses. Describe your financing strategy.
- **Management and Operations**
Discuss your staffing plans, including compensation strategies and personnel policies. Outline your equipment and supplies needs, including major suppliers.

Distribute copies of your business plan to your Start-Up team. With everyone on the same page, you'll be ready to begin the process of evaluating potential locations and building your new practice.

Excerpted from *Successful Practice Start-Ups: Building a Solid Foundation*, a hands-on workbook that guides you through the process of building a new practice. Call today for your free copy: 888.937.2321.

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