

ADA New Dentist News

ADA American Dental Association®
America's leading advocate for oral health

Sponsored by



Inside this Issue

- Enhancing Patient Satisfaction with Aesthetics
- Tooth Whitening
- ADA Resources: Bring Experience to Your Practice
- Give Your Office a Practice Makeover
- Evidence-Based Dentistry in Daily Practice
- News & Notes

Improve your Leadership Skills with New Expanded Leadership Training

New! Get ready for a FULL day of pre-conference leadership programming at the ADA 24th New Dentist Conference June 24-26, 2010 at the Catamaran Resort Hotel & Spa in San Diego, CA. If you're a volunteer in organized dentistry or just looking to enhance your leadership skills, this program is for you. Plus, enjoy a stellar group of CE speakers including Dr. Gordon Christensen, Dr. Mark Hyman, Ms. Lisa Philip, Dr. Cliff Ruddle, Ms. Bethany Valachi, Dr. Greg Psaltis and keynote speaker, Mr. Brian Blasko.

Bring the family and enjoy a night of fun! The Friday night event, "Luau at the Catamaran" will feature island-style entertainment, including, dancers and fire entertainers on the beach of the resort.

Registration opens January 2010. Don't miss it! Visit www.ada.org/goto/newdentconf for more information.

Enhancing patient satisfaction with aesthetics

New Dentist Alice Lam has loved art since she was a little girl. In dental school, this love translated into a desire to create beautiful smiles. But as the Houston-based clinician



Dr. Alice Lam

divelved into cosmetic dentistry, she soon discovered the practice area "requires so much more than just a love and good eye for esthetics," she says.

The lesson was a painful one. Dr. Lam watched in horror as her masterful creations and gorgeous composites fractured and chipped. Her first reaction was to question the ceramist and complain to the supplier, but the real challenge was in herself mastering the delicate, complicated procedures of cosmetic dentistry.

"When I decided to seek quality continuing education, I experienced a paradigm shift in how I saw teeth, restorative care, and the person behind the smile," she says. "As I started applying new information, I experienced less disappointment and more predictable restorations."

New dentists find that there's a learning curve to assessing patients' needs and implementing appropriate clinical techniques successfully. "For anything cosmetic to hold up, I really needed to understand occlusion and very technique-sensitive dentistry because without learning occlusion first, the work will fail and you'll need to replace it. Or worse, you might cause a symptom or problem in a previously non-symptomatic patient," says Dr. Brent Engelberg, Arlington Heights, Ill. "So, I sought the best continuing education."



Dr. Brent Engelberg

New Dentist Mark Kleive of St. Paul, Minn., agrees. "When I integrated aesthetic/cosmetic work into my dental practice, I realized that I required further education, far beyond what I had learned in dental school," he says. "I had a solid foundation, of course,

but I needed more information to catch up with the advances in techniques and materials."

But knowing how to perform procedures isn't the only challenge. Managing patient expectations and marketing appropriately are important practice management factors. Dr. Engelberg discovered that some existing patients didn't know he performs cosmetic dentistry, so raising awareness

through internal communications to his existing patient base was important. And some new patients were either shopping around for the lowest price or looking for someone with experience in cosmetic dentistry. Clarifying patient expectations and making sure patients really understand the treatment plan was key. Building his patient education skills was an important part of integrating aesthetic procedures into his practice.

Marketing and the media can skew patients' perceptions. Dr. Lam noted that although she improved her communication skills with patients, she found it difficult to clear up misconceptions and unrealistic promises on TV and in magazine ads. Plus, the companies that sell dental products all make a lot of promises about what their products can do for your patients and for your practice. According to Dr. Kleive, it can be difficult to sift through all of the marketing materials to discover what is best for your practice.

But keep at it, these new dentists agree, because the rewards of aesthetic care are immense. When a patient of Dr. Kleive "shared how nice that her teeth 'actually look like teeth again,'" it taught me that cosmetic procedures may seem insignificant, but they have a very large impact on the patient and their appreciation for modern dentistry," he says. Going from an unattractive smile to an attractive one isn't just about the smile. "The impact I make in people's lives goes beyond what I thought was possible," Dr. Lam says. "I started out simply wanting to create beautiful smiles. I ended up learning how to make them last and instilling hope for a better future. I even learned how to treat TMD and headaches."

On this last point, Dr. Lam relates the story of Karen, a patient who had worn orthodontics previously but wasn't happy with the results. She didn't like how her teeth looked or fit. She also lived with headaches and craniofacial pain, which had worsened. She felt she had become a burden to



Dr. Mark Kleive

[Continued on page 2]