

WINTER 2016

PRACTICE facts

Source of dental benefits,
children ages 2-18, 2013

50%

PRIVATE

38%

MEDICAID OR CHIP

12%

UNINSURED

Source of dental benefits,
adults ages 19-64, 2013

56%

PRIVATE

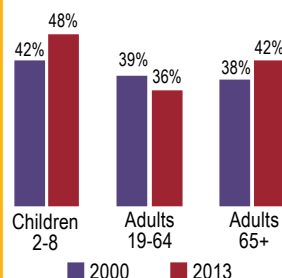
11%

MEDICAID

33%

UNINSURED

Percentage of the population
with a dental visit in a year,
2000 and 2013



While dental care utilization increased between 2000 and 2013 for children and elderly adults, it has decreased among working-age adults.

Source: ADA Health Policy Institute analysis of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, AHRQ.

DentalPracticeSuccess™

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YOUR GUIDE TO A HEALTHY PRACTICE

Whitening treatment begins with trust

By Ginny Hegarty, SPHR

It's a typical morning in your dental practice as your team member greets your new patient.

Patient: "I've noticed that my smile just doesn't seem as bright as it used to be. I'm interested in whitening my teeth. I've seen your ads. Is this something that you can do for me?"

Team: "Absolutely! I'm so glad you asked. There are actually two ways that we whiten teeth. One of them is done here in the



office with a laser treatment and the other you do at home using trays and solutions that we provide to you. Both work really well and can get you that white, bright smile."

See WHITENING, page 3

Technology decisions

Invest in your practice to meet patients' needs

By Dr. David Rice

Change. It's not always easy. In fact, it's a challenge few of us get excited about. That said, if you've been in dentistry for any span of time, you have witnessed that one of life's only constancies is change itself.

Knowing that's true, wouldn't it be great to understand what changes today's most successful dental practices are making to further their success? Well, I have some great news. Our ADA leaders did some homework on this.

See TECHNOLOGY, page 4

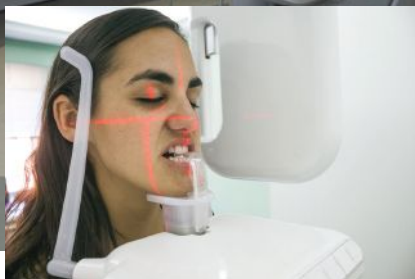
IN THIS ISSUE

Technology vision	6
MarketBuzz.....	7
10-point checklist	8
Equipment selection ..	10
Equipment purchasing FAQs	11
Do you really need that?.....	12
Dental benefits.....	14
Developing your dental consulting program....	16
Out with stress.....	18
Improve your relationship with your practice.....	19



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Equipment selection

By Arlene Furlong

An apparent mistake reveals itself here, a slight misjudgment there. With so many equipment purchases to consider, a few minor transgressions won't be a big deal. Right?

In truth, seemingly inconsequential selection errors have an insidious way of encroaching on dentists' long-term financial growth and practice vision. It's much like the difference between a temporary crown and a permanent restoration, according to Jayme Amos, a dental practice consultant with frequent exposure to the process. "A temporary crown will be replaced, much like a consumer purchase. Permanent

restorations are made to last."

Purchasing miscalculations with lasting impact are as common for the operator as they are for the mechanical room, from the most mundane to the most specialized equipment, according to Mr. Amos. Take the experience of one regretful dentist who spoke up after the fact. Without access to service, defective patient chairs purchased from an out-of-business overseas company effectively shut down two of his five operatories. One was inoperative for a year and the other for two, costing at least \$300,000 in production. "In addition, the doctor was forced to put emergency patients in the wait-

ing room and field questions about unused rooms. His error wasn't in purchasing overseas as much as it was in purchasing without assurance of parts and repair service being available," said Mr. Amos.

Advising that all business purchases are about longevity and return on investment, even the most boring among them, Mr. Amos considered mechanical room equipment, particularly the vacuum pump. "The dry pump may cost \$1,000 more than the wet pump, but the wet pump uses a lot of water in comparison. The cost savings of a dry pump on a water bill can be up to \$90 per

See EQUIPMENT, page 11

EQUIPMENT

Continued from page 10

month, or more than \$10,000 in 10 years. In a situation like this, the seemingly higher cost of a thousand dollars for a boring vacuum pump could be one of your best investments.”

Adopting the long view may be even more critical when purchasing digital technology, aspects of which may be more alluring than practical. “Upgradable technology in dentistry is something like the siren in Greek mythology,” said Mr. Amos. “She kisses those attracted to her and then she kills them.” He explains his analogy: “Technology companies have to price tomorrow’s upgrades in today’s dollars. Five years from now, or whenever you’re ready to buy; the same technology will be much cheaper. Historically, we saw this with film-to-digital upgrades. I predict we’ll see it again with 2D-to-3D upgrades.”

While doctors shouldn’t consider upgradability in their technology purchases, they should also be careful not to build space for technology that may be obsolete in just a few years, according to Mr. Amos. “We’re on a crest of the wave of 3D printing for restorations. Right now dentists are able to print a temporary crown in their office with a 3D printer. They need to ask themselves, ‘Is the ability to print a surgical guide, or crown, or implant right around the corner? How does forthcoming technology impact my equipment purchase?’” ♦

Jayme Amos answers frequently asked equipment-purchasing questions

DPS: Is it ok to purchase refurbished equipment?

Mr. Amos: Refurbished equipment can be an excellent choice. It must come with a warranty and it must include installation. However, don’t be attracted solely by cost. Be sure it fits into your vision of the practice and meets your criteria for longevity and return on investment.

DPS: Should I purchase with a warranty as a priority?

Mr. Amos: Get the longest warranty possible while making sure the brand you choose suits your budget and your vision for growth. Sometimes a warranty can be overlooked, but in dentistry it has been proven that if you have the option of a lower price and long-term warranty, that option should be explored. Some very big brand names have short-term warranties. Compare multiple brands and recognize higher prices don’t always deliver better warranties.

DPS: Who will give me the best advice on equipment purchases?

Mr. Amos: It’s a good idea to look outside your general vicinity for advice, rather than to friends in your area. What has worked for a small sample size of local doctors may not align perfectly with your vision. Access online communities or find an unbiased advisor who has no financial stake in a recommendation. If you intend to make a purchase with longevity in mind, investigate a wide selection of options that align with your clinical philosophy so you’ll be happy with the purchase for years. With so many equipment choices available today, you’ll discover options uncommon for your local area that fit your clinical expectations perfectly. ♦



Jayme Amos’ Startup Practice Blueprint course is in three cities this year.

*Dentists can get in-person access to high-level training in opening new practices. Get Information at www.IdealPractices.com/course. Mr. Amos is the founder of Ideal Practices, a consulting firm dedicated to helping dentists open new practices with clinical and profitable excellence. He is the bestselling author of *Choosing the Right Practice Location*, host of the *Ideal Practices Podcast* and founder of *HowToOpenADentalOffice.com*. Jayme can be reached at jayme@HowToOpenADentalOffice.com.*

