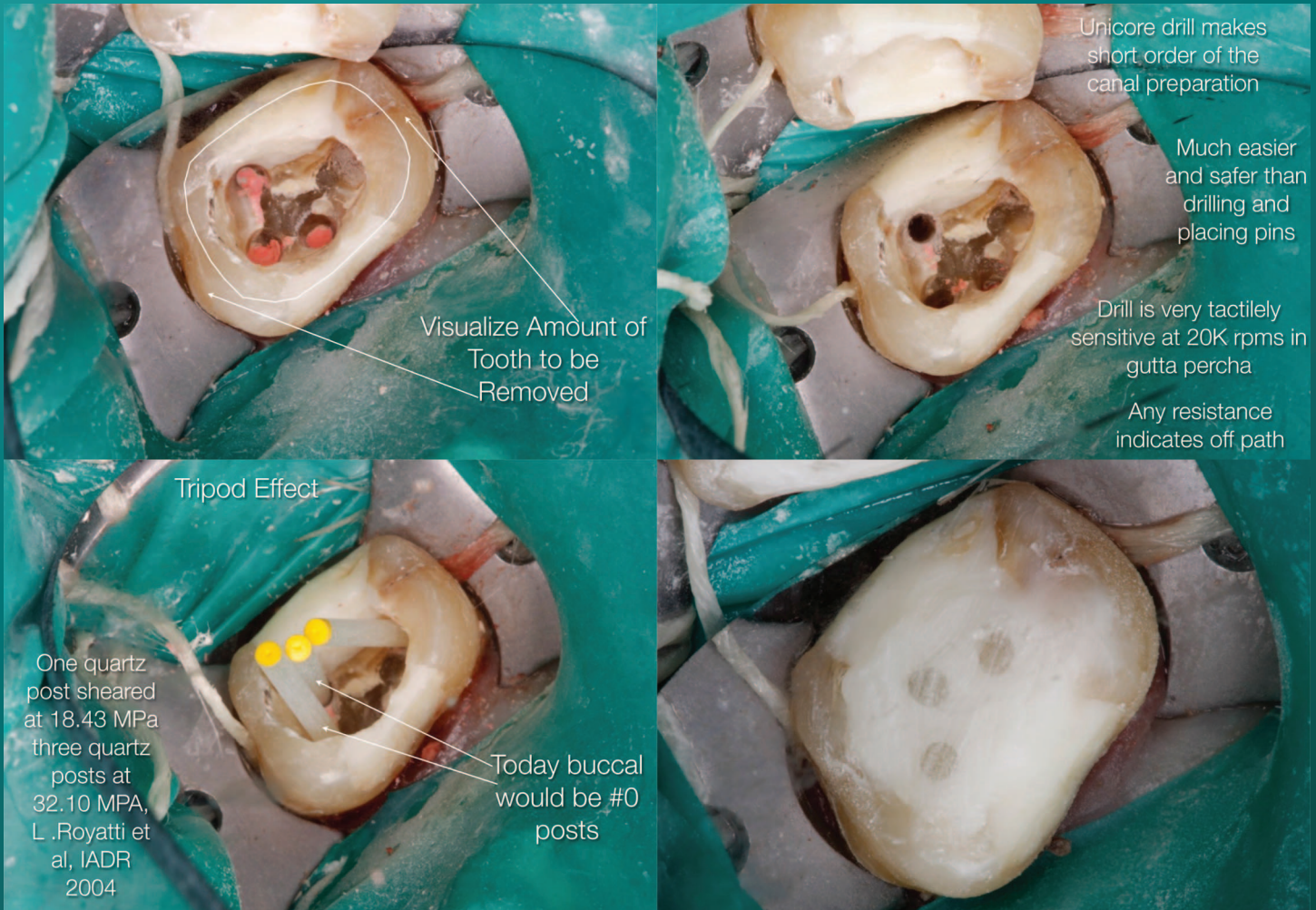


# MOUTHPIECE

smcnds.com

## NONVITAL TOOTH RECONSTRUCTION MADE EZ



### IN THIS ISSUE

- Nonvital Tooth Reconstruction Made EZ
- Handling Dental Associate Agreements: A Practice Owner's Guide
- How Dental Consultants Transform Dental Practices: While Elevating Patient Care and Business Success
- Work Staff Shortages in Dentistry...What Can We Do? and much more...

# Member Events Calendar

See Education / Events > Calendar of Events at [www.smcds.com](http://www.smcds.com) for details and registration.

New / revised course info in **bold text**. Featured courses **highlighted**.

SEPTEMBER						
DATE	DAY	TYPE	TOPIC	SPEAKER/CONTACT	LOCATION	TIME
4	W	RCE	Responsibilities and Requirements for Prescribing Controlled Substances (Schedule II Opioid Drugs)	Reb Close, MD & Casey Grover, MD	Webinar	6:00-8:00 P
10	Tu	G	SMCDS Leadership Meeting	President: Oanh T. Le, DDS	SMCDS	6:30-8:00 P
12	Th	SCCE	Palo Alto Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Study Club	Alexander Hoghooghi, DDS, MD / paomfs.com	SMCDS	6:00-9:00 P
16	M	RCE	BLS CPR Renewal Course	Stephen R. John, DDS	SMCDS	6:00-7:30 P
20	F	SCCE	Bay Area Aesthetic Masters Study Club Extravaganza	Ken Hovden, DDS / baaestheticmasters.com	SMCDS	8:00-5:00 P
21	S	SCCE	Bay Area Aesthetic Masters Study Club Extravaganza	Ken Hovden, DDS / baaestheticmasters.com	SMCDS	8:00-5:00 P
24	Tu	RCE	BLS CPR Renewal Course	Stephen R. John, DDS	SMCDS	6:00-7:30 P
27-28	F	CE1/2	Bay Area Dental Expo	Santa Clara Convention Center	Santa Clara	All Day
OCTOBER						
4	F	RCE	Infection Control & CA Dental Practice Act	Melodi Randolph, RDAEF2, CDA, OAP, BS, MEd & Julie Rodriguez, RDA, CDA	SMCDS	8:15-12:30 P
4	F	RCE	OSHA-Bloodborne Pathogens & Hazard Comms	Melodi Randolph, RDAEF2, CDA, OAP, BS, MEd & Julie Rodriguez, RDA, CDA	SMCDS	1:00-2:00 P
8	Tu	G	SMCDS Executive Board Meeting	President: Oanh T. Le, DDS	N/A, Virtual	6:30-8:00 P
11	F	HWS	Hands-On Workshop Topic: <b>TMD &amp; Sleep Apnea</b> Sponsored by Nierman Practice Management	Chris Chui, DDS, MAGD	SMCDS	9:00-2:00 P
14	M	RCE	BLS CPR Renewal Course	Richard A. Fagin, DDS	SMCDS	6:00-7:30 P
17	Th	SCCE	Palo Alto Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Study Club SMCDS Study Club	Alexander Hoghooghi, DDS, MD / paomfs.com	SMCDS	6:00-9:00 P
24	Th	SCCE	Topic: <b>Canines Unleashed: Diagnosis &amp; Treatment of Feral Canines</b>	James N. Tsau, DMD	SMCDS	7:00-9:00 P
29	Tu	PS	Year-end Tax Tips for Dentists	Laura Phillips	SMCDS	6:30-8:00 P
30	W	CO	College of San Mateo Fall Health Fair	Mike Aicardi 650.637.1121	CSM	10:00-2:00 P
NOVEMBER						
4	M	PG	Bay Area Well-Being Committee Meeting Confidential assistance for drug & alcohol abuse	BAWB - Michael Alvarez	SMCDS	7:00-9:00 P
5	Tu	G	SMCDS Executive Board Meeting	President: Oanh T. Le, DDS	N/A, Virtual	6:30-8:00 P
5	Tu	SCCE	Bay Area Aesthetic Masters Study Club	Ken Hovden, DDS / baaestheticmasters.com	SMCDS	6:30-8:30 P
6	W	S	Senior Society Luncheon @ The Iron Gate	Jim Aicardi 650.637.1121	Belmont	11:30-2:00 P
8-9	F-Sa	L	CDA House of Delegates	Multiple	Los Angeles	All Day
12	Tu	RCE	BLS CPR Renewal Course	Stephen R. John, DDS	SMCDS	6:00-7:30 P
13	W	PS	Own Your Future: Associate to Entrepreneur	Ali Oromchian, Michael Dinsio Calvin Williams, Forrest Wiederman	SMCDS	6:00-8:30 P
14	Th	SCCE	Palo Alto Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Study Club	Alexander Hoghooghi, DDS, MD / paomfs.com	SMCDS	6:00-9:00 P
20	W	CE1	SMCDS General Membership Meeting Topic: <b>Nobody Caries</b>	Brian B. Nový, DDS	Alexandria San Carlos	6:00-9:00 P

EVENT TYPE	
AR	Allied Dental Relations
CE1	Core CE
CE2	20% CE
CO	Community Outreach
FMB	Free Member Benefit
G	Governance

EVENT TYPE	
H	Holiday
HWS	Hands-On Workshop
L	Leadership
NDS	New Dentists Social
PG	Personal Growth
PM	Practice Management

EVENT TYPE	
PM1/4	Pract Mgmt 1=New Dent 4=Life Active
PS	Professional Success
PS1/4	Prof Success 1=New Dent 4=Life Active
RCE	Required CE
S	Social Event
SCCE	Study Club CE



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## 2024 Executive Board

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## MOUTHPIECE

Published Quarterly

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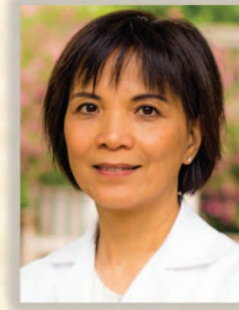
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Photo by [Mourad Saadi](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# President's Message

By Oanh Le, DDS



Dear Fellow SMCDS Members,

I hope this message finds you all in good health and spirits.

Looking further ahead, mark your calendars for September 27 & 28, 2024! SMCDS is gearing up to participate in the Bay Area Dental Expo. This two-day event promises to showcase the latest innovations in dentistry, with 15 esteemed speakers covering a range of topics including Artificial Intelligence, Dental Trends, and Therapeutics. The Dental Expo will be held at the Santa Clara Convention Center – don't miss it.

As we plan for the upcoming events, here's what's on the horizon:

1. **October 4:** OSHA & Infection Control course with Melodi Randolph. Please register with the SMCDS staff.
2. **Ongoing:** CPR classes for members. Please register with SMCDS staff.
3. **New Offering:** DA 8-Hour Infection Control and Radiation Safety for member's staff.
4. **Mentorship Program:** Nakia and the Leadership Council are working on creating a mentorship program. Email Nakia Brandt at [nakia@smcnds.com](mailto:nakia@smcnds.com) if you're interested or have ideas to contribute.
5. **November 20:** GM meeting at the brand-new Alexandria at San Carlos. Dr. Brian Novy will speak about Caries.

As your President, I encourage each of you to share your thoughts and ideas for our dental society. Whether it's suggestions for speakers or topics, or considerations for joining the Board, your input is invaluable in shaping the future of SMCDS. Let's keep strengthening and enhancing our dental community – and have a little fun while we're at it!

Thank you for your ongoing support and contributions to SMCDS.

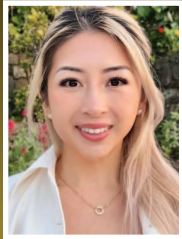
Warm regards,

Oanh Le, DDS  
[Oanh.le.dds@gmail.com](mailto:Oanh.le.dds@gmail.com)  
415.519.9852

# New Member Introductions



Please join the SMCDs Leadership in welcoming our newest members. Take a moment to introduce yourself when you see them at an upcoming General Membership meeting (they wear yellow daisy name tags). Our personal new member interview gives you a sneak-peek into who they are...



## **Cheryl Chang, DDS**

General Practice  
675 Mariners Island Blvd., Ste. 105  
San Mateo, CA 94404-1040  
UOP - DDS - 2023

### **What brought you to San Mateo County?**

I grew up in the Bay Area and always enjoyed to be close by the scenic coast, many shops & restaurants, and lively San Francisco. I love to get out in the sun & nature during my free time.

### **What is your favorite part of working in dentistry?**

My favorite part of working in dentistry is helping my patients achieve a healthy smile they can be proud of. Taking care of ourselves includes taking good care of our teeth, and a healthy smile conveys a sense of youthfulness and vitality, contributing to our overall well-being and quality of life.

### **What do you like to do in your spare time?**

I spend my spare time with my friends & family, and love to try new activities. On my weekends, I enjoy hot yoga, baking, and taking pictures while hiking and traveling.



## **Parinaz Esteghamat Tehrani, DDS**

General Practice  
4375 First St.  
Livermore, CA 94551-4912  
USC - DDS - 2024

### **What brought you to San Mateo County?**

Planning to move to San Mateo in the near future and looking for a potential associate position that can lead to ownership.

### **What is your favorite part of working in dentistry?**

Keeping my patient happy and healthy.

### **What do you like to do in your spare time?**

Spend time with my husband, family, and friends, painting, dancing, and hiking.



## **Pardis Farhadian Lipkin, DDS, MS**

Pediatric Dentistry  
90 Middlefield Rd., Ste. 1  
Menlo Park, CA 94025-4001  
UOP - DDS - 2019  
UOP - Pedo - 2022

### **What brought you to San Mateo County?**

I live in San Carlos and wanted to become better acquainted with other dentists in the area.

### **What is your favorite part of working in dentistry?**

Building rapport with patients and families through dental visits that are inviting and comfortable.

### **What do you like to do in your spare time?**

Spend time with my two young kids exploring local playgrounds. With any leftover time, bake and travel!

# New Member Introductions



Please join the SMCDs Leadership in welcoming our newest members. Take a moment to introduce yourself when you see them at an upcoming General Membership meeting (they wear yellow daisy name tags). Our personal new member interview gives you a sneak-peek into who they are...



## **Jiachen Lin, DMD**

General Practice  
360 W. Sailer Dr.  
San Mateo, CA 94403-342  
Harvard - DMD - 2021

### **What brought you to San Mateo County?**

I recently moved from Boston to San Mateo County. The area's diverse culture, pleasant weather, and proximity to various recreational activities made it an appealing choice for relocation. I am excited to become part of the vibrant San Mateo dental community.

### **What is your favorite part of working in dentistry?**

My favorite part of working in dentistry is building personal relationships with patients and making a significant positive impact on their lives. I also enjoy working in a team setting, collaborating with everyone from the front desk staff and dental assistants to various specialists. Additionally, continuous learning and improvement make dentistry a uniquely gratifying profession.

### **What do you like to do in your spare time?**

In my spare time, I enjoy staying active and exploring various outdoor activities. I love skiing during the winter months, jogging to keep fit, and horseback riding whenever I get the chance. Recently, I've also been learning to play tennis and golf, which have been both challenging and fun.



## **Vinita G. Murthy, DDS**

General Practice  
UOP - DDS - 2024

### **What brought you to San Mateo County?**

Dental school brought me from San Jose to the peninsula in San Mateo County.

### **What is your favorite part of working in dentistry?**

To me, dentistry is a profession that combines predictability with nuanced differences. Everyday can present with subtle challenges that can teach us something new. I love interacting with patients and learning more about how I can be a part of improving their oral health.

### **What do you like to do in your spare time?**

I love to sing. It relaxes me and uplifts my mood depending on the genre. I also love doing various art activities with both my kids.



## **Daniel M. Taw, DDS**

General Practice  
Midwestern Univ. - DDS - 2019

### **What brought you to San Mateo County?**

Returning back home to the Bay Area after graduating dental school and doing a 5 year stint in the Midwest.

### **What is your favorite part of working in dentistry?**

Efficiency and well-run systems. Feels nice to get things done punctually and well done.

### **What do you like to do in your spare time?**

Spending time with family, exploring new restaurants and food, traveling, woodworking, rock climbing, practically anything outdoors and involved with the ocean!

# New Member Celebration

# Welcome!

Join us in celebrating **14** new members from May 2024 to August 2024, contributing to the voice that is SMCDs - **639** strong...

**Benjamin An, DDS**

UOP - 2024 - GP

**Parinaz Esteghamat Tehrani, DDS**

USC - 2024 - GP

**Cody Fong, DDS**

UOP - 2024 - GP

**Francisca J. Forer, DDS**

UCSF - 2021 - GP

**Rojean Gaeni, DDS**

UOP - 2022 - GP

**Rachel M. Healy, DDS**

UOP - 2024 - GP

**Julia Ho, DDS**

UCSF - 2024 - GP

**Pardis F. Lipkin, DDS, MS**

UCSF - 2019 - GP, UCSF - 2022- Pedit

**Vinita G. Murthy, DDS**

UOP - 2024 - GP

**Manasa Narasimhan, DDS**

UCSF - 2024 - GP

**Hemal Pandya, DDS**

UOP - 2024 - GP

**Meghna Prakash, DDS**

UCSF - 2024 - GP

**Ashley Tai, DDS**

UOP - 2024 - GP

**Daniel M. Taw, DDS**

Midwestern - 2019 - GP

## Looking for space to host your next seminar, meeting, study club or clinical training?

### Consider the **NEW SMCDs Seminar Room**

It's perfect for small or medium groups and provides an ideal teaching and learning environment, for less than you'd pay at a hotel or commercial conference site.

The SMCDs Seminar Room is available for rentals 8am to 10pm daily and offers...

Over 1000 square feet comfortably seating 35 classroom

Access to 85" LED 4K UHD TV or projector screen

SMCDs Members get 20% off

Call 650.637.1121 or email [info@smcds.com](mailto:info@smcds.com) for rates and booking schedule

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# Member Events

## April 18 General Membership Meeting



SMCDS and The Mid-Peninsula Dental Society came together for this join meeting at the Hiller Aviation Museum.

Dr. Gary DeWood spoke on Occlusion in 2024.

## May 3 Laser Workshop



Dr. Jeff Rohde flew in from Santa Barbara to lecture on soft tissue lasers.

Members were able to participate in hands-on demonstration.

Thank you to Convergent Dental for providing the lasers.

## June 12 Sellers Seminar *Free Member Benefit*



We had the pleasure of having Ali Oromchian and Gavin Shea present to members. Members gained an understanding of how to sell to a partner, associate or a DSO.



**June 26 New Dentist Mixer *Free Member Benefit***



New and experienced members enjoyed an evening of socializing at the Alexandria in San Carlos. Thank you to our generous sponsors C-Dental and Yaeger Dental.

**August 22 Evolution of Composites Workshop**



Dr. Patrick Roetzer lectured on the evolution of composites. The workshop included a hands-on session. Thank you to our sponsors Zest Dental Solutions, Hariri Financial and Net IP Dental.

**August 28 New Dentist Mixer *Free Member Benefit***



New and experienced members enjoyed an evening of dinner and socializing at Paul Martins' in San Mateo. Thank you to our generous sponsors Bank of America and Roam Commercial Realty.

## August 31 Shredathon *Free Member Benefit*



40 members shredded their old patient charts and recycled electronics. Thank you to Tom O'Brien of Vantage Wealth Management for hosting the event and providing the brunch.

## CDA Executive Director Summer Event



SMCDS Executive Director Nakia Brandt attended the event. Executive Directors engaged in positive and productive discussions about continuing education and events, endorsed partners, DSO dentists and other peer-led topics of interest

## Resources & Support for Early Career Dentists

Navigate the early years in dentistry with CDA on your side. Through membership, you have access to time-saving resources, one-on-one expert guidance and a community that supports your ongoing success.



cda

Discover savings, support and solutions designed to help you navigate your early years in practice.

Visit [cda.org/NewDentists](https://cda.org/NewDentists)



SCAN ME

**Nonvital Tooth Reconstruction Made EZ:**  
XR Quartz Fiber Post and Monobloc Direct Placement  
of Dual Cured Flowable Composites

A White Paper

By Patrick L. Roetzer, DDS, FACD, FICD, PFSF



& Nicholas Aralis B.S. - Sr. Dir. Advanced Materials, Zest Dental



Modern endodontics allow us to conserve more tooth structure than ever before. That being said, if you did a beautiful clean, shape and fill you are ready to place a post and core buildup in preparation for a crown of some type. Hold it! It is February and the patient has just said they need to wait until the next insurance benefit year arrives. Suppose utilizing quartz fiber posts and dual cure bulkfill flowable composites could buy that time. Best of both worlds – great endo, quartz fiber post and high strength composite that will last more than the wished for time! That is what I would like, faced with the same situation. I was particularly taken by a paper in the International Journal of Prosthodontics written by Grandini, Goracci, Tay, Grandini and Ferrari. <sup>1</sup> In that paper, 100 root canal treated teeth were restored with quartz fiber posts and direct resin composite restorations. After 30 months, all teeth exhibited favorable clinical results. I only needed 10+ months to meet the patient’s request for a crown to be placed in January of the next insurance year to gain insurance payment. But wait, in January of the next year if the patient requires another root canal can the tooth I restored with quartz fiber posts and composite survive? Grandini et al used quartz fiber posts, light cured single bottle adhesive and a paste composite placed incrementally.

Fast forward to today’s XR quartz fiber used in the Ultradent Unicore Post System coupled with flowable dual cure bulkfill composite aptly named Bulk EZ Plus by Danville/Zest. Why are they different? XR quartz fiber has been vetted many times over but personally I can attest to it’s strength by the two studies I codirected at UOP/Dugoni that were granted AADR status. We showed that XR fiber out performed the other fiber post materials in diametric tensile strength. That being said, the XR quartz fiber Unicore Post by Ultradent closely mimics the characteristics of dentin to which it is affixed. The silane coated posts bond very well to flowable composite especially when coated with adhesive. In addition, the Bulk EZ Plus dual cure bulk fill flowable can be injected through a 20 gauge needle allowing canal filling even in the smallest canals. If you don’t trust light getting to the base of very small canals such as those in a two canal bicuspid or a mandibular incisor then use 3 bottle Prelude by Danville/Zest. Bottle 1 has an organic acid element to prepare the dentin for Bottle 2 which is a 10 micron thick adhesive. Bottle 3 is what I call the “kicker” to initiate the auto cure set of adhesive when in contact with the Bulk EZ Plus flowable. The technique is simple including shaping the canal with the special drills in the Unicore kit without removing any more tooth than the endo procedure did. I place the smallest post I can keeping the residual dentin very robust. Bulk EZ Plus quickly fills the adhesive coated canals to the apical preparation and the post is inserted allowing the excess flowable composite to extrude alongside the post. The rest of the Bulk EZ Plus composite is quickly injected into the coronal portion thereby “marrying” the canal composite with

the coronal composite – a true monobloc structure (NO knit-lines!) with the post in the center. Frequently, with 2 canal bicuspids I will place 2 size ‘0’ posts, increasing the surface area while preserving canal dentin and maximizing safety in the canal preparation with the drill. Multiple posts also create geometric shapes much like Roman or catenary arches that afford structural strength. I will fill the coronal portion slightly overfilled knowing I am going to quickly shape this mass of composite with Strauss Diamond Occlusinator Pro sculpting and finishing diamonds. These afford the doctor the ability to sculpt the dual cure composite after the 90 second autocure to great anatomical morphology. Final polish with copious water on brownies, greenies, followed by TopDotz composite polish on a bristle brush (Dental Ventures of America) yields great anatomy carved into occlusion and polished to a high shine. Jack Ferracane, PhD, Oregon Health Sciences School of Dentistry had fine things to say regarding Bulk EZ Plus when he stated that the degree of conversion of this dual cure bulk fill flowable did not vary at all at any depth including root canals. Ferracane also noted that Bulk EZ Plus had superior gloss retention and wear resistance. <sup>2</sup> This makes this flowable well suited to the occlusals of posterior teeth. Once the ‘directed shrinkage’ chemical cure process has completed, don’t forget that this is a “dual cure” material! For extra assurance, remember that you can use the post as a ‘lightening rod’ to conduct the light from a curing light like the Valo by Ultradent, downward into the restored tooth to ensure full cure of the sculpted and polished surfaces as well as the canal walls. Monobloc all the way.

Many practitioners are concerned about gap formation under their composite especially when incremental packing techniques are used. Alireza Sadr, DDS, PhD of University of Washington School of Dentistry using optical coherence tomography analysis showed that Bulk EZ Plus exhibited zero gap formation on the pulpal floor whereas a bulk fill paste that was light cured produced greater than 90% gap formation on the pulpal floor. <sup>3</sup> This tendency to pull away from a surface during light curing has always been a concern for dentists as it can create post operative sensitivity in vital teeth. In nonvital teeth where a post has been placed having no “pull away” effect because of “directed shrinkage” of dual cure flowable composite can greatly enhance the structural integrity of the post retained restoration. I feel that given what has been shown by my research and that of others, far more “skilled in the art”, a dentist can safely combine endodontic treatment, XR quartz fiber posts and direct composite (dual cured flowable bulk fill) with confidence that it will last for years.

#### Footnotes

1. Clinical Evaluation of the Use of Fiber Posts and Direct Resin Restorations for Endodontically Treated Teeth S. Grandini, DDS, MsC, PhD et al International Journal of Prosthodontics 2005; 18;399-404
2. Ferracane J., PhD Oregon Health and Science University School of Dentistry; Unpublished Data 2022
3. Alireza Sadr, DDS, PhD University of Washington School of Dentistry; Unpublished Data 2022

Questions regarding this article can be directed to Patrick L. Roetzer, DDS, FACD, FICD, PFSF [paddyraptor@gmail.com](mailto:paddyraptor@gmail.com) or Nicholas Aralis B.S. [nick.aralis@zestdent.com](mailto:nick.aralis@zestdent.com)

Dear Members,

As a member of the San Mateo County Dental Society, I am honored to offer my testimony of Nimbus' products. The Nimbus Microfine toothbrush, has earned my professional approval for several compelling reasons based on my extensive experience with this toothbrush.

The Nimbus Microfine toothbrush was created in the mid-nineties by a periodontist who recognized the injuries caused by poorly designed, abrasive bristle toothbrushes. His commitment to improving oral health led him to develop a solution that would help patients achieve optimal oral hygiene without causing harm. This vision brought the Nimbus toothbrush to life.

The Nimbus Microfine toothbrush features a unique two-level extra soft bristle design. The longer, tapered bristles gently and effectively reach critical areas between teeth and gums, removing plaque and debris. The shorter supportive bristles help brush away any remaining particles.

Clinical and laboratory studies have shown that extra soft tapered bristles are more effective than standard bristles. This innovative design has demonstrated that Nimbus toothbrushes clean more effectively and gently than all other manual toothbrushes.

I personally use the Nimbus toothbrush, as do all members of my family. I recommend them to all my patients. As a dental professional dedicated to the health and well-being of my patients, I highly recommend the Nimbus Microfine toothbrush without hesitation.

Warmest regards,

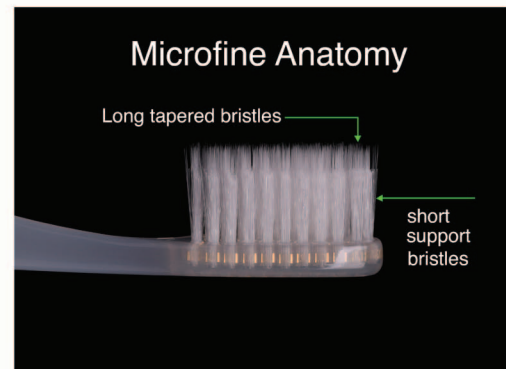
Oanh Le, DDS  
SMCDS President



Tel: 650-949-5449  
Toll-free: 866-646-2871  
email: [orders@nimbusdental.com](mailto:orders@nimbusdental.com)

The **Nimbus® Microfine®** toothbrush was created by a periodontist to provide the most optimal safety for your gums and tooth surfaces. This has been achieved by Nimbus's original two level Microfine Extra Soft Bristle design. Our brushes utilize longer tapered bristles, which gently and effectively reach into critical areas between teeth and gums, clearing away plaque and debris. Shorter supportive bristles help brush away remaining particles.

**Nimbus®** has been professionally shown to **gently & effectively** clean better than "All other manual toothbrushes."



# Handling Dental Associate Agreements: A Practice Owner's Guide

As a dental practice owner, the proper handling of dental associate agreements is crucial to ensuring a smooth operational flow and maintaining a harmonious workplace. These agreements serve as the foundation for expectations between the practice and its associates, outlining duties, compensation, and other employment terms. Crafting a clear and comprehensive agreement is not just about legal compliance but also about protecting the interests of your practice.

At The San Mateo County Dental Society, we are here to provide the resources you need to ensure your practice runs smoothly. [Dental & Medical Counsel](#) can provide expert guidance in formulating agreements that meet both legal standards and practical business needs. Learn more about dental associate agreements below.

## Understanding the Importance of Associate Agreements in Dental Practices

Associate agreements in dental practices are vital as they clarify the terms of employment, reducing potential conflicts by setting clear expectations. These contracts help ensure that both the practice owner and the associate understand their responsibilities, compensation, and working conditions. This clarity is crucial for maintaining a positive work environment and ensuring long-term success. Furthermore, a well-drafted agreement can safeguard the practice against legal disputes by addressing compliance with state and federal employment laws.

In the world of dental care, associate agreements also adapt to changes in practice demands and dental technology advancements. They provide a framework for integrating new associates into the practice, outlining the scope of practice and any necessary conditions or restrictions. Regularly updated agreements can help your practice stay competitive and compliant, reflecting current standards and practices in dentistry. [Dental & Medical Counsel](#) can assist in ensuring that your agreements are up-to-date and reflective of both legal requirements and industry standards.

## Key Components of an Effective Associate Agreement

- **Scope of Practice:** Clearly define what procedures the associate is expected to perform. This clarity helps prevent misunderstandings and ensures the associate works within their competency levels, enhancing patient care quality.

- **Compensation Structure:** Detail how the associate will be compensated, whether through salary, hourly, or production-based incentives. This transparency helps in attracting and retaining talented associates who are clear about their earnings potential.
- **Term and Termination Conditions:** Specify the agreement's duration and the terms under which either party can terminate the contract. Such clauses are essential for protecting the practice and the associate's interests during unforeseen circumstances.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Include a mechanism for handling disputes between the associate and the practice. This can include mediation or arbitration processes, which can often resolve issues more amicably and economically than litigation.
- **Continuing Education and Professional Growth:** Encourage professional development by stipulating support for continuing education. This investment in your associates' growth can lead to improved practice services and enhanced patient satisfaction.

### **Legal Considerations for Drafting Associate Agreements**

When drafting [associate agreements](#), it is essential to ensure compliance with local and federal employment laws. This includes provisions for overtime, leave entitlements, and termination procedures, protecting both the practice and its employees. In San Mateo County, staying abreast of state-specific regulations can be particularly challenging, making the expertise from Dental & Medical Counsel invaluable.

In addition, consider including non-compete clauses that protect your practice from potential competition without overly restricting the associate's future employment opportunities. Such clauses must be reasonable in scope and duration and must comply with California's legal standards.

### **How to Negotiate Fair Terms with Dental Associates**

- **Transparency in Expectations:** Start negotiations with clear, open discussions about role expectations and responsibilities. This ensures both parties are on the same page and helps build a foundation of trust.
- **Flexibility in Scheduling:** Offer flexible scheduling options as part of the negotiation. This can make your practice more attractive to potential associates looking for a work-life balance.
- **Incentives for Performance:** Consider including performance bonuses or profit-sharing schemes. These can motivate associates to contribute positively to the practice's growth and patient satisfaction.
- **Professional Development Opportunities:** Include opportunities for continuing education and specialization, which can be attractive to associates looking to advance their skills and careers.
- **Equitable Dispute Resolution Mechanisms:** Incorporate fair and impartial mechanisms to resolve disputes or disagreements that may arise, reinforcing a sense of security and fairness for both parties.

## Common Pitfalls in Associate Agreements and How to Avoid Them

- Vague Language: Avoid ambiguous terms that can lead to different interpretations. Ensure that the language used in the agreement is precise and clear to all parties involved.
- Ignoring Regulatory Changes: Stay updated on changes in [employment law](#) and industry standards. Failure to do so can result in compliance issues and legal vulnerabilities.
- Overlooking Termination Clauses: Clearly outline the conditions under which an agreement can be terminated by either party. This clarity can prevent legal disputes and ensure smoother transitions if the employment relationship ends.
- Insufficient Role Definition: Clearly define the role and duties of the associate to prevent role confusion and overlap, which can lead to dissatisfaction and inefficiency.
- Neglecting to Specify Compensation Details: Clearly delineate all compensation details, including base salary, bonuses, and any benefits, to avoid misunderstandings and potential legal issues down the road.

## Managing Expectations: Setting Clear Roles and Responsibilities

Setting clear roles and responsibilities within an [associate agreement](#) is paramount. This clarity prevents overlap and ensures that each team member understands their duties, contributing to a more efficient and harmonious workplace. Clearly defined roles help in assessing performance and providing constructive feedback based on set expectations.

In addition, delineating responsibilities can help in identifying training needs and areas for professional development. Supporting your associates in their career growth not only boosts their job satisfaction but also enhances your practice's overall quality of care. [Dental & Medical Counsel](#) can provide assistance in crafting detailed job descriptions and responsibilities tailored to your practice's needs.

## Rely on Experts To Help You Craft Fair Dental Associate Agreements

While the drafting of associate agreements might seem confusing, turning to experts like [Dental & Medical Counsel](#) ensures that your contracts are not only comprehensive but also fair and legally sound. Expertise in dental law provides an invaluable resource for San Mateo County practice owners looking to protect their operations while fostering a positive and productive work environment.



# How Dental Consultants Transform Dental Practices: While Elevating Patient Care and Business Success



By Michael Dinsio, MBA

The dental industry in 2024 is a dynamic and highly competitive field that requires not only clinical expertise but also astute business acumen. As dental practices evolve, the complexities of running a successful operation have significantly increased.

Dental practice owners are often confronted with challenges that include managing day-to-day operations, navigating the intricacies of financial management, and ensuring regulatory compliance. In such a multifaceted environment, the function of a dental practice consultant can be your secret weapon.

A dental practice consultant offers knowledge and experience tailored to address dental practices' unique needs. Consider consultants your very own professional advisor. They provide strategic guidance and support by offering another fresh, informed perspective, empowering you to prioritize exceptional patient care while maximizing business performance.

Whether you are a new practice owner looking to establish a strong foundation or an experienced professional seeking to enhance your practice's efficiency and profitability, the insights and expertise of a consultant can be transformative.

This article discusses the fundamental value and return on investment a dental practice consultant offers. We look at the scope, the skills, and the qualifications they should bring to the table. You should be aware and familiar with what makes a consultant worthwhile and a valuable asset to a dental practice. We will also examine the key services they offer, such as business development, financial management, and operational efficiency. Furthermore, we will highlight the benefits of hiring a dental consultant, including enhanced profitability, improved patient satisfaction, and streamlined operations. By the end of this article, you will have a thorough understanding of how a dental practice consultant can be a pivotal asset to your practice's success and whether or not you should consider hiring one.

## Understanding the Role of a Dental Consultant

To fully appreciate the role of a dental consultant, it is essential to delve into three aspects that define the scope of their work, the skills and qualifications they bring to the table, and the overarching significance of what they do in a dental practice.

### 1. Definition and Scope

A dental consultant is a specialized counselor who collaborates with dental practice owners and office managers to enhance various aspects of their business operations. The scope of their assignment can be expansive, so let's break it down.

1. Strategic planning for clinical efficiency
2. Implementing administrative and operational guidelines
3. Marketing & new patient acquisition
4. Team training, development & human resources
5. Regulatory compliance & risk management
6. Financial management
7. Profitability strategies and production optimization
8. Technology integration

Essentially, they serve as an invaluable resource for practice owners who aim to optimize their practices clinically and administratively while planning for sustainable growth.

### 2. Skills and Qualifications

The effectiveness of a dental practice consultant is primarily determined by their knowledge, experience, and qualifications. Consultants typically have a robust background in both dentistry and business management. Many also have years of dental practice management experience or even a degree in business administration. Additionally, they could possess certifications from reputable industry organizations, such as the American Association of Dental Office Managers (AADOM) or the Academy of Dental Management Consultants (ADMC). Although these certifications are a testament to their ambitions and dedication to the industry, it doesn't speak for the quality of their counsel or even quantify a proven track record. So look at their performance by their track record and referral base.

#### **Key skills of a dental consultant:**

- **Analytical Prowess:** The ability to analyze financial statements, operational workflows, and market trends to identify areas for improvement.
- **Communication Skills:** Proficiency in practically conveying complex information to clinical and non-clinical staff.
- **Problem-Solving Abilities:** Expertise in diagnosing issues within the practice and devising practical solutions.
- **Leadership and Training:** Capacity to lead teams and provide training that enhances staff performance and patient care.

### 3. The Value of Hiring a Dental Consultant

The value of adding a dental consultant to your practice operations cannot be overstated. In a landscape marked by stiff competition, rising operation costs, regulatory changes, and technological advancements, consultants can offer neutral and objective strategic insight. Dental consultants help practice owners make better well-informed decisions to drive growth, enhance patient satisfaction, improve overall efficiency, and assist in obtaining a healthy work-life balance.

One small example of how they can help is assisting in the implementation of team training on scheduling systems to reduce patient wait times, thereby improving the patient experience and also boosting retention rates. They can also delve into financial evaluations or audits that help practice

owners manage overhead costs more effectively and enhance profitability. Moreover, by implementing SOPs or best practices, doctors can enhance team development, ensuring that every team member is aligned with the practice's goals and principles while fostering a harmonious and productive work environment.

## Key Services Offered by Dental Practice Consultants

Dental consultants provide a range of services tailored to enhancing the overall health and functionality of a dental practice. Their expertise spans various facets of business management, ensuring that dental practices do not merely survive but thrive in a competitive market. Here are some of the key services they offer, bringing tremendous value to a practice:

### Business Development

One of the primary services provided by a consultant is their keen sense of business development. This involves a strategic approach to growth, increasing the patient base, and enhancing market presence. Consultants typically perform a thorough assessment of the current market conditions and the practice's position within them. They can help craft a customized, extensive marketing plan, including community outreach programs and patient referral systems, just to name a few.

Moreover, consultants assist in identifying and seizing revenue growth opportunities, such as expanding services, incorporating new technologies, or even a planning and execution strategy for opening additional practice locations. Their aim is to create a sustainable growth trajectory that aligns with the practice's vision and goals.

### Financial Management

Financial health is crucial for the success of any business, and a dental office is no exception. Dental practice consultants offer adept financial management services to ensure a practice operates within the most profitable framework. These services can include budgeting, financial planning, and cash flow management. Consultants often conduct financial audits to identify any inefficiencies and areas for improvement.

More importantly, they can provide industry research and even help implement fee schedules, insurance negotiations, and cost management to maximize profitability. By leveraging their business and financial acumen, consultants help practice owners understand key metrics, strategies for reducing overhead costs, and ways to improve overall financial performance.

### Operational Efficiency

Operational efficiency is another critical area in which dental consultants can substantially impact a practice's performance. They can objectively analyze current workflows and administrative processes, identify bottlenecks, and implement best practices and advanced management systems. When operations are streamlined, staffing costs decrease, which is well known as the biggest culprit for overhead expenses. Consultants look for ways to enhance productivity and reduce operational costs.

Dental practice consultants also offer training and development programs for your team, ensuring everyone works together effectively and cohesively. Many minute aspects of managing a dental practice can be audited and optimized;

- Scheduling & Scheduling to goal
- Confirmation protocol

- Patient arrival & hand off protocol
- Insurance management & verification
- Complete AR management
- Record management & HIPAA
- Appointment preparedness
- Infection control & sterilization
- Hygiene standard of care
- Radiograph guidelines
- inventory & supply management
- HR management
- Team meetings & CE's
- Proper documentation and compliance
- Financial management, P&L, and Balance Sheet knowledge
- Post-treatment protocols
- Reviews, referrals, and reputation management.
- marketing endeavors and campaign tracking
- social media account management
- patient engagement using technologies

The key benefits offered by dental consultants cover all aspects of running a dental practice. Business development strategies help expand the practice's reach and patient base, financial management services ensure the practice remains profitable, and operational efficiency improvements are made. By harnessing a consultant's professional knowledge and expertise in managing these elements, practice owners can be reassured that their practice is moving in the right direction.

### Benefits of Hiring a Dental Practice Consultant

Hiring a consultant can be a pivotal decision for any dental practice aiming to elevate its performance and sustainability. These specialized partners can offer a wealth of understanding and knowledge, providing benefits that can significantly impact the practice's overall success. Here are the key advantages to consider when hiring a dental practice consultant:

#### Enhanced Profitability

One of the primary benefits of engaging a dental practice consultant is the potential for enhanced profitability. Consultants employ a comprehensive approach to analyzing the practice's financial health. They can identify cost-reduction opportunities as well as areas where revenues can be increased. For example, by implementing best practices in billing, coding, and insurance claims processing, consultants ensure that a practice maximizes its revenue potential while minimizing unnecessary expenses. This is an ongoing process, so it's critical to properly audit and evaluate a current practice's policies and procedures.

#### Improved Patient Satisfaction

Patient satisfaction is the cornerstone of a successful dental practice. A consultant can provide additional insights into improving patient experiences. They can provide an objective perspective of the current approaches and suggest enhancements. This could be as simple as streamlining scheduling and ensuring proficient, empathetic, and informative staff interactions.

Consultants frequently recommend the adoption of new technologies or systems that facilitate better communication and follow-up with patients. By focusing on patient satisfaction and increasing patient retention rates, you can focus on garnering positive reviews and attracting even more patients through word-of-mouth referrals and a positive online presence in a competitive market.

### Streamlined Operations

As mentioned, efficient operations are crucial for a smooth functioning dental practice. Dental practice consultants identify operational bottlenecks and implement solutions to streamline processes. Optimizing a dental practice involves evaluating numerous detailed tasks focused on team development, operational processes, and efficiency to ensure smooth operations. Key areas include team re-training, standardizing operational protocols, and workflow evaluation to enhance productivity and patient care. Continuous improvement can be achieved through feedback, innovation, and adherence to regulatory standards, which are essential for long-term growth and success. By ensuring that the practice runs like a well-oiled machine, consultants enable systems so that patient care is front and center with less focus on administrative hassles, all while maintaining a healthier work-life balance for everyone in the practice.

### Sustainable Growth and Development

Consultants also play a vital role in dental practices' strategic growth and development. They assist in setting long-term goals and creating actionable plans to achieve them. Whether expanding the practice, introducing new services, or entering new markets, consultants provide the expertise to navigate these complex processes. Their insights help practices make informed decisions that align with their vision and objectives. Through strategic planning, practices can grow sustainably and remain competitive in an ever-evolving industry.

### Regulatory Compliance and Risk Management

Navigating the complex landscape of healthcare regulations can be challenging for dental practices. Consultants ensure the practice is covered under all the relevant laws and regulations to avoid legal pitfalls and financial penalties. They provide guidance on compliance with HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) standards, and other regulatory requirements. Additionally, consultants help implement risk management strategies that safeguard a practice against potential liabilities. This comprehensive compliance and risk management approach provides peace of mind.

### Conclusion

Again, in the increasingly competitive field of dental care, the role of a dental practice consultant is proving indispensable. These experts bring a wealth of knowledge and experience. Their unique skill set, specialized qualifications, and real-world experience enable them to offer a comprehensive range of services that can significantly transform a dental practice.

Hiring a dental consultant can result in an array of benefits, including enhanced profitability, improved patient satisfaction, and streamlined operations. By focusing on these three key areas, consultants help practice owners simplify and optimize the complexities of business ownership, ultimately leading to a more successful and sustainable dental practice. As practice owners face numerous challenges, they can leverage the expertise of a consultant to help navigate current issues and proactively prepare for future opportunities.



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Belmont, CA 94002-2832  
(650) 654-1854

### Mike Jee, DDS, MS

97 Arch St  
Redwood City, CA 94062-1401  
(650) 364-9004

### Brenda C. Lamb Lewis, DDS, MSD

235 N San Mateo Dr Ste 100  
San Mateo, CA 94401-2672  
(650) 348-4030

### Igor Roitman, DMD, MS

625 Menlo Ave Ste 1  
Menlo Park, CA 94025-4743  
(650) 327-0625

### Joyce Y. Cheng, DDS, MS

625 Menlo Ave Ste 1  
Menlo Park, CA 94025-4743  
(650) 327-0625

### Stephen R. John, DDS

205 De Anza Blvd # 41  
San Mateo, CA 94402-3989  
(650) 430-0186

### F. Ray Moncada, DDS

2400 Westborough Blvd Ste 204  
South San Francisco, CA 94080-5413  
(650) 588-0288

### Mauricio Ronderos, DDS, MS

358 Marine Pkwy Ste 300  
Redwood City, CA 94065  
(650) 595-5083

### Kevin U. Consani, DDS, MS

228 De Anza Blvd  
San Mateo, CA 94402-3913  
(650) 697-3450

### Navid N. Knight, DDS

2400 Westborough Blvd Ste 105B  
South San Francisco, CA 94080-5412  
(650) 583-9300

### Stephen W. Nelson, DDS

235 N San Mateo Dr Ste 200  
San Mateo, CA 94401-2672  
(650) 348-7464

### Ngoc-Nhung Tran, DMD, MS

1028 Laurel St  
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Contact Nakia Brandt at [nakia@smcnds.com](mailto:nakia@smcnds.com) or [dental@hpsm.org](mailto:dental@hpsm.org)



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## Work Staff Shortages in Dentistry... What can we do?

By Michael Njo, DDS

I get calls, texts, and questions almost every day complaining, asking questions and conveying concerns about work staff shortages in the dental profession. Questions such as “Do you know any dental assistants looking for work?” “It is so hard to get great candidates for our position” “Where are all the quality team members?”

The answer is, I don’t know anyone, and this is the state of the profession. They simply aren’t out there as much, so you can stop expecting a quick fix. Specifically, the dental assisting workforce has been shattered by the pandemic, and the situation isn’t going to get better anytime soon. It will be years before dental practices recuperate and can find dental team members to round out their teams.

Many older professionals decided during the pandemic to retire and/or cut back on their workload. I spoke to a dentist recently wanting to sell his practice. In getting to know his practice, I asked him to share with me information about his team. His response was I work alone. I queried him further to clarify his response and he said, “I have no employees”. What!??? The same goes for many other dental professionals—sales forces, college and trade school instructors, office managers, and hygienists. We experienced a mass exodus, much of it to retirement. Those who stayed moved to the next level to fill vacancies and parted ways with some offices to advance their careers in another office. That left many practices short on people, with no way to find experienced individuals because they’re few and far between, and good employers are doing what they can to hang onto their good ones. In the midst of it all, many dental assisting schools closed, which helped lead to one of the biggest shortages of oral healthcare workers in a very long time.

### **What can you do about this situation?**

We are a resilient profession! You start from scratch. For instance, visit a local restaurant and find the waiter or waitress who hustles, and hire them. Visit your bank and find an employee who smiles and goes above and beyond to help you and hire them. Take a look at your patient base, find the patient everyone loves to see, and hire them. You need to look for good people and then train them! The days of interviewing, then having a second interview, then having a working interview are over. If you are lucky enough that a candidate shows up, they present well, they are trainable/coachable, are well spoken, and appear to have a “reasonable” work ethic. Hire them on the spot!!!

Is all of this a big pain? Yes, but it's what we need to do to keep moving forward. Training from scratch is not ideal because I know everyone in the office is busy, but what else can we do? The inconvenience pays off in the long run.

When you bring in someone, don't overload them. Set them up for success. Be patient! If they're an assistant, start them with small tasks in sterilization and have them shadow. You will have to lengthen your appointments to assure a positive working environment. This will allow you to explain the procedure and debrief the new team member about the appointment and about what is about to happen. The post appointment is needed to review and reflect on what went well and what to improve upon. If it's a new front desk person, find something they can accomplish quickly so they feel productive, then you can add more tasks as people grow confident. Don't overwhelm and overload anyone with information too quickly. Have constant "growth meetings" and check-ins. These interactions are designed to be purposeful, empowering and educational. This will provide opportunities to assure a successful assimilation to your practice and procedures.

I often hear from team members who say they are worked so hard and get few to no breaks and no lunch. Understandable, because generally these individuals are thrown in to an existing tough situation, most often alone with no other team or dentist support. Basically, a sink or swim mentality. They generally sink, at no fault of their own. Don't put your team through this because everyone needs a break, everybody needs support, everybody needs the feeling of success and accomplishment. We all need a few minutes each day to breathe and compose ourselves. We all need clear guidelines and clear expectations to be successful.

Have written protocols/SOPs (standard operating protocols) that team members can refer to so they don't feel lost and worried about asking too many questions. If instructions are written out, the team can refer to this often and work independently. Written protocols are the best way to keep your team on task. Team members need to know what to do and when to do it. Written protocols are the best way to convey how you want your business run.

Your protocols should be clear and concise, not too fancy or full of garbage, just easy to read. They're a huge boost for the newbies as well as for the veterans who may think they know what you want. Protocols keep team members on the same page at all times. Have your team cross trained, many hands make light work!

Finally, value your team! If they're good, hang on to them. Show appreciation, and by all means, be kind. Sounds simple, unfortunately it is not common. Team members want to work where they're valued and respected. Show your team and coworkers how much you appreciate them, and they will stay! By following these suggestions, hopefully the dental staffing shortage will not have a huge impact on you. Remember, knowledge is power. Please email me at [dentalstrategies@gmail.com](mailto:dentalstrategies@gmail.com) for any questions. I would be happy to schedule a call.

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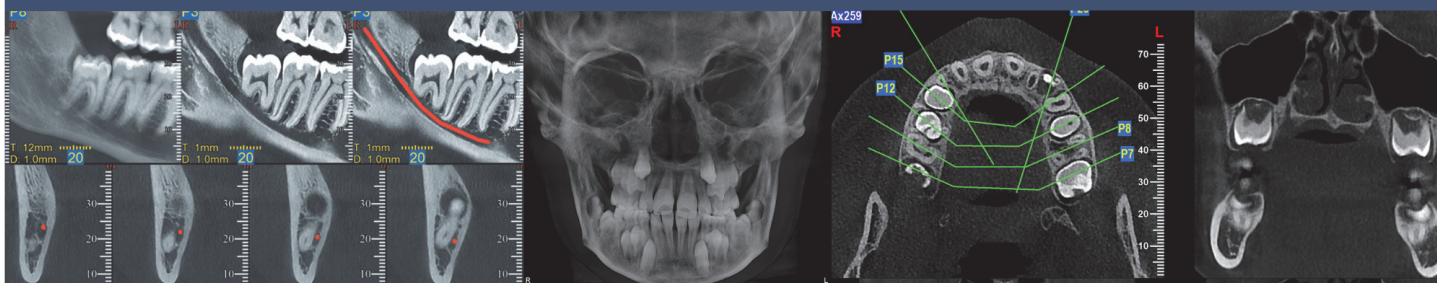
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At Hariri Financial Partners, we envision a future where financial prosperity knows no bounds. Our commitment is to empower families and individuals alike to navigate the complex financial landscape with confidence, guided by a resolute vision for a secure and flourishing future.

We believe in the relentless pursuit of financial security, where the foundations of asset protection, wealth accumulation, and strategic distribution strategies are not merely words, but the keystones of a prosperous life.

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Americo	Fidelity & Guaranty Life	First Symetra Nat'l Life Ins Co of NY	First Symetra Nat'l Life Ins Co of NY
Lincoln Financial Group	MassMutual Ascend Life Ins. Co.	EquiTrust Life Ins. Co.	National Integrity Life Ins.
Athene IA	Nationwide Life Ins. Co.	North American Company	Protective Life
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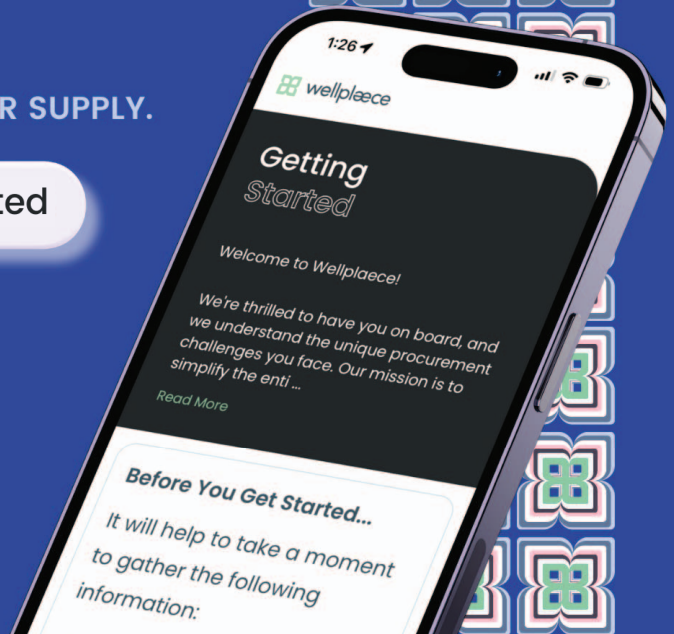
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To learn more about how you can uplift low-income and uninsured members of our community, contact Jenny Saba, Associate Director of Volunteers & Engagement at [jsaba@samaritanhousesanmateo.org](mailto:jsaba@samaritanhousesanmateo.org) or call 650-523-0819.

**Fr 10/4 Required CE Infect Ctrl & CA Dent Pract Act - OSHA-Bloodborne Pathogens**

**LIVE Webinars**

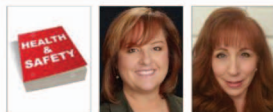
8:15a-12:30p  
IC & CDPA

**4 CE (Core)**

1:00p-2:00p  
OSHA-BBP

**1 CE (Core)**

**For staff too!**



**Melodi Randolph,**  
RDAEF2, CDA, OAP, BS, MEd

**Julie Rodriguez,**  
RDA, CDA

**Course Description**

The Dental Board of California requires all licensed dental professionals (DDS, DMD, RDA, RDH, etc.) to take approved CE courses in Infection Control and California Dental Practice Act every two years for license renewal. Cal-OSHA requires employers to provide training in Bloodborne Pathogens, Hazard Communication, General Safety, and Emergency Response to occupationally exposed employees upon hire and at least annually thereafter (refer to your Exposure Control Plan to identify occupationally exposed employees). These three courses are packed with practical information in an enjoyable atmosphere. Bring the whole office for a productive day of learning and fun.

**Fr 10/11 Hands-On Workshop TMD & Sleep Apnea Hands-On Workshop**

9:00am-2:00pm

**SMCDS Seminar Room**  
939 Laurel Ste C  
San Carlos

Breakfast &  
Lunch Included

**4.5 CE (Core)**



**Chris Chui, DDS, MAGD**

**Learning Objectives**

Understand the basics of Dental Sleep Medicine and TMJ issues associated with general dentistry. Be involved with these medical conditions which can only be treated by dental treatments.

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**New Topic!**

**We 10/16 Practice Management Combatting Day to Day Insurance Problems**

6:30-8pm

**LIVE Webinar**

**1.5 CE (Core)**

**For staff too!**



**Benjamin Tuinei**

**Course Description**

While the vast majority of doctors despise how insurance carriers treat them, it is a known fact that the insurance industry has done a fantastic job at spreading rumors that you (the doctors) need them more than they need you. It is a common misconception that if you drop an insurance plan you will lose all patients that have that insurance. This lie has been perpetuated by the insurance industry as we've observed thousands of dental practices terminate their agreements while still retaining patients who have that particular insurance plan. This course is designed to teach doctors and their teams on how to eliminate restrictive in-network contracts in a way that influences a high patient retention rate. This course unveils the history of how dental insurance plans gained so much control over the dental industry and how an individual dentist can free herself/himself from insurance control.

**Tu 10/29 Professional Success Year-end Tax Tips for Dentists**

6-8:30pm

**SMCDS Seminar Room**  
939 Laurel Ste C  
San Carlos

Dinner  
Included



**Laura Phillips**

**Course Description**

This seminar provides dentists with actionable year-end tax strategies that can be immediately implemented to reduce tax liabilities for 2024. Participants will learn tried-and-true techniques along with lesser-known strategies to optimize their strategic business and personal tax planning and to maximize tax savings.

