



Benesch DSO Industry Report—Q1

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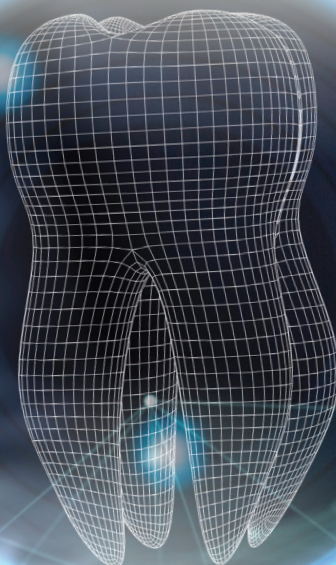
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1. Dental Service Organization News

Emerging DSOs should consider tangible, intangible issues before growing too quickly: Expert

Chris Salierno, DDS, chief editor of Dental Economics, discusses consolidation in the dental industry, and advises practices looking to add more offices to listen to dentists who have been there before. He points out that currently 8.8% of U.S. dentists are affiliated with a DSO and that there's noticeable DSO growth on the macroeconomic level as measured by the number of dentists and locations. On a microeconomic level, he says an individual DSO or multipractice group might want to make sure that their current house is in order first. Salierno says most group practices are faced with challenges such as losing money on marketing, insufficient new patients, patient no-shows, recruitment and retention issues and low associate production. He says large DSOs have the financial footing to support a poor performing location, but small DSOs may not, adding that it's as important to monitor intangible issues

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1. Dental Service Organization News *(continued)*

such as “esprit de corps” (e.g., patient satisfaction surveys, online reviews, decreased associate turnover, etc.) as much as metrics such as EBITA. In [another piece](#), Salierno says multipractice owners and managers of DSOs can find themselves surrounded by a whole new set of silos, and recommends they merge their practices and get rid of such silos. He contends that those acquiring independent small businesses and merging them into the existing collective face the challenge of integrating equipment, hardware and software, and that failure to replace the practice management and imaging software inadvertently creates silos by hampering practices’ ability to share information. Salierno [also shared](#) his take on independently owned dental practices as well as DSOs and the trend toward multipractice growth. He says entrepreneurial dentists are increasingly grouping multiple practices together while DSOs are expanding through de novo offices and acquisitions. He says the trend is no cause for alarm for independent practitioners, believing the business model is alive and well. For those interested in trading chair time for executive duties, Salierno says the time is ripe, with experts and resources available to help grow from one practice to many.

DentistryIQ on Dec. 17, 2019, Jan. 15, 2020; Dental Economics on Nov. 1, 2019

NADG co-founder says DSO is thriving

Dr. Andrew Matta, the cofounder of DSO North American Dental Group, says the DSO focuses on setting its own culture and empowering the doctors it partners with. NADG continues to grow since relocating to New Castle in 2011. Matta says what makes NADG unique is that it keeps a traditional patient experience, and works to ensure that the dentists it works with become partners in their company, making NADG doctor-led. NADG now employs 247 people at its resource center in the city, and has partnered with more than 200 dental practices in 11 states. Since moving to New Castle, NADG has invested more than \$2 million to refurbish the space and to develop it into a corporate space for team members. Jacobs Holdings bought out two investors to purchase equity with NADG in August, and Matta said it chose Jacobs Holdings because its charitable arm—the Jacobs Foundation —is focused on youth and child development, and has partnered with Carnegie Mellon to study child and youth development.

New Castle News Nov 15, 2019

North American Dental Group expands in Texas, W. Va., Md., Pa., N.Y., N.J. with practice affiliations

North American Dental Group [added](#) two practices in Texas—6 Day Dental and East Texas Dental Group—to its group of affiliated dental practices. Both practices offer general and family dentistry and orthodontic care, with multiple offices in Texas. 6 Day Dental has three offices, while East Texas Dental Group has one. NADG also [expanded](#) into West Virginia and Maryland by affiliating with Meridian Dental Specialists, which supports 10 offices across Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia that operate under the names Endodontic Associates of Maryland, MMS Dental Implants & Periodontics, MMS Endodontic Specialists, Monument Endodontics & Periodontics, Monument Periodontics, and Parkersburg Endodontics. NADG also [expanded](#) its presence in New York by affiliating with three-practice Scarsdale Oral Surgery, which provides oral and maxillofacial surgical care, [as well as](#) New York's Kaye Dentistry and Personal Care Dental of Westchester, which have offices in New York City and Scarsdale that provide reconstructive, cosmetic and implant dental services. Lastly, NADG [also added](#) New Jersey's Palisades Oral Surgery, a practice providing oral and maxillofacial surgical care in Fort Lee, N.J., to its group of affiliated dental practices.

North American Dental Group on Nov. 16, Nov. 18, 2019, Jan. 7, Jan. 13, Jan. 20, 2020

Aspen Dental opens 800th office as de novo growth continues; quadruples Chicago office space; opens several practices in dental shortage areas

Aspen Dental, a branded network of dental offices supported by DSO Aspen Dental Management, opened its 800th office in the U.S. with a location in Southern Pines, N.C. Aspen says nine new Aspen Dental offices are to set to open across seven states: Fayetteville, Ga.; Kansas City and Lawrence, Ka.; Canton and Royal Oak, Mich.; Kansas City, Mo.; Lincoln, Neb.; Southern Pines, N.C. and Mechanicsville, Va. Aspen says a new office opens every four days, with an estimated 25,000 patients receiving care every day and nearly 12,000 team members across the country. Aspen Dental says its growth is entirely de novo, with every office built rather than via acquisition. In January 2020, Aspen Dental [quadrupled](#) office space in Chicago, leasing 200,000 square feet as part of plans to expand its workforce. The company signed a lease for nearly half of a 19-story office building under construction at 800 W. Fulton Market. The DSO said in 2018 it would bring roughly 250 jobs to Chicago. The building is slated to open in spring 2021. Aspen Dental also opened practices in dental shortage areas in four states: It [announced plans](#) to open a practice in Mount Pleasant, S.C., [an office](#) in Laveen, Ariz., [another](#) practice in Georgetown, Texas, and [another](#) in Tulsa Hills, Okla.

Related:

Aspen Dental signs one of Fulton Market's biggest leases yet—Connect Chicago
Big lease, with room for 1,000+ workers, signed in Fulton Market—Chicago Tribune
Hanley Investment Group arranges sale of new two-tenant Aspen Dental and T-Mobile in Chicago Metro Area to California buyer—Chicago Daily Herald

Aspen Dental on Nov. 7, Dec. 2, Dec. 5, Dec. 19, 2019, Jan. 23, Jan. 29, 2020

1. Dental Service Organization News *(continued)*

[Aspen Dental opens practices in dental shortage areas in four states](#)

New York-based Aspen Dental said it plans to open a practice in Mount Pleasant, S.C., a dental health professional shortage area. The practice will provide comprehensive dental care, including dentures, preventive care and restoration. Aspen Dental [also said](#) it would open an office in Laveen, Ariz., another dental health professional shortage area. The practice will provide both preventative and restorative services. It also [planned to open](#) a practice in Georgetown, Texas, another dental health professional shortage area. The practice will provide comprehensive dental care, including dentures, preventive care and restoration. Aspen [also announced](#) plans to open a practice in Tulsa Hills, Okla., a dental health professional shortage area. The practice will provide comprehensive dental care, including dentures, preventive care and restoration.

Aspen Dental on Nov. 7, Dec. 2, Dec. 5, 2019, Jan. 23, 2020

[Heartland Dental becomes first DSO to pass 1,000 supported office mark](#)

Heartland Dental announced that it became the first DSO in the U.S. to support more than 1,000 offices, with 1,600 dentists across 37 states. The milestone was reached through its affiliation with Miami Lakes Cosmetic Dentistry, which became the 208th Heartland-supported dental office in Florida. Heartland Dental is majority owned by KKR, a leading global investment firm.

Related:

[DSO hits 1,000 practice milestone—Setting a new record for the industry](#)—GroupDentistryNow

Heartland Dental on Dec. 10, 2019

[Pacific Dental Services opens 11 practices in one day to surpass 800-practice milestone; expands to Illinois](#)

Pacific Dental Services (PDS) just surpassed the 800th supported dental practice milestone with its announcement that it opened 11 PDS-supported practices on Dec. 31, 2019. The 800th supported practice, Lake Barcroft Dental Group, is located in Alexandria, Virginia. Its support services network is now present in 22 states. The 11 practices that opened at year-end are located in Arizona, Colorado, Florida (2), New Mexico, South Carolina, Texas (3), Virginia and Washington. PDS also [expanded](#) into Illinois with the opening of its first supported dental practice in the state. The PDS-supported office in Fairview Heights, Fairview Heights Dentistry, will provide CEREC CAD/CAM same-day dentistry, digital x-rays, laser, online scheduling, and the VELscope Enhanced Oral Assessment System, among other technologies at the forefront of oral and whole-body health care. The expansion means PDS' network of supported practices now spans 22 states.

Related:

[DSO opens 11 practices in one day and surpasses 800th supported dental practice milestone](#)—GroupDentistryNow

Pacific Dental Services on Nov. 12, Dec. 31, 2019

Illinois DSO develops career portal to help recruit employees

Tru Family Dental, a network of practices throughout Illinois and Michigan, partnered with Fruition to launch a [career portal](#) to help recruit and attract talent, according to a statement. The portal simplifies application processes to make it easier for practices to hire dentists, hygienists and other staff. Users can search for jobs based on location and position.

Becker's Dental + DSO Review on Nov. 25, 2019

42 North Dental enters N.Y. with practice affiliation

Massachusetts-based DSO 42 North Dental added Browne, Goetz & Miraglia in Westchester County, N.Y., to its portfolio of supported practices, marketing its first affiliation in N.Y. The DSO has grown to 74 supported practices and continues to expand with de novo practices and its acquisition strategy.

42 North Dental on Dec. 18, 2019

Dental365 acquires four Gentle Dental offices, opens 44th location

New York-based DSO Dental365 opened its 44th location and announced the acquisition of four Gentle Dental offices. The deal will see seven Gentle Dental dentists from offices in Long Island join the DSO. Dental365 practices are open seven days a week, including weekends and holidays, and offer 24-hour emergency dental care.

Becker's Dental + DSO Review on Jan. 17, 2020

Envista anticipates growth in business from DSOs

During its Q4 earnings call, Envista Holdings, a global family of three companies and more than 30 dental brands, explained that 2019 was a transformative year where it became a fully independent company and added to its portfolio through its first acquisition of Germany's Matricel. Envista says it will continue to invest and expand capabilities as it anticipates demand for the Spark clear aligner system, made by its Ormco subsidiary, will ramp up throughout the year. Envista adds that it's encouraged by its progress with DSOs as it has a team dedicated to helping these professionals grow their businesses and practices, and expand in the specialty procedures of orthodontics and implants to provide broader clinical services and capture a larger share of their customer spending. It says sales growth was more than 10% at the top 10 DSOs collectively in 2019, and believes DSO customers will look to boost their volume over the next several years.

The Motley Fool on Jan. 31, 2020

Elite Dental Partners works with EDMS to centralize data for affiliated practices

Elite Dental Partners, a DSO with 111 locations with more than 1,300 employees in 13 states, says its recent growth has been combined with a focus on the development of infrastructure to streamline support functions and provide tools for operational teams in the field. To help affiliated services, it partnered with Canada-based [Enterprise Dental Management Systems](#) (EDMS) to build an analytical toolbox to help integrate various patient management systems (PMS), data warehousing and reporting for measuring business performance. Elite says DSOs need to choose a technology partner that is flexible to support the changing needs of a growing organization to add new reports, analytical tools, or integrations with third-party solutions. Elite adds that EDMS allows it to integrate data from cloud-based systems and serves as its data bridge as the DSO transitions its offices to one single cloud-based PMS.

GroupDentistryNow on Jan. 7, 2020

1. Dental Service Organization News *(continued)*

Smile Brands opens its first Aspire Dental-affiliated practice

Irvine, Calif.-based Smile Brands opened its first Aspire Dental office, located in Irvine. The practice offers patients general dentistry, orthodontics, Invisalign, oral surgery, periodontics, endodontics and implants. With the new opening, Smile Brands is offering patients a \$59 check-up package, which includes an exam with oral cancer screening and digital X-rays. Smile Brands supports more than 440 affiliated practices throughout 18 states.

Smile Brands on Nov. 19, 2019

Schulman Study Group reforms as member-owned orthodontic DSO SSG Management

The former Schulman Study Group has re-formed as a DSO known as SSG Management (SG). The organization is independently and equally owned by its members. Collectively, the 134 SG members have 282 practice locations and annual revenues of \$400 million. Each member contracts for non-clinical services to create efficiencies and cost savings for his/her independently owned practice. By changing from a study group to a DSO, SG seeks to offer benefits such as competitive pricing on c-suite level practice services to a greater number of members. Its website offers information for orthodontists who are interested in becoming members, and companies looking to offer their products and services to SG-member orthodontists can learn about the Preferred Supplier Program and meeting sponsorship opportunities. As a DSO, SG will consider business opportunities to boost its growth in areas such as expanding orthodontic practices, along with investment in the buying and selling of orthodontic practices.

GroupDentistryNow on Nov. 12, 2019

Dental Care Alliance announces formation of the USMILE Foundation

Dental Care Alliance formed the USMILE Foundation based upon DCA shared values to unleash potential, serve first, move forward, improve lives, lead together and expect excellence. The Foundation is grounded in the principles to serve first by providing dental healthcare services and education for communities and individuals in need.

Benzinga on Dec. 29, 2019

USOSM affiliates with two surgery practices in Atlanta

Texas-based U.S. Oral Surgery Management partnered with two oral and maxillofacial surgery practices, expanding its footprint. USOSM teamed up with Atlanta-based Peachtree Dunwoody Oral & Facial Surgery, and with the Metropolitan Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Associates, also in Atlanta. USOSM supports affiliated oral and maxillofacial surgeons in six states: Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Minnesota, Tennessee and Texas.

U.S. Oral Surgery Management on Jan. 6, 2020

2. Mergers and Acquisitions

PE-owned Smile Brands narrows auction to handful of suitors

Mergermarket reports that the auction for Gryphon Investors-backed dental practice management group Smile Brands has narrowed down to a few potential buyers in the second round of its sale process. Private equity firms Apax Partners and TSG Consumer Partners appear to be the front-runners, though Advent International and Harvest Partners, which owns Dental Care Alliance, are still in the process. Smile Brands has more than 425 affiliated dental offices across 17 states. It has been a portfolio company of Gryphon Investors since 2016, when it bought the company from Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe (WCAS).

Mergermarket on Nov. 27, 2019

MB2 Dental acquires Arizona DSO CORE Dental Partners

Texas-based MB2 Dental purchased Arizona's CORE Dental Partners, which comprises 17 dental practices, including six pediatric offices, operated by 11 dentists. The deal is MB2 Dental's largest transaction, allowing the DSO to expand into Arizona. By the end of 2019, MB2 Dental expected to be affiliated with 79 new dental practices throughout the U.S. Financial terms weren't disclosed.

M2B Dental on Dec. 10, 2019

MB2 Dental added 79 affiliated practices in 2019, aims to add 21 more in Q1 2020

Texas-based MB2 Dental said 2019 was its most successful fiscal year, adding 79 affiliated dental practices through the year. The dental partnership organization (DPO) expanded into Arizona, Florida, Kansas and Missouri to total 192 affiliated practices across 12 states. Since partnering with private equity firm Sentinel Capital Partners in 2017, the DPO has more than doubled in size. MB2 expects to add another 21 locations in Q1 of 2020, including three new states: Connecticut, Georgia and Illinois.

MB2 Dental on Jan. 10, 2020

Consulting firm labels Chicago DSO Webster Dental Care a 'strategic buy'

Aptus Exchange, a healthcare brokerage and advisory firm, has deemed Webster Dental Care, a Chicago-based DSO, a strategic buy for dental practices. Aptus believes Webster Dental Care is expected to see rapid growth in 2020. Aptus has helped Webster Dental Care grow from supporting seven practices to 12 in the Chicagoland area within the past 24 months. The dentist-owned DSO plans to grow in 2020 through capital investment, acquisitions and de novo expansion.

Aptus Exchange on Jan 14, 2020

2. Mergers and Acquisitions *(continued)*

Marquis Dental acquires dental practice in Pennsylvania

Marquis Dental, doing business as Villanova Dental Group, acquired Joseph R. Greenberg, D.M.D., P.C., an esthetic and restorative dental practice located in Villanova, Pennsylvania. The practice will provide “more office hours, additional emergency coverage, attractive pricing on numerous services, as well as additional dental services, including root canal, sleep apnea and snoring treatments.”

North America Legal Chronicle on Jan. 7, 2020

Banking expert details considerations for dentists eyeing group practice model

Dan Croft, head of Healthcare Practice Solutions Group at TD Bank, points to a [recent survey](#) showing that dental professionals are optimistic about the future of the profession, with many interested in forming or becoming part of a group practice. Among dentists, 84% anticipated purchasing, buying into, merging, or selling their practices soon, with 42% expecting this within the next four years. Dentists were found to be more eager than other practitioners to maintain ownership of their businesses rather than be absorbed by large DSOs. Croft looks at how dentists can balance independence and scale their businesses, adding that many dentists who want to maintain ownership are eyeing group dental practices to improve economies of scale, cash flow and flexibility to cater to patient needs. These practices are designed to better compete with the corporate DSO model. He describes scalability, reduced costs and additional resources as the benefits of group practices, adding that younger practice owners are trending toward the group practice model, while dentists were found to be the most likely medical group to sell their practices through a transition specialist or practice broker when they retire. Of the 97% of dentists who plan to sell their practices, 63% believe there will be barriers to maximizing sale price, such as a limited buyer pool (29%), buyer financing (26%), and low appraised value (21%). Croft also looks at several group practice considerations: practice expansion and relocations, business processes, and a centralized management team.

DentistryIQ on Nov. 12, 2019

Executech acquires dental IT provider Pact-One

IT service provider Executech acquired Pact-One, an IT provider specializing in dental IT solutions serving dental clients in the Las Vegas, San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco Bay areas. Pact-One will operate independently with added support from Executech. Executech says Pact-One clients and employees will benefit from an added geographical reach, more training and technical resources for employees, and access to expanded technology solutions such as cybersecurity and cloud services.

Executech on Jan. 28, 2020

Colgate acquires ‘naturally friendly’ company Hello Products to appeal to younger generations

Colgate-Palmolive Co. signed a definitive agreement to acquire Hello Products, an oral care company known for its “naturally friendly” products that appeal to younger consumers. Hello has developed toothpaste, mouth rinse, toothbrushes and floss sold only in the U.S. Hello founder Craig Dubitsky and CEO Lauri Kien Kotcher will continue to lead the company. Financial terms weren’t disclosed.

Colgate-Palmolive on Jan. 23, 2020

3. Private Equity

PE firm Evolution Capital Partners invests in Ohio DSO Empire Dental Arts

Ohio-based DSO Empire Dental Arts received an undisclosed investment from PE firm Evolution Capital Partners. It plans to use the funding to expand throughout Northeast Ohio. Empire Dental Arts markets itself as a dental partnership organization that provides centralized administrative services to affiliated practices. It's looking to establish "a small-scale, patient-focused dental partnership organization in Northeast Ohio, starting with our existing four practices through which we have validated our operational best practices."

Related:

Evolution Capital Partners, raising fourth investment fund, acquires Empire Dental Arts of Mentor—Crain's Cleveland Business

Evolution Capital Partners on Jan. 6, 2020

PE firm JLL Partners looks to sell DSO American Dental Partners

JLL Partners, a New York-based middle market PE firm, is seeking a buyer for American Dental Partners approximately eight years after taking the dental practice management company private. American Dental Partners is expected to produce adjusted 2020 EBITDA in the mid-\$60 million-range. JLL acquired American Dental Partners in 2012 through a take-private transaction valued at \$392 million. The DSO serves more than 273 multi-specialty dental group practices spanning the U.S., offering operations management, financial services, organizational development, information technology.

PE Hub on Jan. 9, 2020

Texas DSO Endo1 Partners gets PE funding from Veronis Suhler Stevenson to speed growth

Texas-based specialty DSO Endo1 Partners received an undisclosed amount of funding from Veronis Suhler Stevenson, a private investment firm. The DSO supports locations in Texas and California, giving patients access to prevention services, root canals and other procedures related to the interior of the tooth. Endo1 Partners plans to use the funding to accelerate its expansion with the acquisition of different endodontic practices.

Veronis Suhler Stevenson on Dec. 10, 2019

Texas DSO Enable Dental closes funding round led by PE firm

Texas-based DSO Enable Dental closed its Series A financing round led by private equity group FCA Venture Partners leading. The DSO plans to use the funding to scale its portable dental solution. It currently provides dental services to patients in Texas, Kansas, Missouri, Colorado and California, and is focused on reaching patients in assisted living facilities, skilled nursing homes, substance abuse centers, group homes, healthcare institutions, hospitals and personal residences. Enable will also use the funding to develop technology systems and build out its team of clinicians. Financial details weren't disclosed.

Related:

A pioneering and portable dental DSO, Enable Dental, raises capital to expand—

GroupDentistryNow

Enable Dental on Jan. 21, 2020

3. Private Equity *(continued)*

Western Dental reportedly seeking financial investors

California-based Western Dental & Orthodontics is reportedly eyeing buyers, with Goldman Sachs and Deutsche Bank advising the sales process. The process is in the early stages, with management starting to give presentations. Private equity firm New Mountain first invested in the DSO in 2012. Western Dental has seen revenue grow year over year. The DSO supports more than 320 offices throughout the country, but a large portion of its revenue comes from Medicaid patients.

Related:

Western Dental opens new office in Santa Ana—Western Dental

Becker's Dental + DSO Review on Nov. 27, 2019

TUSK Partners launches “Equity Affiliation Strategies” model for group dental practice funding

Group dental practice and DSO consulting firm [TUSK Partners](#) released its “Equity Affiliation Strategies” model to address the group dental practice model’s challenge of continued access to debt funding. TUSK expects the Equity Affiliation Strategy model to improve growth for both acquisition-oriented and startup-based groups. It expects the model to be valuable for founder-owner dentists in the DSO space as they eye business growth. The model claims to reduce the reliance on overall debt-funding and emphasize earned equity through Profits Interest Units.

TUSK Partners on Nov. 12, 2019

Connecticut PE firm L Catterton invests in Brazilian dental clinic franchisor

The Latin America fund of Connecticut-based consumer-focused private equity firm L Catterton has made a strategic investment in OdontoCompany, a dental clinic franchisor in Brazil. L Catterton will partner with OdontoCompany founder and CEO Dr. Paulo Zahr and shareholder, José Carlos Semenzato to accelerate growth and expansion. Terms weren’t disclosed. OdontoCompany was expected to have 700 active dental clinics throughout Brazil by the end of 2019 offering orthodontics, dentistry, aesthetics, endodontics, implants and other services. In early 2019, it acquired a stake in Oral Sin, a franchisor of dental clinics focused on implants with more than 160 clinics. OdontoCompany’s franchises operate in all 27 Brazilian states, serving more than 800,000 patients each year. OdontoCompany says L Catterton’s support will help it expand both organically and through strategic acquisitions.

L Catterton on Nov. 6, 2019

Mexico's Moons joins Y Combinator accelerator to compete with Invisalign

Mexico-based Moons, a startup in Latin America, has joined accelerator Y Combinator. Moons already has \$5 million in financing from an international group of investors, including Jaguar Ventures, Foundation Capital and Tuesday Capital, along with individual investors from Latin America's dental community. It has 18 locations in Mexico and two in Colombia, where it expects to expand aggressively. The firm conducts free initial consults and examinations with potential patients. For suitable candidates, Moons creates a treatment plan and consultation schedule and fits them with a pair of 3D-printed aligners for around \$1,200.

TechCrunch on Jan. 27, 2020

OnPay, payroll software company used by ADA members, raises \$6M in funding round

OnPay, a payroll service provider for small businesses and accountants that serves as the exclusively endorsed payroll partner for American Dental Association members, closed a \$6-million Series A funding round. The amount surpassed its original goal of \$5 million. The Atlanta-based company provides payroll, HR, and benefits services to more than 10,000 clients across the U.S. It will use the funding to grow its team, expand its marketing efforts, improve its customer experience and product development.

OnPay on Jan. 20, 2020

Singapore dental startup Zenyum raises \$13.6M to support expansion plans

Zenyum, a Singapore-based dental startup, raised \$13.6 million in series A funding from RTP Global, Sequoia India, TNB Aura, and Enterprise Singapore's Seeds Capital, among other investors. The company plans to use the funds to expand to additional markets like Vietnam, Indonesia, and Taiwan. It currently operates in Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Thailand. Zenyum provides 3D-printed braces and offers cosmetic dental treatment, and its app can be used as touchpoint between doctors, its in-house orthodontists, and customers. The company wants to expand its offerings beyond aligners and move into retainers and teeth whitening, creating a new category of products called smile cosmetics.

TechInAsia on Nov. 27, 2019

4. Innovation & Future of Dental

[Bento rolls out app feature to allow patients to comparison shop for dental services](#)

Boston-based tech company Bento, which serves the dental insurance industry, launched a Price Check feature on its app to allow patients to compare prices for common dental procedures based on their zip code. The company has a pay-as-you-go model so individuals, families and organizations pay for services without contracting with an insurance company.

Related:

[Boston startup is bringing transparency to dental care](#)—Forbes

Bento on Nov. 5, 2019

[Candid uses AI to accelerate teeth straightening process through app. orthodontist](#)

Aligner company Candid, which sells at-home starter kits, is using artificial intelligence to speed up treatment by as much as 30%. The firm ships patients diagnosis kits and offers an app to guide patients through treatment. The standard plan takes about 32 weeks, with aligner switches every 14 days. Progress is tracked by an assigned orthodontist, either through the app or in-person at a Candid studio. Candid says its Dental Monitoring treatment plan provides AI-based remote monitoring capabilities to help connect orthodontists and remote patients. It connects with patients every seven to 10 days to ensure they are wearing aligners correctly. Patients put a cheek stretcher in their mouth and take pictures of their teeth with and without the aligners. The pictures are analyzed by AI, which sends the information to an orthodontist for further analysis. It claims that treatment for patients with Dental Monitoring takes 20% to 30% less time than those using the standard Candid program.

Related:

[Candid adds connected device to remote orthodontics](#)—MedCityNews

Forbes on Dec. 15, 2019

[Startup Pearl using AI to stop dental insurance fraud by comparing dental images](#)

California-based startup Pearl has developed artificial intelligence to help combat dental insurance fraud. Its software is based on a dataset of tens of millions of dental images, such as X-rays, three-dimensional images and intraoral photography. An insurance provider can use Pearl's machine learning tool to compare images to detect duplicates and near duplicates. The AI technology can then determine if the image matches the procedure described in the claim. Pearl claims it has identified thousands of cases of dentists using repeat X-rays or other medical images to bill insurers. Liberty Dental Plan Corp. has partnered with Pearl and says that between 17% and 20% of its claims are fraudulent.

Wall Street Journal on Jan. 24, 2020

Dental platform Dandy launches with Philly dentists to combine teledentistry, in-person care

Pennsylvania-based Dandy, a dental platform that combines in-person treatment and teledentistry, has launched in Philadelphia in what it says is in response to the lack of medical supervision in the clear aligner market. The company partnered with dentists in the city to address issues that could affect treatment. The platform lets patients book an appointment online with a local dentist for a 3D scan, X-rays and a full dental checkup. Patients then receive custom aligners within days. Dandy says most patients will see a dentist two to three times to adjust aligners or undergo procedures for optimal outcomes. Patients can also use the app to track their treatment and share progress. The service costs \$1,900, or \$88 a month until the balance is paid, and includes the initial checkup, aligners and a retainer. Dandy plans to expand nationwide in 2020.

Related:

Philadelphia startup launches new take on at-home teeth straightening—Philadelphia Business Journal

Dandy on Nov. 14, 2019

Burst works with dental professionals to develop high-tech dental floss

Los Angeles-based Burst, the subscription dental care service for toothbrushes, has added dental floss product to its monthly kits. The dental hygiene company, which has raised at least \$20 million in financing from the growth capital investment firm Volition Capital, works with a network of dental hygienists and dental professionals both as a sales channel and as a sounding board for new product development. Its sales channel includes more than 20,000 dental health professionals, and Burst shares profits with its channel partners. It has already distributed about \$3.5 million through the program. It worked with its network on its mint-eucalyptus-flavored, charcoal-coated dental floss that expands between teeth, which sells for \$12.99. Burst's floss comes in a case for replacement bobbins, which can be delivered for \$6.99 per month.

TechCrunch on Dec. 20, 2019

Startup Quip aims several product, service launches in coming months, eyes professional market

Quip, the oral care company behind the Instagram-famous toothbrush, is promising additional products and services in the professional dental care market in the next nine months. Without offering specifics, Quip wants to become a symbol of consumer trust at the dental office. Quip is expanding into professional care, with plans for "multiple launches" next year. CEO Simon Enever says Quip aims to become consumers' "full-service oral care companion," on the personal side and the professional side. Enever said Quip's offerings will expand rapidly over the next three to nine months.

Business Insider on Nov. 19, 2019

4. Innovation & Future of Dental *(continued)*

[Personal care companies focusing on oral healthcare at CES](#)

Personal care companies attending the annual CES consumer electronics fest were offering several innovation in mouth tech, including a toothbrush that uses radio frequency to send a wave of charged molecules to the tooth's surface, a "plaqueless" brush that uses optical sensors to measure film buildup on enamel, an AI toothbrush-and-app combo that identifies 16 different zones in the mouth and grades a user's hygiene with an emoji?. Consumer health companies are also developing portable water flossers, dental floss subscriptions, at-home LED whitening kits, and direct-to-consumer smile aligners. The article sees its author describe the oral care devices she was able to try at CES.

Wired on Jan. 24, 2020

[SmileDirectClub eyes Germany, Hong Kong for expansion in 2020](#)

SmileDirectClub plans to open several SmileShops in Germany in 2020, to increase its presence throughout the European Union. SmileDirectClub is [also moving](#) into Asia with the opening of two locations in Hong Kong. Its research found that about 70% of people in Hong Kong would feel more confident if they had a straighter smile, citing cost as the leading barrier to doing so. Its international footprint already includes access to 250 affiliated dentists and orthodontists in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and the U.K. In Germany, licensed German dentists will create and prescribe the clear aligners to patients.

Related:

[Fast-growing health care company expanding to Germany](#)—Nashville Business Journal

SmileDirectClub on Dec. 17, 2019, Jan. 7, 2020

[SmileDirectClub ends exclusive agreement with Align Technology, can sell aligners directly to dentists](#)

SmileDirectClub plans to sell its clear aligners directly to dentists and orthodontists through a wholesale channel, now that its exclusive supply agreement with Align Technology lapsed at the end of 2019. The company will allow dentists and orthodontists to enroll in an in-office option this year. It says it will support the distribution through its manufacturing operation in Antioch, Tennessee, along with a second manufacturing facility being built in Texas to meet increasing demand.

Related:

[SmileDirectClub and Align Technology ending partnership in 2020](#)—The Motley Fool

[SmileDirectClub to compete with Invisalign by selling aligners to dentists, orthodontists](#)—USA Today

SmileDirectClub on Jan. 14, 2020

New clear aligner company hits the market

The dental industry welcomed another clear aligner provider in November. Two industry leaders partnered to launch Clear Blue Smiles. Co-located in St. Louis and Northern Virginia, Clear Blue Smiles was founded by Kevin Dillard, former general counsel of the American Association of Orthodontists, and William Crutchfield, DDS, a leading orthodontist.

Becker's Dental and DSO Review on Dec. 9, 2019

Weave rolls out payment platform for dental practices

Weave, a Utah-based startup, debuted Weave Payments, a full-scale payment processing platform for small and medium-sized businesses. The platform joins Weave's telephone-based practice management software, which aims to help service-based businesses like dental practices grow and retain patients by managing patient communications. Weave Payments includes features such as Text to Pay, fast-processing terminals and mobile wallets, with the goal of reducing back-end paperwork and reporting. The features allow for dental practices to accept all commonly used forms of payment in a convenient and easy manner. Weave's platform is currently used by over 13,000 businesses.

Weave on Dec. 3, 2019

Curve Dental launches platform to allow dentists to send prescriptions from device to pharmacy, partners to offer members discounted pricing

Utah-based dental software provider Curve Dental upgraded its cloud platform to allow dentists to send a new prescription or renewal to pharmacies from any digital device. Curve partnered with DrFirst to allow its cloud-based dental practice management platform to manage electronic prescriptions, write and send prescriptions and ensure compliance with specific state regulations. The platform displays commonly prescribed medications based on historical prescribing behaviors, reducing the need to search for drugs and human error. Curve Dental also [partnered](#) with The Dentists Supply Company (TDSC), an online dental supply company, to provide discounted pricing for TDSC shoppers and Curve customers. The companies say the agreement could save buyers up to 24% off MSRP. They add that combining Curve's practice-management software with TDSC's dental supply savings allows dental practices to compete with DSOs by lowering overhead costs while using better technology, enhancing the patient experience, maximizing data security and improving profitability through cloud technology.

Curve Dental on Nov. 19, Dec. 2, 2019

Competitive Health, The TeleDentists partner to expand virtual dental care

Virtual dental care provider The TeleDentists partnered with digital health solution supplier Competitive Health to allow patients to access to board-certified dentists via mobile or desktop devices. Patients will be able to access services such as oral health risk assessments, preventive treatment and urgent consultations in real time. If needed, follow-up appointments are scheduled. The firms believe the offering can reduce the burden of expensive ER visits and taking time off of work.

Competitive Health on Jan. 7, 2020

4. Innovation & Future of Dental *(continued)*

[The TeleDentists, VSee partner on telehealth platform for virtual dental care](#)

The TeleDentists partnered with VSee to develop teledentistry services that will use the VSee telehealth platform and video communications. The TeleDentists will provide virtual dental care including oral health risk assessment, prevention, and urgent dental consultations. The offering will allow individuals to access to dental care, pointing to research that shows can reduce healthcare costs by 17%. The TeleDentists' programs include:

- Dental Second Opinions, allowing patients to consult with specialists on a proposed dental treatment;
- The Education Center, allowing users to discuss products and home care with dental hygienists; and
- Smile Survey to see how a patient's smile scores from 1-10.

The TeleDentists on Nov. 13, 2019

[Western Dental launches its own aligner](#)

California-based Western Dental & Orthodontic rolled out its own orthodontic aligner, ClearArc, made from plastic or acrylic material. The aligners are meant to help patients with crowded teeth or spacing issues. Western Dental began offering ClearArc at its 233 California practices in January, and will become available to practices in Texas, Arizona and Nevada beginning in February.

Western Dental on Jan. 17, 2020

[TUSK Partners releases podcast series on group dental practices](#)

Group dental practice and DSO consulting firm TUSK Partners launched a podcast series, "[Group Dental Practice Fundamentals](#)," that is aimed at entrepreneurial dentists who are looking to learn how to grow and exit their business. The podcast complement TUSK's educational content-driven marketing strategy.

TUSK Partners on Jan. 9, 2020

[MedLoyalty offers dental practices platform to build membership programs, alternative payment models](#)

Florida-based MedLoyalty launched a platform designed to help dentists build a subscription-based, in-house membership program as an alternative to insurance. The offering lets dentists offer their own pay structure for dental services, with a focus on making care more convenient and affordable for patients with or without dental insurance. MedLoyalty is seeking practices to test the platform at no cost and report back on patient and employee experiences.

MedLoyalty on Jan. 21, 2020

North Carolina dentist rolls out membership programs to improve patient experience

A newly opened dental practice in Whitsett, N.C., is offering patients membership programs. LTR Dental allows patients to make appointments on Saturdays, providing patients cleanings, exams, X-rays, crowns, implants, fillings, Invisalign, whitening and more. Patients have the option of enrolling in a \$25 per-month membership to get two cleanings and one exam per year. Necessary X-rays are included in the fee, along with 20% off other services. For \$40 per month, patients have the added benefit of all necessary emergency exams, along with \$240 in credits to be used for treatments. The fee for pediatric members is \$20 per month, and includes two cleanings and exams a year as well as two fluoride treatments, all necessary emergency exams and 20% off other services.

BlueRidgeNow on Nov. 17, 2019

Regenstrief Institute, Indiana University School of Dentistry develop dental informatics program to improve oral health

With the aim of improving oral health for better overall physical and emotional health, Regenstrief Institute and Indiana University School of Dentistry are setting up a dental informatics program that is linked to a clinical data repository managed by a regional health information exchange. The partnership plans to establish a research agenda that implements its findings in dental offices and other points of care to improve oral disease prevention and treatment. The program will use both electronic dental and medical record data to develop interoperable databases and further knowledge of oral health problems that cause, co-occur with or result from medical conditions.

Regenstrief Institute on Nov. 12, 2019

Delta Dental of Michigan invests in startup that uses gamification to support healthy lifestyles

Delta Dental of Michigan is investing in LVLFi, a startup that aims to empower and encourage healthy lifestyles among employees. The U.K.-based startup's founder, Alex DeVoto, graduated from the Lansing Economic Area Partnership's (LEAP) inaugural PROTO InsurTech accelerator program. Delta Dental partnered with the newest vertical of LEAP-owned subsidiary PROTO Accelerator, PROTO InsurTech, as one of its founding corporate partners. Delta Dental will pilot LVLFi with select employees in 2020, with an organization-wide launch planned for 2021. LVLFi uses gamification and behavioral economics through mobile apps and games for the insurance industry with the goal of lowering claim rates and costs for health and life insurers.

Delta Dental of Michigan on Dec. 6, 2019

Henry Schein partners with Ivoclar Vivadent on wireless milling system

Henry Schein partnered with Ivoclar Vivadent AG to distribute the latter's PrograMill One Milling System, a wireless milling system that allows the mill to be placed anywhere in a dental practice. The system does not require separate filtration or suction units. The agreement will see Ivoclar Vivadent supply the milling system in the first half of 2020. Financial terms weren't disclosed.

Henry Schein on Dec. 1, 2019

4. Innovation & Future of Dental *(continued)*

DSOConnection.com offers brokerage services without commission

[DSO Connection](#) is promoting itself as an alternative to dental brokers. Traditionally, brokers facilitate the buying and selling of a dental practices by handling administrative tasks, negotiating sales, and guiding dentists through the buying and selling processes. Brokers often charge commission fees of ranging from 6% to 10% or more for their service. DSO Connection says it provides comparable services without charging commissions for purchasing or for selling practices. DSO Connection acts as a meeting point for dentists and buyers.

DSO News on Nov. 6, 2019

Florida dentist replaces sedation with virtual reality headset to improve patient experience

The owner of Fort Myers, Florida-based Gulf Coast Advanced Dentistry hopes to improve patient experience by using virtual reality tools instead of sedation. The practice started using Opera VR, a wireless headset system designed for dental settings. Opera VR is meant to provide a relaxing audio and visual experience for patients to ease pain or anxiety. Studies have found virtual reality can be as effective as a mild opioid to manage pain.

WZVN-TV on Jan. 15, 2020

Nashville dental practice coordinates family appointments to improve patient convenience

Nashville-based Belle Meade Family Dentistry says it is stacking appointments to help families coordinate busy schedules. The practice, which provides both adult and pediatric dental services, offers minimally invasive periodontal care, dental implants, orthodontics and cosmetic dentistry for teens and adults.

Belle Meade Family Dentistry on Dec. 4, 2019

Benco, Dental Intelligence collaborate to help practices grow with better insights

Dental Intelligence, which helps dental practices use data to improve patient care, team collaboration and practice profitability, has partnered with Benco Dental, an independent dental distributor, [to help dentists](#) “do more and even better dentistry, more efficiently.” Dental Intelligence connected to a dental practice’s management software, analyzes, automates, finds opportunities and communicates. Tools used include:

- Morning Huddle: An automated presentation that in 15 minutes unites the dental team with clear and measurable goals, reviews past, present and future, celebrates victories and creates teaching moments;
- Call Insight: A smart caller ID that improves patient experience and displays valuable patient opportunities; and
- Today’s Follow Ups: A daily communication assistant that auto-generates call lists for appointment confirmations, hygiene re-care and unscheduled treatment.

Dental Tribune USA on Dec. 21, 2019

OMS Logistics offers DSOs mobile oral surgery service platform to help prepare for anesthesia

Tennessee-based OMS Logistics (OMSL) has developed a mobile delivery system for surgical services and general anesthesia in the dental industry. The platform uses cloud computing and an anesthesia information management system (AIMS) to offer capabilities also seen in hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers. Practices can use the technology to medically screen outpatient encounters for appropriateness for general anesthesia before the day of the appointment. The platform captures physiologic data in a cloud-based database to allow OMSL to monitor patient safety. OMSL contends that the value-add of its platform is that it uses a team of surgeons to service a dental network and can provide multiple specialists, allowing dental practices to have predictable surgical days per month and still have coverage when a surgeon is not available. It contends that DSOs can use this approach to insure patient access and rapid implementation. OMSL says it serves 31 offices, three large DSOs and multiple states. OMSL is also collaborating with [Cornerstone Dental of California](#), a specialty DSO providing endodontic services to large group practices.

OMS Logistics on Nov. 26, 2019

HR for Health, Henry Schein partner to provide dental practices with ways to simplify HR, payroll

Henry Schein, a solutions company for health care professionals, signed an exclusive business relationship with HR for Health, a SaaS human resources software for private health care practices, to help doctors reduce employment compliance risk and simplify HR management. Henry Schein Business Solutions, which offers dentists resources for business operations, finance, marketing, education, training and more, and HR for Health's HR and compliance software will provide doctors with [offerings](#) to improve practice ownership, including team performance management, new patient flow, operations, payroll processing, and complying with employment laws.

HR for Health on Jan. 30, 2020

Henry Schein teams up with UPS for drone delivery

Henry Schein partnered with UPS to explore drone deliveries. The two companies will test unmanned aerial vehicles for business-to-business functions. Henry Schein will begin testing the drone delivery service some time in 2020, with focus on exploring the transport of essential healthcare products to customers. UPS Flight Forward has oversight from the Federal Aviation Administration. Working with Henry Schein, the two will explore the possibilities of delivering products to health campuses, remote communities or temporarily inaccessible areas.

Becker's Dental and DSO Review on Jan. 30, 2020

Cosmedent launches new proprietary rock resin cement at the 2019 GNYDM

Cosmedent's New ROCK Resin Cement is a dual-cure, self-adhesive resin cement used for the permanent cementation of ceramics, zirconia, lithium disilicate and metal-based restorations. With its proprietary setting technology, ROCK resin cement sets faster and more completely than other self-adhesive cements. Its thin film makes it easier to seat restorations without the hassle of occlusal adjustments related to thicker cement layers.

DSO News on Nov. 25, 2019

4. Innovation & Future of Dental *(continued)*

Formlabs launches new dental business unit

3D printing company Formlabs created a new dental-focused business unit. Formlabs Dental will use the new Form 3B printer and its associated platform, which comes with a new range of dental materials, a service team and software to help streamline workflows. The printer can be used to create numerous dental applications, including dentures, retainers, surgical guides, splints, casting and pressing patterns, crown and bridge models and diagnostic models.

Verdict on Nov. 12, 2019

5. Dental Practice News

TUSK Partners' 2019 State of the Dental Economy looks at PE interest, new groups, big transactions

TUSK Partners released its 2019 State of the Dental Economy report, pointing to change, growth, M&A activity and new entrants into the DSO market. It points out 2018 ended with Heartland and Pacific Dental both adding 100 practices or more and North American Dental Group growing the number of affiliated practices by 49% in one year. Highlights for 2019:

- **Investor Interest in DSOs Up:** It received a call per week from private equity groups interested in the DSO space and saw the rise of non-DSO strategic investment from media companies and real estate investment companies looking to leverage their assets and synergies into the DSO space.
- **New Groups Emerged:** While new group dental practices and DSOs are looking to technology, marketing and disruptive technologies to grow, the next wave of DSO leaders are bringing fresh, new ideas to a continually evolving economy.
- **Hiring and Retaining Talent was a Struggle:** There is a small pool of seasoned talent in the DSO space due to a lack of experience people. The market is growing faster and has more human capital needs at the operations, marketing, finance and executive level than ever before. To find talent, DSOs are either looking outside of the segment with the help of PE firms, or candidates are quickly gaining upward mobility within the same organization or by jumping to a newly formed group.
- **Massive M&A Activity:** Large transactions included the partnership of Decision One Dental Partners (D1) & Smile Brands, Mid-Atlantic Dental's acquisition of Dental One Partners, the sale of North American Dental Group (NADG) to Jacobs Holdings, Heartland growing to over 1,000 practices and Pacific Dental Services adding 200 affiliated practices in 2019.

TUSK Partners on Jan. 20, 2020

SmileDirectClub partners with Walmart to sell several products online, in store

SmileDirectClub will roll out a suite of products exclusively in Walmart stores and on the retailer's website. The offerings will be available for purchase in more than 3,800 Walmart locations in the U.S. SmileDirectClub will offer consumers an electric toothbrush, whitening system, toothpaste, water flosser and ultrasonic UV cleaner. SmileDirectClub also plans to launch another electronic toothbrush and subscription package on its website.

Related:

SmileDirectClub and Walmart team up on distribution deal—The Motley Fool

SmileDirectClub announces retail partnership with Walmart—Loyalty360

SmileDirectClub signs exclusive deal to sell dental care at Walmart—CNN

SmileDirectClub on Jan. 6, 2020

SmileDirectClub reports \$180M revenue for Q3 2019

SmileDirectClub announced total Q3 revenue of \$180.3 million, a 50.6% increase compared to Q3 of 2018. For the quarter, SmileDirectClub reported a \$387.6 million net loss. During Q3, it reported 106,070 unique aligner shipments, up from 72,387 in the same quarter the year prior. Average aligner gross sales were \$1,788 for Q3 of 2019, compared to \$1,773 in 2018. The net loss was mostly attributable to the company's heavy spending on marketing and sales, as well as other expenses. Sales and marketing expenses more than doubled in Q3 to \$131.3 million, roughly 78% of SmileDirectClub's total revenue. General and administrative expenses also increased as the firm said it would spend more on expanding the locations of its small stores as well as on technology, data analytics, data science and financing.

Related:

SmileDirectClub posts losses on sales, marketing spending—Wall Street Journal

How to straighten out SmileDirectClub—Wall Street Journal

SmileDirectClub shares tank as much as 20% after first earnings report since

IPO fails to impress—CNBC

SmileDirectClub loss widens for quarter as revenue surges—MarketWatch

SmileDirectClub on Nov. 12, 2019

Consumer satisfaction with dental plans spikes for 2019

J.D. Power's [2019 Dental Plan Satisfaction Report](#) found more consumers are satisfied with their dental plans when it comes to coverage and communication experience. Overall satisfaction increased to 772, out of a 1,000-point scale, for 2019, up from 768 in 2018. Based on responses from more than 1,400 dental plan members, it found the top dental insurers were DentaQuest (810), Blue Cross Dental/Blue Shield Dental (806), HumanaDental (780). Plans falling below average included Aetna Dental (760), Delta Dental (759), United Concordia Dental (757), Cigna, (753), Metlife Dental (745) and Guardian Access Dental/Premier Access (730).

J.D. Power on Nov. 6, 2019

5. Dental Practice News *(continued)*

DentalPost survey finds less than half of dental hygienists satisfied with their pay

DentalPost's [State of the RDH Career in 2020](#) is a survey of dental professionals published in RDH Magazine. DentalPost is a dental job search board and its survey consists of 30 questions ranging from compensation and benefits to how dental industry employees felt about their roles in the dental community and timely changes happening in the industry. Among its findings:

- 44% of dental hygienist participants are satisfied with their overall pay;
- 38% are happy with their overall employee benefits. Flexible scheduling and paid holidays are benefits dental hygienists value most;
- 24% feel overworked and would prefer to work fewer hours. Only 8% would prefer to work more hours;
- 43% of dental hygienists are open to a job change within a year;
- Almost half of the respondents earn between \$51,000 and \$70,000, with 16% making more than \$80,000; and
- Several coaching opportunities to help employers retain employees include improving the annual review process as respondents cited disappointment in their annual raise (61% dissatisfied), along with confusion and frustration with the review process itself.

DentalPost on Dec. 17, 2020

33% of dental practices not found in Google search results

Dental practices continue to lack digital marketing execution despite the billions of dollars spent annually, according to a DMscore study. California-based DMscore studied 54,000 dental practices. The study was conducted in December 2019 with data collected over the two years prior. The company analyzed the digital marketing efforts of the dental practices. The study found digital marketing is under-utilized in the dental industry, such as paid search advertising, directory presence and search engine optimization. Across the country, 71% of dentists have Yelp profiles. However, 20% of the profiles are “unclaimed” by the practice they work at. Dentists should ensure they are claimed by the dental practice where they are employed to exert more control over the way their business is perceived. Additionally, a little more than 33% of dentists had little to no visibility when it came to Google searching.

Becker's Dental and DSO Review on Jan. 24, 2020

California Dental Association rolls out online learning platform

The California Dental Association launched an online learning platform, [CDA Brightbox](#), to help dental professionals obtain continuing education credits. The platform lets users access all CDA online learning courses, including audio recordings from CDA Presents, in one place. CDA members have 180 days to complete the online learning coursework. Brightbox also offers audio recordings from CDA's biannual CE convention, CDA Presents and members can download lectures and speakers' presentations.

California Dental Association on Nov. 14, 2019

ADA releases guidance stating antibiotics not needed for most toothaches

New [guidelines](#) from the American Dental Association (ADA) stipulate that in most cases adults don't need to take antibiotics for a toothache. While patients with toothaches are often prescribed antibiotics to address symptoms and prevent worsening of the problem, healthy adults should generally undergo dental treatment instead of receiving antibiotics, according to the guidance. The recommendations aim to minimize overuse and the rise of more antibiotic-resistant infections by limiting use to cases when these drugs are necessary.

Reuters on Nov. 1, 2019

ADA seeks comment on proposed standard, revised technical report

The American Dental Association Standards Committee on Dental Informatics approved the following documents for circulation and comment:

- Proposed ANSI/ADA Standard No. 1094 for Quality Assurance for Digital Intra-Oral Radiographic Systems: Quality assurance, as this relates to digital intraoral radiography, entails the consistent production of X-ray images to provide the maximum amount of diagnostic information with minimal radiation exposure to the patient. There are essentially four components involved with any digital intraoral imaging system: the X-ray source, the digital image acquisition device, the image display device and the image viewing environment. Each of these components will be addressed in this standard.
- Proposed revision of ADA Technical Report No. 1088 for Human Identification by Comparative Dental Analysis: Positive identification of unknown human remains or an unidentified living individual by comparative dental analysis requires both the submission of supporting documentation from the dental provider(s) who treated the patient, as well as documentation of the remains or the individual. The technical report aims to provide the best practices for comparative dental analysis for obtaining comparative forensic dental data, as well as the methodologies to reconcile that data in order to establish an identification.

American Dental Association on Jan. 8, 2020

New ADA tool to help members develop financial policies

The American Dental Association partnered with CareCredit to develop the [ADA Financial Policy Builder Tool](#). It allows dentists to develop customized financial policy documents to share with patients. The system can help dentists increase transparency with their patients. It's part of the Guidelines for Practice Success suite of resources at the ADA Center for Professional Success sponsored by the ADA Council on Dental Practice.

American Dental Association on Nov. 6, 2019

5. Dental Practice News *(continued)*

[Scammers pose as dental board members to demand money from dentists](#)

The Dental Board of California warned dentists to be cautious of scammers posing as board members to obtain information or demand money from them. The scam was first reported in September 2019, with a wave of fraudulent calls recorded. Officials say scammers are pretending to be board members and telling dentists they are under investigation for drug trafficking by either the board, local police, the Drug Enforcement Agency or FBI. Board members are reminding dentists they will never be contacted for money or payment. If dentists are contacted by the scammers, they should contact the Dental Board of California to inquire whether there is an investigation pending. If they are contacted by a scammer posing as the DEA, dentists should file a report on the DEA's Diversion Control Division website.

Becker's Dental and DSO Review on Feb. 4, 2020

[Mexican city of Los Algodones known as 'Molar City' for number of dental clinics serving Americans](#)

The Mexican town Los Algodones, situated on the border across from California, has become known as "Molar City" since becoming home to an estimated 600 dentists serving Americans seeking to save on dental care. The clinics offer bridges and root canals at half what they cost in the U.S. The town is home to fewer than 5,000 permanent residents. Dental tourism is mostly from retired Americans and Canadians, since Canada's national health care system doesn't include dental coverage. It's estimated that 65% of medical tourism is for dental care and is mostly due to costs. Patients Beyond Borders estimates a bridge containing four implants to replace lost teeth cost an average of \$21,500 in the U.S. in 2018, compared to \$9,300, not counting travel expenses, in Mexico. As a rule of thumb, Patients Beyond Borders advises any treatment that costs more than \$6,000 in the U.S. can be performed for less, including travel costs, abroad. The biggest clinic in Los Algodones, Sani Dental Group, treats 10,000 patients annually, 80% of whom are American. Half of them are from Arizona, California and Nevada. Many clinics in the town are set up for foreign patients, with all employees speaking English, having a call center with a U.S. phone number, offering free transportation to and from the airport and providing discounts or complimentary accommodations at hotels.

Related:

[U.S. News suggests medical tourism to cut dental care costs](#)—U.S. News & World Report
HuffPost on Nov. 14, 2019

[Vietnam turning into medical tourism destination for dental, cosmetic care](#)

Foreign tourists are part of Asia's latest medical tourism industry. Vietnamese officials hope medical tourists will emerge from the threefold increase in arrivals between 2010 and 2018. The key attractions: dentists and cosmetic surgery. Vietnam's political stability, affordability of healthcare and the relatively high quality of certain types of medicine are driving the incipient trend already, country analysts say. Vietnam stands to join Asian peers such as Singapore, Thailand and Taiwan as magnets for medical tourism, yet charge less.

VOA News on Dec. 18, 2019

60% of medical tourism patients travel for dental care

Many people who chose to travel outside of the U.S. for medical treatments do so for dental care, according to a survey released Jan. 29 from eHealth. 21% of respondents indicated they would travel internationally for medical care. Of the patients who have already traveled for medical reasons, 60% did so for dental care. When asked why they were inclined to travel, 74% cited lower costs for dental care. Meanwhile, other kinds of care patients received internationally include medically necessary surgery (22%), vision care (20%), elective or cosmetic surgery (18%), chronic disease treatment (15%) and acute disease treatment (13%).

Becker's Dental and DSO Review on Jan. 29, 2020

Ohio legislation would restrict mobile dentistry, mandate them to provide patient records

Ohio state Rep. Scott Lipps proposed a bill that would regulate mobile dental units in the state. Currently unregulated in Ohio, mobile dental units treat many Medicaid patients, but Rep. Lipps contends these patients can struggle to get copies of X-rays or records. His bill would require mobile dentists and the unit to register with the Ohio dental board and to provide patient records through a statewide database. The [bill](#) passed the Ohio House of Representatives and is being debated in the state Senate.

WXU on Dec. 4, 2019

Bill would authorize dental therapists to provide routine dental care

A coalition of Oregon health and dental care organizations, educators, Tribes and tribal organizations are supporting legislation to be introduced at the start of the 2020 Oregon legislative session that would make basic dental care available to more Oregonians. The legislation, Senate Bill 1549, would expand dental care access by authorizing the licensing of dental therapists, primary dental care professionals who provide preventive and routine care under the supervision of a dentist. This healthcare delivery model is used worldwide for over a century and was introduced in the U.S. by Alaska Natives 15 years ago. Since then, 11 other states have authorized dental therapy in some or all settings.

The World on Jan. 30, 2020

Lawmakers push bill to certify dental therapists

Those who support the state licensing a new type of mid-level dental provider are pushing ahead with legislation that got a public hearing before the Assembly's Medicaid and Oversight Reform Committee. Under bills authored by Rep. Mary Felzkowski, R-Irma, and Sen. David Craig, R-Town of Vernon, dental therapists would work under the supervision of dentists. They would be able to provide preventive and routine restorative care, such as filling cavities, placing temporary crowns and extracting severely diseased or loose teeth. Wisconsin struggled to provide dental care for those with lower incomes. The Wisconsin Dental Association and the Marquette University School of Dentistry oppose the proposal to create and license dental therapists, having expressed concerns about the level of training therapists would receive. In addition, the WDA argues higher Medicaid reimbursement for dentists treating low-income patients could improve access. The bill does not require dental therapists to locate in underserved areas but would allow those licensed in Minnesota to practice in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Public Radio on Dec. 18, 2019

5. Dental Practice News *(continued)*

1,800 CT scans went unread at Walter Reed since 2011

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center failed to read nearly 2,000 radiology scans dating back to 2011. Between 2011 and 2016, about 1,300 scans of patients' faces and jaws went unread at Walter Reed's Naval Postgraduate Dental School. In 2018, another backlog occurred, with 500 scans going unread at the Bethesda, Maryland-based medical center. The delays stemmed from inadequate processes, poor physician oversight, an overworked radiologist and technical issues, according to an investigation completed in August. No one was reprimanded over the issues, since inspectors found no signs of malicious intent for the delays. Walter Reed rechecked all unread scans and discovered no medical reasons to follow up with affected patients. *Becker's Clinical Leadership & Infection Control on Nov. 25, 2019*

House of Representatives passes healthcare policy with dental legislation focus

The House of Representatives passed a policy that could transform healthcare for tens of millions in the U.S. The provision is based on the idea of adding oral health coverage to Medicare. H.R.3 would cover screening and preventive services, basic and primary treatments and dentures. The House vote comes over 50 years after Congress created the federal health-care program for senior citizens and disabled Americans. Getting such a bill enacted would be life-changing for the estimated 37 million people on Medicare who can't afford to get regular dental care. Voters across the political spectrum seem to agree.

The Hill on Dec. 25, 2019

UCSF dentistry alumnus donates \$10M to school

A UCSF School of Dentistry alumnus gave the school \$10 million, which stands as its largest gift to date, strengthening the school's position as a global leader in oral health and oral health sciences through the development of a modern curriculum, recruitment and retention of world-class faculty members and professional development and mentorship programs for junior faculty. The anonymous contribution will establish an endowment, providing a steady and lasting source of income to sustain the long-term vision of the current and future deans of the school and the future of oral health.

UCSF on Jan. 30, 2020

2019 legislative wins set stage for expanded access to oral healthcare

Significant strides in oral health policymaking in 2019 have helped set the stage for improved access to care for many Americans in 2020 and beyond, especially for those with limited incomes or who live in areas underserved by dental professionals. However, the strong trend toward more practice consolidation in the dental care industry is likely to continue, which could bring more efficiencies in how care is delivered. In 2019, three states expanded Medicaid coverage for dental benefits to adults, while four others authorized the midlevel providers known as dental therapists to practice within their borders. There is also the potential for progress in the fall of 2020 when the U.S. surgeon general is expected to release a major report on oral health that outlines the federal government's vision for improving outcomes and care delivery. Some highlights from 2019 and topics to watch for in 2020 that may affect access to dental care and how it is delivered include dental coverage for adults on Medicaid, expansion of dental therapy, the surgeon general's oral health report and a continued consolidation of dental practices.

PEW on Jan. 21, 2020

New law increases dental plan transparency, protects dentist-patient relationship

CDA-sponsored legislation that further increases dental plan transparency became law on Jan. 1, 2020. AB 954 signed in October 2019 by Gov. Gavin Newsom, requires dental plans to be more transparent about the leasing of dental networks. The law will reduce patient and dentist confusion caused by the increasing number of plans leasing their networks to other payers. Through the provisions outlined in AB 954, the contractual information provided will enhance clarity for patients and dentists on the patient's potential out-of-pocket costs while protecting the dentist-patient relationship through a more informed treatment planning process. Medicare or Medicaid dental plan agreements are exempt from the requirements of the law.

CDA on Jan. 27, 2020

Maine proposal would eliminate dental insurance waiting periods for kids

A proposed bill would eliminate insurance waiting periods for anyone under the age of 19 in Maine, according to CBS and CW+ affiliate WABI TV5. Jonathan Shenkin, DDS, a pediatric dentist in Augusta, Maine, introduced the idea to state Sen. Heather Sanborn, D-Portland, after seeing the effects of delayed dental care due to waiting periods. Dr. Shenkin had three patients in pain who couldn't receive treatment because their parents were paying a premium for dental insurance and couldn't afford dental care at the time, according to WABI TV5. Orthodontic care is not included in the proposed changes.

Becker's Dental and DSO Review on Jan. 22, 2020

North Carolina proposal would let dental hygienists practice without supervision

The North Carolina Board of Dental Examiners approved a proposal that would allow dental hygienists to provide care for patients who haven't met the prior exam requirement. The prior exam rule requires a prior dental examination within 120 days for patients receiving care from public health programs. The North Carolina Division of Public Health recommends individuals visit the dentist twice a year, yet local groups providing care to dental shortage areas say the "prior exam rule" inhibits that possibility. William Donigan, DDS, dental director for Gastonia, NC-based Gaston Family Health Services, said the proposed rule changes are "vital" to North Carolina communities. The revision would allow dentists to provide dental hygienists with written orders so they could serve the community in mobile dental units, Dr. Donigan said. The proposal is expected to be addressed by the Rules Review Commission in January and, if approved, the rule could go into effect as early as February 2020.

Becker's Dental and DSO Review on Dec. 19, 2020

6. Litigation & Compliance

Patterson, FTC reach agreement to settle price-fixing allegations

Patterson Companies entered a [settlement agreement](#) with the Federal Trade Commission after a judge ruled that Patterson illegally colluded with Benco Dental Supply Co. in a price-fixing arrangement. The company determined that a settlement was in its best interest and allows it to avoid the costs, distraction and uncertainty related to the matter. The agreement will see Patterson train employees to comply with federal law, file five annual compliance reports and appoint an internal compliance officer to handle antitrust issues. As part of the settlement, Patterson won't pay any fines or admit wrongdoing.

Related:

Patterson Cos. strikes agreement with FTC to settle price-fixing allegations — StarTribune
Patterson Companies on Nov. 8, 2019

ADA revokes 'The Dentist's Prayer,' revises religious diversity policy

The American Dental Association House of Delegates voted to rescind "The Dentist's Prayer," used by some dental societies during meetings and change its policy regarding religious diversity. "The committee considered best practices and agreed that religious diversity must include those with different beliefs as well as those who are not religious," Judith Fisch, DDS, chair of the committee said. The board also recommended that the house remove the prayer from ADA policy and update the religious diversity policy to reflect a neutral stance. The house decided that meetings can begin with "a personal moment of reflection or silent prayer."

Becker's Dental and DSO Review on Jan. 28, 2020

Delta Dental demands repayment after a system error overpaid crown procedure claims, CDA says

The California Dental Association encouraged dentists to act after a Delta Dental of California system error accidentally reimbursed dentists for replaced crowns. The error affected about 350 self-funded dental groups. Delta Dental sent out adjusted claims statements to about 1,000 dentists in the state, seeking repayment for the crown procedures. The statements explain that patients are responsible for certain payments made for replacement crowns they received prior to the five-year requirement for dental crowns. CDA called on dentists to either file a provider dispute with Delta Dental or manually refund the company and seek payment from the patient. If a dentist doesn't dispute the demand, Delta Dental can legally deduct the overpaid amount from future claim payments.

California Dental Association on Nov. 12, 2019

21 plaintiffs drop class-action claims against SmileDirectClub

Twenty-one consumer plaintiffs who are part of a class-action complaint against SmileDirectClub have withdrawn their claims, leaving one plaintiff in court and one in arbitration. The 21 plaintiffs filed an official notice of voluntary dismissal under *Ciccio et al v. SmileDirectClub* after the court sent the original consumer plaintiff to arbitration.

Related:

Most SmileDirect class action plaintiffs drop case—Nashville Post

All but two plaintiffs drop class action lawsuit against SmileDirectClub—Nashville Business Journal

SmileDirectClub on Dec. 18, 2019

New Jersey court sides with SmileDirectClub over state dental association' claims against company

The Superior Court of New Jersey granted SmileDirectClub's motion for summary judgment against the New Jersey Dental Association, with the company stating that the court concluded that the association's allegations about the company's business and the independence of the doctors who use its network are false. SmileDirectClub claims the court decision verifies that its model is in full compliance with the law, and that SmileDirectClub is not engaged in the corporate practice of dentistry.

Related:

New Jersey court rules in favor of SmileDirectClub—Becker's Dental + DSO Review

SmileDirectClub on Jan. 13, 2020

Law360 on Nov. 22, 2019

Federal government approves two ADA-developed forensic dentistry standards

The U.S. government approved two forensic dentistry guidelines developed by the American Dental Association Standards Committee on Dental Informatics:

1. The American National Standards Institute/ADA Standard No. 1058: Forensic Dental Data Set standardizes terminology dentists should use when submitting patient data to help identify human remains or a living person with amnesia. It was created in response to attempts to identify victims in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack.
2. The ADA Technical Report No. 1088: Human Identification by Comparative Dental Analysis provides information on the process of identifying people using dental analysis. It also educates dentists on what information they must share if involved in that process.

American Dental Association on Nov. 15, 2019

6. Litigation & Compliance *(continued)*

ADA urges Senate panel to help speed drug application process

The American Dental Association sent a letter to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, urging it to pass legislation that would change the FDA's regulation of over-the-counter drug. The letter calls for the committee's support for the Over-the-Counter Drug Safety, Innovation and Reform Act, which would allow the FDA to update a drug monograph by administrative order instead of through the rulemaking process. The ADA warns a drug product that currently meets a monograph's requirement, including acceptable ingredients, testing methods and packing and more, can "bypass the rigorous and expensive new drug application process." The ADA contends that the new law could help develop an OTC "single strength-controlled acetaminophen-ibuprofen combination drug," a type of drug that can serve as a safe, effective and accessible alternative to opioids.

American Dental Association on Oct. 31, 2019

American Dental Association urges Congress to pass Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act

The American Dental Association sent a [letter](#) to the Health Subcommittee of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, asking lawmakers to pass legislation that would require all private group and individual health plans to cover necessary procedures that repair or restore congenital anomalies. The ADA argued that the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act would remove barriers that prevent access to diagnosis and treatment for congenital anomalies. It claimed many private health insurance companies "routinely deny or delay follow-up or corrective procedures claiming that they are cosmetic in nature—which fails to recognize the medical conditions of these patients."

American Dental Association on Jan. 9, 2020

ADA announces interim policy on vaping

The American Dental Association released a new interim policy on vaping, calling for a complete ban of vaping products that aren't approved by the FDA. The ADA policy advocates for regulatory or legal action to ban the sale and distribution of all e-cigarette and vaping products, except for those approved by the FDA for tobacco cessation purposes and available by prescription only. The policy also pushes for funding to study the safety of e-cigarettes and vaping products for tobacco cessation purposes and their effects on oral health.

Florida dental practice sued for sending thousands of unsolicited texts

A [class-action suit](#) was filed against alleges TLC Dental-Hollywood, a Florida dental practice, claiming the practice sent text messages such as "We are open today!" without consent, violating a federal robocall statute. The complaint alleges TLC sent texts to class members using an automatic dialing system without prior consent, which violates the Telephone Consumer Protection Act. The act stipulates that companies sending unsolicited messages risk being sued under federal law. TLC allegedly sent thousands of unsolicited text messages, which class members contend caused injuries such as invasion of privacy, aggravation, annoyance, intrusion on seclusion, trespass and conversion. The suit seeks injunctive relief along with statutory damages up to \$1,500 per text message.

Becker's Dental + DSO Review on Jan. 7, 2020

American Dental Association files lawsuit against Delta Dental alleging anticompetitive conduct

The American Dental Association and two individual dentists are [suing](#) Delta Dental over claims that it violated antitrust laws and engaged in anticompetitive conduct. They allege Delta Dental designated certain areas for operation and divided up the U.S. market to restrict competition and reduce reimbursement rates for dentists. The lawsuit names Delta Dental Plans Association, its affiliated national entities and 39 independent Delta Dental companies. Other dentists have filed class-action lawsuits against Delta, alleging antitrust violations. The ADA says its complaint seeks court certification as a class action lawsuit.

Becker's Dental + DSO Review on Dec. 2, 2019

Mississippi dentist sues Delta, accuses company of price-fixing and conspiracy

Delta Dental is being used by a Mississippi dentist accusing the dental insurer of price-fixing and conspiring to lower compensation for dentists. The suit alleges Delta Dental wields substantial market power by compelling dentists to accept below-market reimbursement for services, which results in having lower incomes and fewer patients as a result of Delta's unlawful conduct. The suit also claims that the American Dental Association found dentists' average, inflation-adjusted net income fell significantly from 2001-18, due in part to Delta Dental's anti-competitive conduct. The suit, which seeks class-action status, calls for Delta to be barred from restricting areas of competition, and seeks damages and protection from retaliation for plaintiffs. It follows a [suit](#) filed by the ADA accusing Delta Dental of violating antitrust laws and engaging in anticompetitive conduct.

The Clarion Ledger on Dec. 13, 2019

Hoverboard dentist guilty on 46 counts, "unlawful dental acts"

An Anchorage, Alaska-based dentist was convicted of 46 charges including felony fraud charges and "unlawful dental acts," which included performing oral surgery while riding on a hoverboard. The five-week trial found Seth Lookhart, DMD, guilty of medical assistance fraud, scheme to defraud, illegal practice of dentistry and reckless endangerment. The dentist unnecessarily sedated patients to maximize Medicaid payments, removed teeth without permission and failed to meet professional patient care standards. His practice, Lookhart Dental, was also found guilty of all 40 counts alleged against it. Superior Court Judge Michael Wolverton said the state's evidence was "often supported, and often in excruciating detail, by Lookhart's own texts, photos and videos." In July 2016, the dentist filmed a "dental extraction procedure on a sedated patient while riding a hoverboard" and then sent it to several people.

Becker's Dental and DSO Review on Jan. 21, 2020