

Dental/DSO Industry Newsletter

Dental/DSO Industry Market Intelligence

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INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT

Interview with Kristie Boltz, CMO, My Dental CMO

Kristie energizes and empowers others with actionable insights to attract high-value patients and build world-class dental teams.

Known for her expertise in strategy, execution, improving ROI and office culture, she inspires and trains teams that "Marketing Is A Team Sport." Clients and audiences leave her sessions with a renewed understanding that marketing is a team sport, ready to collaborate and turn big dreams into reality.



MyDentalCMO
strategy • marketing • *success*

How was My Dental CMO started? What led you to start the business?

I'll tell you how it didn't start; I wasn't an assistant, a hygienist, an office manager, or a dentist. I was an adjunct math professor at CSU, Sacramento, and had a "side hustle" as a waitress at a high-end restaurant near campus. A couple dined frequently and (remember, this is the early 2000s, so we all didn't come to dinner with our smartphones) would come in with stacks of newspapers, magazines, and industry publications. Turns out they had a consulting and accounting firm that worked with dentists. They offered me a summer internship, and I loved it. It was still teaching; just now, I was teaching dentists and teams, not college students. After spending a few years with that firm, I left to join the American Dental Association's for-profit venture, Intelligent Dental Marketing, when dentists were "dipping their toe" into marketing. Many were building their first website and starting to email their patients. I spent two years as their VP of Business Development, speaking and, again, teaching dentists, teams, CPAs, and vendor partners around the country about the benefits of marketing. When the economy hit its "speed bump" in 2008, I started thinking, "All these dentists are looking for marketing solutions, but no one is asking some key questions before they invest. How much is a new patient worth? How long do they stay? What's the attrition rate? What's a high-value patient worth?" etc. I wanted to start a company focused on making sure every marketing investment a dentist made, big or small, made sense for their unique practice and improved their ROI.

What services do you offer?

Again, I'll tell you what we don't do. We don't build websites, design logos, make social media posts, provide SEO, run PPC campaigns...you get the idea. Dentists hire us to become BETTER – to acquire a better patient, to build a better team, and ultimately have a better practice. When I started in 2008, no one was offering Fractional C-suite services to dentistry. Now, it's extremely common. People hire me as a Chief Marketing Officer for two primary reasons: to improve their marketing ROI and to make marketing part of their practice culture, not just as a line item on their P&L.

Talk a little about My Dental CMO's work in the dental industry.

I'll tell you who we don't work with. We don't work with dentists who want to write a check and attract as many patients as possible. We don't work with dentists chasing a 1% reduction in expenses. Most importantly, we don't work with dentists who don't invest in their team.

Fundamentally, we believe that "**Marketing is a (Dental) Team Sport.**" Now, more than ever, hundreds of dental marketing agencies will offer solutions to dental practices. Some of them are doing exceptional work and working closely with the practice and its goals. Most are OK and just send monthly reports that most dentists don't understand. There are a few out there who are predatory in their promises and terrible in their execution.

We have the privilege of working with dentists and their teams who are interested in becoming BETTER, day after day, month after month, year after year.

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INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT (cont'd)

Interview with Kristie Boltz, CMO, My Dental CMO

What challenges are you seeing in the dental industry right now? What opportunities?

Some people might say that it's hard to find and retain employees. Others might say that the competitive "edge" they had in their market is gone. I see the most significant challenge dentistry faces today as IMPATIENCE. Dentists and team members often bounce around from articles to Facebook groups to podcasts to continuing education Zoom sessions and changing strategy more often than they change the ink in their office printer. Owners are often impatient with team member development. Teams are often impatient with owner processes. Everyone can become a better version of themselves, attract better patients, and build a better practice year after year. And that requires persistence and patience.

What is your favorite vacation?

My husband and I took a rafting trip down the Grand Canyon in 2018. We slept under the stars for a week, rafted through all classes of rapids, hiked, ate around a campfire, brought one bag that weighed less than 20 pounds, had zero electronics, and "reset" together. It was incredible.

This Summer, we're taking our kids, grandkids, their spouses, and my entire family to the Outer Banks to celebrate my parents' 50th wedding anniversary. So, that's going to be pretty special, too.

To learn more about [My Dental CMO](#), please click [here](#).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Yankee Dental Congress Multi-Site 2025

JANUARY 30, 2025–FEBRUARY 1, 2025

Boston Convention and Exhibition Center

The Yankee Multi-Site Summit is a two-day event that brings together some of the brightest minds in the dental industry, including multi-site owners, DSO executives, leadership teams/clinical staff, key industry partners, and entrepreneurs. The moderator, Dr. Emily Vanney, graduated with honors from the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry in 2012. She gained clinical and leadership experience working in various practice settings before joining United Dental Partners in 2016. Dr. Vanney is a member of the Women in DSO and the ADA Large Group/Multi-site Practice Engagement Task Force.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Dentsply Sirona World Dubai 2025

FEBRUARY 2–3, 2025

Grand Hyatt Dubai

Dentsply Sirona World Dubai 2025 provides dental professionals with a mix of educational programs, hands-on workshops and networking opportunities. The event highlights the latest in digital dentistry innovations and features renowned speakers like Dr. Mischa Krebs and Andreas Kurbad sharing their expertise. Dentsply Sirona World Dubai 2025 will also highlight advancements in in-person and digital dentistry.

For more information, please click [here](#).

AEEDC 2025

FEBRUARY 4–6, 2025

Dubai World Trade Center

The 29th edition of the world's premier dental conference attracts professionals from all over the globe to network with over 66,000 attendees and 3,900 exhibitors. The conference offers unparalleled opportunities to explore the latest dental technologies, earn continuing education

credits and attend 100+ sessions led by global experts. AEEDC Dubai also includes the AEEDC Dubai World Orthodontic Conference, specialized workshops and extensive networking opportunities with industry leaders.

For more information, please click [here](#).

OMNI Championsgate

FEBRUARY 6–8, 2025

Orlando, Florida

The 2025 AADGP Annual Meeting & Expo focuses on advancing dental group practices through networking, education, and innovative solutions. The expo will include workshops on topics like AI in dentistry, revenue growth, risk management, and marketing. Participants will also get to experience innovative dental technologies and services and enjoy special events, including a golf outing and happy hours for informal connections. The 2025 AADGP Annual Meeting & Expo says attendees can expect invaluable insights and actionable strategies to enhance patient care, streamline operations, and achieve business growth.

For more information, please click [here](#).

INNER CIRCLE 2025

FEBRUARY 6–8, 2025

Orlando, Florida

Inner Circle 2025 is an exclusive dental conference tailored for dental group executives, clinicians and industry leaders. The conference includes Keynote addresses from Duncan Wardle, the former head of Innovation & Creativity at Disney, and Micael Buckle, CEO of IntHRface and Chief Executive Facilitator of the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Methodology. Inner Circle is a smaller event tailored to accommodate only the first 150 dental practices that register to maintain the conference's appearance as an exclusive experience.

For more information, please click [here](#).

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS (cont'd)

Live Patient Molar Endodontics

FEBRUARY 8–14, 2025

Guatemala City

The Live Patient Molar Endodontics course is designed to provide dental professionals with in-depth knowledge of endodontic principles, diagnostic skills and treatment planning. Participants will gain hands-on experience performing endodontic procedures on live patients, guided by a Board-certified Endodontist. The course will cover advanced techniques, technologies and strategies for managing complex cases, along with practical tips for integrating endodontics into general practice.

For more information, please click [here](#).

The 160th Chicago Dental Society (CDS) Midwinter Meeting

FEBRUARY 20–22, 2025

McCormick Place West

Recognized as one of the largest dental exhibitions globally, this event features over 200 educational courses, including hands-on workshops, live demonstrations and keynote sessions led by industry experts. Attendees can earn CE credits and explore the extensive Exhibit Hall highlighting the latest dental technologies tools, and solutions. The 160th CDS Midwinter Meeting 2025 also includes special events, such as the New Dentist Reception, and provides opportunities for networking and professional growth.

For more information, please click [here](#).

ICOI Winter Implant Symposium 2025

FEBRUARY 20–22, 2025

New Orleans, Louisiana

Hosted by the International Congress of Oral Implantologists (ICOI), this event gathers dental

professionals, including general dentists and specialists, to explore the latest advancements in dental implantology. The symposium features lectures, hands-on workshops and networking opportunities, all led by top experts in the field. Attendees can gain insights into cutting-edge techniques, scientific research and practical applications to enhance patient care.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Live Patient Three Session Implant Continuum

FEBRUARY 23–28, 2025

Guatemala City

The Live Patient Three Session Implant Continuum is designed for dental professionals seeking to refine their implantology skills. The hands-on course provides a deeper understanding of treatment planning for implant cases, techniques for reflecting full-thickness flaps and suturing, as well as strategies for managing complications. Participants will also gain proficiency in placing single and multiple implants and completing the therapeutic process, ensuring they're equipped to handle all stages of implant treatment.

For more information, please click [here](#).

SmileCon 2025

OCTOBER 23–25, 2025

Washington, D.C.

Save the date for SmileCon 2025, where participants can join dental professionals on October 23–25 in Washington, D.C.

For more information, please click [here](#).



Please contact us if you would like to post information regarding our upcoming events or if you'd like to guest author an article for this newsletter.

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KEY FINDINGS

Projections for 2025

Moving into 2025, the dental industry faces a series of transformative shifts driven by evolving patient expectations, the rise of Dental Support Organizations (DSOs) and persistent operational challenges. The industry will need to make informed strategic decisions and overcome what could be a challenging year.

A significant trend in 2025 will be the increasing consolidation of dental practices through partnerships with Dental Support Organizations (DSOs), and “invisible” (or silent) DSOs are becoming a [popular choice](#). These organizations provide financial and administrative support without interfering with a doctor’s autonomy. [According](#) to Chip Fichtner, co-founder of Large Practice Sales, invisible DSOs allow practitioners to maintain control over clinical decisions while benefiting from resources that enable growth, improve profitability, and reduce operational burdens. As the DSO market expands - projected to be worth nearly \$455 billion by 2030 - dentists must carefully choose their partners.

Professionals in the industry will also need to put their best foot forward when it comes to [patient expectations](#), as well. As expectations continue to rise, dentistry is experiencing a shift toward personalized, technology-driven care. Patients increasingly expect practices to offer modern conveniences such as AI-driven diagnostics, seamless communication and more personalized care experiences. Patients are increasingly prioritizing practices that use innovative technology, including AI, robotics, and 3D imaging. As these technologies become more widely adopted, they will continue to reshape patient care.

Moving into 2025, professions remain concerned over [staffing](#), particularly dental hygienists and assistants. Nearly 60% of dentists indicate recruitment as their top challenge, and the shortage is compounded by burnout and turnover. However, that might not be easy as many practices in the industry will continue to face [financial strain](#), especially regarding increasing overhead costs, low insurance reimbursement rates and delayed payments. Dentists say rising overhead and inflation are key concerns, as well as frustrations with Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance reimbursements.

As the DSO market continues to expand and patient expectations evolve, dentists must carefully consider their options for growth, whether through DSO partnerships, technological adoption or building staff. Smart and precise choices will need to be made to navigate 2025 successfully.

Sources: DrBiCuspid.com, American Dental Association

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KEY FINDINGS (cont'd)

Fluoride in Water Continues to be Debated

Despite fluoridating public water systems being a common practice in the U.S. for decades, with the goal of reducing tooth decay, its addition to the nation's drinking water continues to be controversial. Differing opinions from local government officials, health experts, and residents have kept the debate raging for years.

In Grand Forks, North Dakota, the City Council [recently voted](#) 4-3 against removing fluoride from the city's water. This decision cited health concerns, particularly its alleged harmful effects, even though council members pointed out the fluoride levels in the water were within federal guidelines and hadn't been shown to cause any cognitive harm. The American Dental Association (ADA) [continues](#) to advocate for water fluoridation, emphasizing its role in preventing cavities and strengthening tooth enamel, a stance backed by decades of scientific research.

On the other side of the debate, cities in Florida, such as Palm Bay and Port St. Lucie, have taken steps to either prevent or halt the addition of fluoride to their water supplies. Palm Bay's City Council [voted](#) not to add fluoride, citing concerns about "mass treatment" and a desire for further research on its potential risks. Port St. Lucie [also](#) temporarily suspended its fluoride addition following the Florida Surgeon General's recommendation, which questioned the safety of fluoride due to possible health risks, including neurotoxic effects.

However, a [study](#) conducted by the University of Queensland, which followed children exposed to fluoridated water, found no measurable effect on cognitive development or IQ scores. The research, which followed participants from childhood into adulthood, affirmed that the levels of fluoride used in public water systems were safe and did not impair brain function. Despite these findings, some local governments, like the Tavares City Council in Florida, still decided to [remove](#) fluoride from their water supply, citing public concern and the potential risks highlighted by the state's health officials. The mayor of Thermopolis, Wy. [saw](#) the practice of "mass medicating" the populace as an invasion of civil liberties. The move has been met with criticism from organizations like the ADA, which continues to support the practice of fluoridating public water systems at the recommended level. The organization [argues](#) the practice provides a public health benefit, especially for those who lack access to other fluoride sources such as toothpaste or dental treatments.

As more cities reconsider their water fluoridation policies, the debate doesn't appear to be losing steam. Putting fluoride in the water will continue to pull different communities in different directions; for now, communities like Grand Forks stand by fluoride, citing its proven dental benefits, while others, influenced by concerns over health risks, are opting for alternative approaches to oral health care.

Sources: Grand Forks Herald, ADA, WESH 2, Fox 29 WFLX, Fox35 Orlando, Thermopolis Independent Record

GENERAL DENTISTRY NEWS

Dental provider MCDC closes several locations due to rising costs

My Community Dental Centers (MCDC), a nonprofit serving underserved communities in Mi., permanently closed dental centers in Grand Haven, Ionia, Monroe, Roscommon, Spalding and St. Johns. The NGO says the closures follow a financial and operational evaluation which found rising care costs, workforce shortages and demands for higher wages. The NGO said it'll now focus on stabilizing operations and strengthening its remaining 28 centers. It will assist affected patients with care transitions and offer support to staff through relocation opportunities and career resources.

Source: West Michigan News

Marquette School of Dentistry receives \$1.37 million grant to establish Open Dental Education Consortium

The Marquette University School of Dentistry received the grant to establish the Open Dental Education Consortium (ODEC), aiming to standardize dental education and reduce tuition costs. Partnering with three institutions, including Milwaukee Area Technical College and Brigham Young University, ODEC will develop open educational resources to help save students an estimated \$1,000 each during the grant period. Faculty and graduate students will work together to create high-quality, accessible curriculum materials hosted on a centralized platform. The consortium plans to convert at least 25% of member institutions' curricula to an open model within three years.

Source: Marquette

St. Mary Health Center, YMCA, YWCA receive grants from New Hanover Endowment

The New Hanover County Community Endowment distributed \$6.1 million in grants to local nonprofits, including \$695,000 to St. Mary Health Center for purchasing a permanent clinic building in Wilmington, NC. The health center, which provides free emergency dental surgery, lost its previous location after a dispute but is now securing a "forever home." State officials say these grants help address critical community needs, including healthcare access and water safety education.

Source: YMCA, and YWCA Awarded Grants for Community Programs

Southern Tier Orthodontics to declare bankruptcy

Southern Tier Orthodontics in Elmira, N.Y., announced its closure and plans to file for bankruptcy, notifying patients via text message on Jan. 2. Orthodontist Jason Horn cited personal and financial reasons for the decision and stated he could not reimburse prepaid treatment fees, apologizing for the situation. Patients were advised to transfer care to other providers, with records available for a smoother transition. A local law firm said there are limited legal resources for affected families but recommended filing complaints with the N.Y. AG office or launching a class action lawsuit.

Source: My Twin Tiers

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GENERAL DENTISTRY NEWS (cont'd)

CFO Jimmy Patronis approves development of Florida Veterans Dental Care Grant Program

Florida CFO Jimmy Patronis, a member of Florida's Cabinet who oversees the Department of Financial Services, approved the establishment of the Florida Veterans Dental Care Grant Program, allocating \$1 million in funding to provide dental services for veterans in the state. The program will help veterans access essential dental care, as only 15% are eligible for services through the VA. Patronis said the initiative will reduce financial barriers and improve the quality of life for many veterans facing limited access to dental care.

Source: My Florida CFO

New ADA guide covers CDT codes for saliva tests

The American Dental Association (ADA) released [a new guide](#) outlining CDT codes for saliva-based diagnostic tests. Saliva testing, which is gaining popularity for monitoring conditions such as infections and oral health, requires accurate coding for proper documentation and reimbursement. The guide includes specific codes for sample collection (D0417), analysis (D0418) and salivary flow assessment (D0419) and distinguishes between laboratory-based and in-office screenings. The ADA says dental professionals should stay aware of any further code updates while waiting for the FDA to approve the diagnostic saliva tests.

Source: ADA News

HCC receives a \$500,000 grant for a new dental program

The college received a \$500,000 High-Cost Health Care Workforce Funds Start-Up Grant from the North Carolina Community College System to establish a new Dental Assistant program. The short-term training initiative aims to equip students with essential skills for immediate workforce entry, addressing the growing demand for skilled dental professionals in the region. Dean of Academic Affairs Julie M. Galvin says the program fosters both technical proficiency and patient education to promote long-term oral health.

Source: RRSpin, December 9, 2024

Aspen Dental expands network in North Carolina, Texas

The clinic opened two offices in N.C. and Texas on Dec. 5. One office is in Goldsboro, N.C., and the other is in Stafford, Texas. Aspen Dental has more than 1,100 locations across forty-six states.

Source: Beckers Dental & DSO Review

DSO EXPANSION & CONSOLIDATION

Allied OMS continues strategic expansion in Texas

A provider of oral and maxillofacial surgery, the company partnered with Parkway Oral Surgery & Dental Implant Center in Houston to bolster its presence in the state. Allied OMS says Parkway is recognized for its high-quality care and innovative oral surgery services, and the partnership will strengthen Allied's network, offer enhanced resources, improve operations and expand patient access to premier surgical care. Parkway shares the same values of clinical excellence, patient-centered care, and a commitment to innovation, says Allied CEO Dan Hosler.

Source: Allied OMS

PDS Health adds 14 practices in December

The healthcare support organization added 14 in Dec., bringing its total practice number to 63 as of the end of 2024. PDS Health now supports more than 1,000 offices in 24 states. The additions in Dec. include:

- PDS Medical Group Green Valley in Henderson, Nev.
- Kennesaw (Ga.) Modern Dentistry.
- Beckett Ridge Modern Dentistry in West Chester, OH.
- Boynton Mall Modern Dentistry in Boynton Beach, Fl.
- The Dental Office of Rancho Cucamonga in Calif.
- The Dental Office of Bellflower in Calif.
- Dentists of Green Valley in Henderson, Nev.
- Orange Modern Dentistry in Calif.
- Norco Modern Dentistry in Calif.
- Fremont Hub Dentistry in Calif.
- Dentists of Elk Grove in Calif.
- Garden Grove in Calif. Modern Dentistry.
- Dentists of Vallejo (Calif.); and
- The Dental Office of Katy (Texas).

Source: Group Dentistry Now

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DSO EXPANSION & CONSOLIDATION (cont'd)

Swish Dental is slated to open three new Houston locations

The dental care provider is expanding its footprint in Houston, with three new offices set to open in 2025. The locations include Montrose (3230 Yoakum Blvd.), Upper Kirby (5329 Kirby Dr.) and Midtown. The Montrose and Upper Kirby offices are expected to open in the summer, with the third to open before the end of Dec.

Source: Community Impact

Leading Edge Specialized Dentistry acquires oral surgery practice

Part of Dental365's Leading Edge Specialized Dentistry, Leading Edge Oral Surgery acquired Miller Oral Surgery. With locations in Harrisburg and Hershey, Pa., Miller Oral Surgery is led by Drs. Michael Andrews and Shaun Bortel. The acquisition expands Leading Edge's footprint into Pa. and aligns with its parent company's mission to offer high-quality dental care through strategic growth.

Source: Dental 365

Gentle Dental opens new state-of-the-art Office in North Las Vegas

The oral health care provider with over 160 locations across eight states opened a location in North Las Vegas, located at 7920 N. Decatur Blvd. The office officially opened on Dec. 12, 2024, with a grand celebration held on Dec. 14. Led by Dr. Shafia Awan, DDS, and Practice Manager Amanda Regalado, the office offers comprehensive dental services with innovative technology, complemented by specialized care options nearby such as orthodontics and oral surgery.

Source: LinkedIn

Aspen Dental opens practices in 4 states

The DSO has opened four new practice locations in four states:

- Holbrook, N.Y., led by managing clinical director Shahzaib Tariq, DDS.
- Papillion, Neb., led by practice owner Josue Covarrubias, DMD.
- Laurinburg, N.C., led by practice owner Yonathan Nigatu, DDS; and
- Noblesville, Ind., led by managing clinical director Todd Myers, DDS.

Source: Beckers Dental & DSO Review

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DSO EXPANSION & CONSOLIDATION (cont'd)

Espire Dental expands with acquisition of 2 more dental groups

The cosmetic and multi-specialty group practice acquired Sauvage PLLC, a five-location dental practice in Seattle, Washington, and Tranquility Dental Wellness, a four-location practice serving the Tacoma/Olympia area. Tranquility Dental Wellness, founded by Dr. Lori Noga in 2012, offers a blend of advanced dental care and a luxurious, spa-like atmosphere, which Noga said was intentional to create a more patient-friendly, relaxed environment that emphasizes comfort and care. Sauvage PLLC, a five-location dental practice based in Seattle, Washington, founded and led by Dr. Laura Sauvage and Dr. Paul Sauvage, offers personalized treatment options to patients while focusing on long-term oral health.

Source: Group Dentistry Now

MB2 Dental Enters Iowa, Fifth State of 2024, now operating in 44 states nationwide

MB2 Dental expanded into the state by partnering with Knoxville Dental Center, marking its presence in 44 states. This partnership makes Iowa the fifth state MB2 Dental entered in 2024, following Mass., S.C., Vt., and West Va. Dr. Andrew Secory, owner and operator of Knoxville Dental Center, said he is excited to be part of the MB2 brand while also being able to maintain its clinical autonomy.

Source: MB2 Dental

Abra Health Group expands to Connecticut with acquisition of the four locations of Il About Kids Pediatric Dentistry

The company acquired the Conn.-based practice with four locations, marking the organization's expansion into its third state alongside N.J. and Pa. Abra says it will open a new location in Bridgeport, Conn. in 2025 to strengthen its presence in the region further. CEO Dr. Michael Skolnick says the move underscores Abra's goal of providing preventive and specialized pediatric dentistry in underserved areas.

Source: Hartford Business Journal

OTHER DSO NEWS

Merger between CRDTS and SRTA finalizing soon, according to press release

The Central Regional Dental Testing Service (CRDTS) and State Resources for Testing and Assessments (SRTA) are set to finalize their merger, which they say will improve dental and dental hygiene licensure testing starting in 2026. Operating under CRDTS governance, the merged entity will integrate examiners and leadership expertise from both organizations. Current testing protocols will remain unchanged, with enhancements planned for future exams to meet the needs of candidates, states and schools. Leadership from both CRDTS and SRTA are enthused to join forces, expressing their respective commitment to standardized, fair and efficient testing that safeguards public safety and advances the dental profession.

Source: Dentistry IQ,

Heartland Dental launches “Masters and Mentors” campaign to highlight doctor-led culture, leadership development

The DSO says its “Masters and Mentors” campaign highlights its commitment to a doctor-led culture and leadership development. Inspired by founder Dr. Rick Workman’s philosophy, “Doctors helping doctors become the best versions of themselves,” the campaign highlights real-life stories from supported doctors and hygienists, emphasizing mentorship, collaboration and continuous education. Heartland says the campaign aims to inspire dental professionals to advance their careers.

Source: Kilgore News Herald

Dental 365 to launch clinical learning platform

The DSO announced the launch of its innovative experiential learning platform for clinicians. Designed to enhance professional development, the platform emphasizes learning through hands-on experiences rather than traditional methods. CEO Dr. Scott Asnis says the platform focuses on the process of learning through experiences instead of traditional methods.

Source: Dental 365

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OTHER DSO NEWS (cont'd)

Innovate 32 announces partnership with Rachel Johnson & Associates

The DSO has joined with Rachel Johnson & Associates (RJA) in Murfreesboro, Tenn., to expand its footprint in the South and Mid-Atlantic. Founded in 2006 by Dr. Rachel Johnson, RJA provides general and cosmetic dentistry with a focus on high-quality patient care. Innovate 32 CEO Josh Johnson said both companies share the same values and clinical experience, and the collaboration will leverage shared resources and best practices to improve dental services in Middle Tenn. and support growth in the region.

Source: Yahoo Finance

The Trump effect on dentistry landscape

The return of Trump-era economic policies, such as tax reforms and deregulation, is expected to drive significant changes in the dental industry, with DSOs expanding rapidly. Tax cuts and lower interest rates will fuel DSO acquisitions, increasing consolidation and raising practice valuations, making it an opportune time for dentists to sell. Deregulation may ease administrative burdens but intensify competition for private practices, prompting many to consider selling or partnering with DSOs. Strategic decision-making will be crucial as the industry evolves, with opportunities for both small and large players to capitalize on market dynamics.

Source: DSO Brief

US Oral Surgery Management secures \$175M credit expansion

The physician practice management company, which specializes in oral and maxillofacial surgery, closed on a \$175 million credit expansion with its existing lenders. The funding will support the company's accelerated growth initiatives through 2026. Founded in 2017, U.S. Oral Surgery Management has grown to include over 250 surgeons across 28 states.

Source: Group Dentistry Now

PRIVATE EQUITY DEALS

Mashura announces \$300M strategic partnership with Warburg Pincus

Mashura, an inventory intelligence platform for veterinary and dental clinics, formed a \$300 million strategic partnership with Warburg Pincus to accelerate growth and innovation in both industries. The partnership will support Mashura's efforts to expand its customer base globally, improve its smart cabinet technology and optimize integration partnerships. Through its CUBEX and Zimbis brands, Mashura provides solutions that streamline inventory management, reduce costs and ensure regulatory compliance, and says the partnership with Warburg Pincus will help it meet the growing demand for automation in healthcare and improve inventory management in veterinary and dental practices.

Source: DVM360

Provident Healthcare Partners advises Mid-Florida Endodontics on partnership with SRM Equity Partners

Provident Healthcare Partners successfully advised Mid-Florida Endodontics (MFE) on its strategic partnership with SRM Equity Partners. MFE, a provider of endodontic services in Central Fla., sought a partner to support its growth and expansion across the Southeast. MFE says Provident's expertise makes it an ideal partner while being able to preserve its clinical autonomy while capitalizing on opportunities in the dental specialty market.

Source: Provident Healthcare Partners

Ironwood Capital Portfolio company Espire Dental Management expands into Pacific Northwest

Ironwood Capital announced its subordinated debt investment to support Espire Dental Management's acquisition of Sauvage PLLC, a five-location dental practice based in Seattle, Washington and Tranquility Dental Wellness, a four-location dental practice based in the Tacoma/Olympia area of Washington.

Source: Ironwood Capital

Patterson Companies announces definitive agreement to be acquired by patient Square Capital

Patterson announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to be acquired by healthcare investment firm Patient Square Capital for an all-cash deal valued at about \$4.1 billion, including the refinancing of Patterson's receivables facilities. Patterson said this transaction follows a review of strategic alternatives by its Board of Directors, with assistance from its independent advisors, maximizing value and enabling Patterson to continue to execute its strategy well into the future. The company's Board of Directors, excluding President and CEO Don Zurbay, given his position as a Management Director, has unanimously approved the transaction.

Source: Nasdaq

PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION

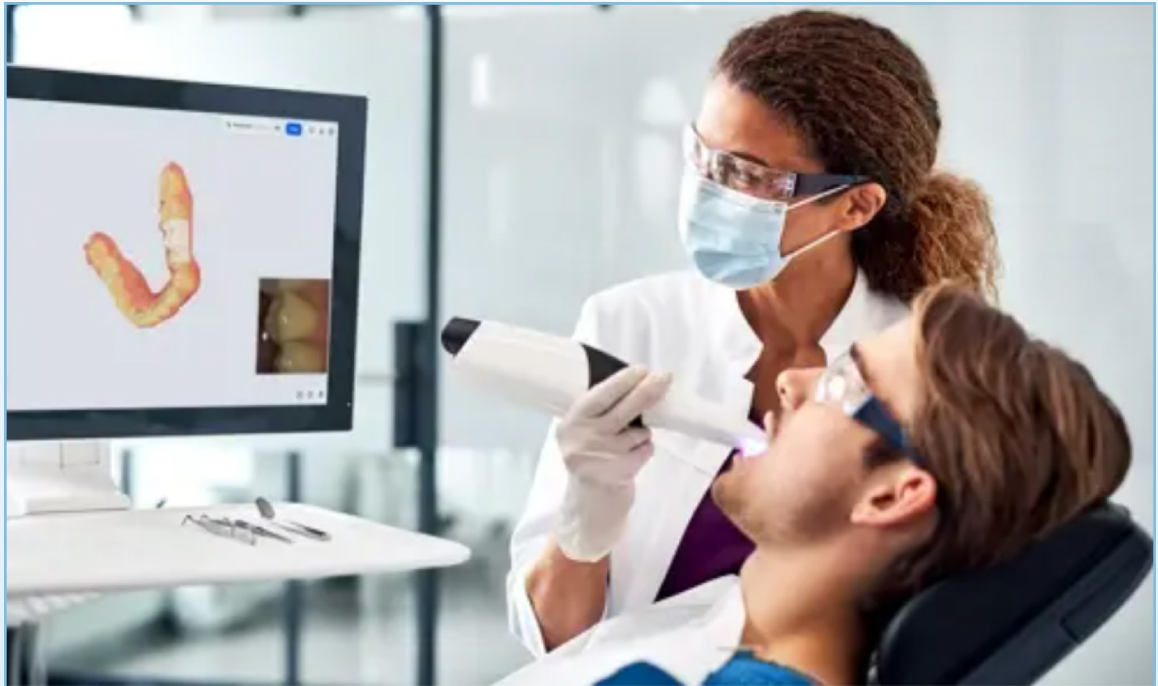
American Dental Association invests in Pearl to advance AI in Dentistry

The American Dental Association (ADA) says it made a strategic investment in Pearl, a global leader in dental AI solutions, to advance technology that enhances precision and care in dentistry. The ADA's Innovation Advisory Committee spearheaded the initiative, highlighting its dedication to supporting transformative technologies that benefit dental professionals and public health. Pearl says its AI platform helps dentists improve accuracy, efficiency and confidence in clinical decision-making while maintaining control over patient care; adding AI can elevate the future of dentistry and patient outcomes.

Source: ADA News

Dentsply Sirona expands digital workflow platform for DSOs

The company said it enhanced its DS Core cloud-based platform to support DSOs better. The platform allows companies to monitor equipment usage and streamline workflows, and it can integrate directly with Dentsply Sirona technologies like digital X-rays and intraoral scanners. The DS Core Enterprise feature, added to the platform's latest update, allows DSOs to deploy the platform across networks, improving patient communication and collaboration. Dentsply Sirona said the feature should help optimize efficiency and connectivity in DSO operations.



DS Core Enterprise also enables direct integration with Dentsply Sirona's Primescan 2, which is the first-ever cloud-native intra-oral scanning solution.

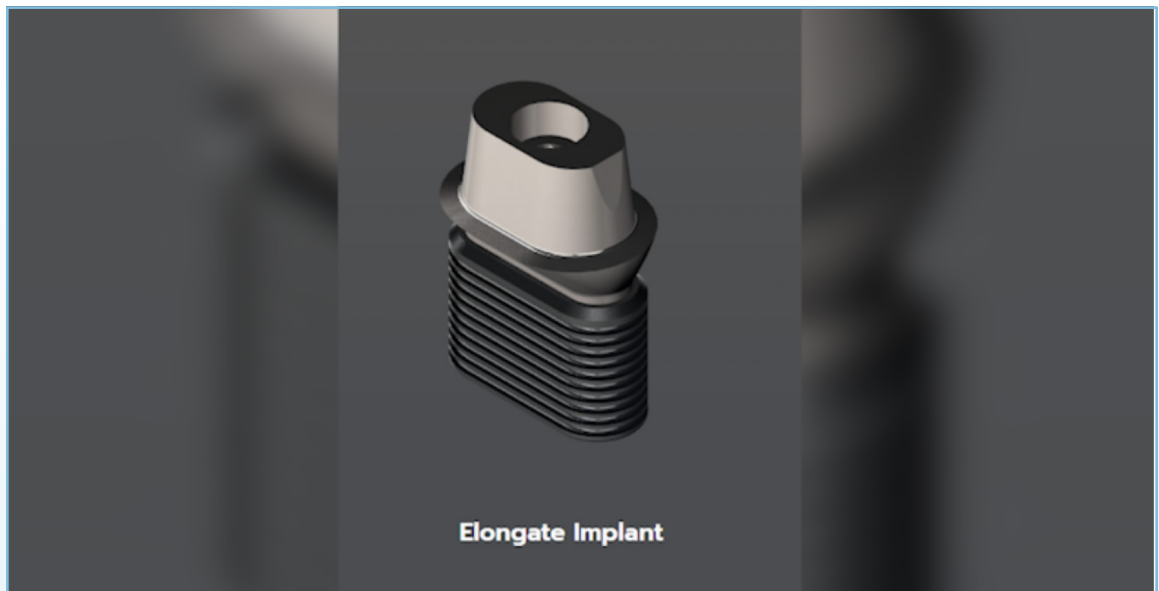
Source: Dental Tribune

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PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION (cont'd)

Colorado Springs dentist invents new dental implant

Dr. Jim Grant of HollowBrook Dental in Colorado Springs invented a rectangular dental implant, which would replace the traditional round titanium screw used in most implants. The design, backed by 12 patents and FDA-approved for over two years, offers a better fit, reduces food trapping and enhances patient comfort, making it feel more like a natural tooth. Collaborating with local oral surgeons and dentists, the implant has been successfully used in over 65 patients, with overwhelmingly positive feedback. Dr. Grant, who was the first to receive the implant himself, believes this design can transform dental care worldwide.



Source: Fox 21 News

Penn Dental Medicine study shows saliva test may help mark gum disease progression

Researchers at Penn Dental Medicine identified key inflammation-related proteins in saliva they say could help track the progression of periodontitis. The study, involving over 400 participants, found that patients with worsening gum disease had significantly higher levels of nine specific proteins in their saliva, which decreased after treatment. Unlike saliva, blood protein levels showed minimal correlation with disease progression but were helpful in assessing treatment effectiveness. The researchers say this breakthrough suggests saliva tests could become valuable personalized dentistry tools for monitoring gum disease and tailoring care.

Source: Penn Today

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PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION (cont'd)

New denture adhesion solution is inspired by octopus suction cups

Researchers at King's College say their denture adhesion system, inspired by the suction cups of octopuses, shows improved retention in both dry and moist conditions. The researchers replicated the micro-architecture of octopus suckers using 3D-printing technology and coated the surfaces with keratin, a natural protein. The bio-inspired design significantly enhances denture stability compared to traditional adhesives, offering a more comfortable and secure fit for users, the researchers state. The keratin coating also resists degradation, maintaining strong adhesion over time.

Source: Dental Tribune

Smart inventory cabinets: Can automated dispensing make a difference for the bottom line?

Blake Hibray, President of Sevaudent Sourcing Solutions, says smart inventory cabinets, like those from Zimbis, are addressing critical pain points in dental practices by improving workflow efficiency and inventory management. These cabinets automate inventory tracking, reduce administrative labor, and enhance regulatory compliance, allowing staff to focus more on patient care. Citing the implementation of these cabinets at Affordable Dentures & Implants' two U.S. locations, Hibray says he saw a \$14,000–\$20,000 reduction in excess inventory and monthly supply cost savings of \$2,500 per practice after initial implementation. With a subscription-based model requiring no upfront fees, Hibray says these systems can ultimately offer a cash-positive solution that aligns with the needs of modern dental practices.

Source: Dental Economics, December 19, 2024

The transformative power of AI for aligner planning and management

A Dental Tribune "advertorial" says Polorto's DDP AI technology is transforming orthodontic practices by enabling the rapid, in-house production of aligners using AI. The software creates digital diagnostic models in minutes, meaning orthodontists and technicians can plan and produce aligners more efficiently, which can reduce costs and treatment time. In clinical settings, DDP-Ortho provides personalized treatment and quick results, such as delivering aligners within a day after scanning. The system also eliminates external laboratory costs, making aligners more affordable and accessible while increasing practice volume.

Source: Dental Tribune

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PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION (cont'd)

uLab announces strategic collaboration with Voxel, LuxCreo to disrupt direct print aligner technology

The products and software provider said its strategic collaboration with Voxel Dental and LuxCreo will advance direct print aligner technology and enhance in-office manufacturing for orthodontists. uLab says the partnership will integrate its uDesign platform with LuxCreo's FastTrack AI to streamline workflows, reducing labor-intensive steps like thermoforming and trimming. Voxel says the collaboration will create faster, more precise and cost-effective aligner production, improving patient care and expanding the capabilities of digital dentistry.

Source: Kilgore News Herald

Balanced Pharma analgesic aims to lower opioid use

Balanced Pharma acquires the rights to Enduracaine Dental, a non-opioid injectable drug designed to provide up to three days of pain relief after dental surgeries, in a bid to reduce opioid prescriptions in the U.S. dental market. The drug is a mix of tetracaine, lidocaine and epinephrine, and it will be packaged in standard dental cartridges with extended shelf-life and no refrigeration requirements to squash any potential usability barriers. With 94% of wisdom tooth patients currently prescribed opioids and a heightened risk of abuse, Balanced Pharma says the drug will offer safer alternatives. The drug is still pending FDA approval, but it is still expected to launch within a year.

Source: Dental Economics

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PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION (cont'd)

NYU creates virtual reality 'flight simulator' for dental students

The NYU College of Dentistry created a custom virtual reality (VR) system to help dental students practice critical skills, including administering local anesthesia, in a realistic yet stress-free environment. The technology replicates a dental office, allowing students to interact with virtual patients and receive real-time feedback during repeated practice. The NYU College of Dentistry says enhancements like tactile feedback controllers and simulations for pediatric patients are being developed to improve further and expand the experience, which it says could revolutionize hands-on training in medical education.



NYU dental student Kaitlyn Re (right) practices giving an injection alongside fellow student Dhvani Thakkar (left).

Source: NYU

LITIGATION

Alleged \$11.2M dental fraud operation in Palm Beach, other counties

Evelyn Cruz is accused of running a \$11.2 million dental insurance fraud scheme across multiple counties, including Palm Beach. From 2012 to 2022, she operated fake dental practices under licensed dentists' names, defrauding patients and insurance companies by billing for non-existent treatments and inflating charges. Cruz and her husband allegedly funneled the fraudulent proceeds into personal accounts, using the funds to purchase a luxury home. The scheme was uncovered in 2021, leading to a lengthy investigation that revealed millions in fraudulent charges and theft. Cruz faces multiple charges, including insurance fraud, theft and grand theft.

Source: CBS 12

Connecticut dentist pays more than \$600K to settle false claims allegations

Dr. Lakshmi Bethi, along with her dental practices, agreed to pay \$608,296.39 to settle allegations of submitting false claims to Conn.'s Medicaid program. Bethi paid a third-party recruiter for each patient referred to her practices, violating the federal Anti-Kickback Statute and the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership guidelines. Bethi also pled guilty to paying over \$360,000 in kickbacks and receiving \$2.2 million in Medicaid reimbursements for services rendered to recruited patients. The settlement resolves claims from Jan. 2019 to Apr. 2023, and Bethi received two years of probation and must forfeit \$500,000.

Source: DOJ

Dental office agrees to pay the state \$350K after a data breach, privacy investigation

Westend Dental, based in Indianapolis, agreed to pay \$350,000 and enhance its privacy practices following a state investigation into a 2020 ransomware attack that exposed patient data. The breach, which affected sensitive information for over 17,000 patients, was not reported for two years, violating federal and state disclosure laws. The investigation also uncovered repeated privacy violations, including the unauthorized sharing of patient information in online responses and social media posts. Under the settlement, Westend Dental will implement stricter HIPAA compliance measures, provide staff training, and improve cybersecurity policies.

Source: Inside Indiana Business

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LITIGATION (cont'd)

Corporate Transparency Act injunction reinstated

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals reinstated a nationwide injunction against the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) on Dec. 26, pausing enforcement of its reporting requirements for small businesses until at least Mar. 2025. The CTA, aimed at combating money laundering, requires firms to disclose beneficial ownership information to the U.S. Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. Initially set for Jan. 1, 2025, the filing deadline was extended to Jan. 13, 2025, but the injunction now halts compliance obligations. Legal challenges question the law's constitutionality, with arguments set for March 2025.

Source: ADA News

Illinois dental laws going into effect in 2025

As of Jan. 1, 2025, several laws impacting dental practices took effect. Insurance companies are now required to honor prior authorizations under the legislation, and dental residents in CODA-approved programs will be allowed to practice for up to three months while awaiting licensure. Medicaid reimbursement rates for deep sedation and intravenous sedation will see a 33% increase, improving financial support for anesthesia services. Additionally, a new law regulates third-party financing in dental offices to enhance consumer protection.

Source: ISDS

Dentist sentenced to 15 years in prison for performing surgery without proper pain management

Dr. Phillip M. Jensen, a 64-year-old dentist from Rochester, was sentenced to 15 years in federal prison for stealing fentanyl from patients, tampering with their medication and performing surgeries without adequate pain management. Between 2019 and 2022, Jensen diluted fentanyl intended for patients with saline and administered it during oral surgeries, leaving patients in severe pain. Jensen pleaded guilty to charges including drug diversion, tampering with consumer products and fraud. He also faces a \$200,000 fine and the loss of his medical license.

Source: DOJ

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LITIGATION (cont'd)

Another class action lawsuit for Dentsply Sirona

Scott+Scott Attorneys at Law filed a securities class action against Dentsply Sirona, alleging the company made misleading statements about its business and financial condition from Feb. 2022 to Nov. 2024. The lawsuit claims Dentsply misrepresented the safety of its Byte aligners, sold them to ineligible low-income patients, and failed to disclose severe patient injuries. Following the revelation of these issues in Nov. 2024, Dentsply's stock price dropped over 28%, resulting in significant losses for investors.

Source: Business Wire

Kreidler fines PacificSource \$100,000 for incorrectly processing claims

Washington State Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler fined PacificSource Health Plans \$100,000 for processing claims incorrectly, resulting in \$85,000 in unnecessary co-payments for 733 members. Kreidler investigated after a consumer complained that PacificSource improperly charged co-pays for in-network telehealth treatments despite plan documents stating they were covered at no cost. The insurer mis-defined "telehealth" as audio-only, though its policy included audio and video visits. PacificSource has since reprocessed the claims, removed cost-shares and issued refunds with interest.

Source: Office of the Insurance Commissioner Washington State

Virginia court dismisses challenge to Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact

A state court dismissed a lawsuit challenging Va.'s involvement in the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact. The lawsuit, filed by two Va. dentists, argued the compact violated state law by allowing non-state entities to regulate licensure and potentially harming Va. dentists. However, a circuit judge ruled the complaint lacked sufficient evidence to support claims of unconstitutional special legislation. Va., which joined the compact in 2024, is one of 10 states participating in the agreement that allows dental professionals to practice across member states without needing separate licenses.

Source: ADA NEWS

STAFFING

Major DSO staffing changes for the end of 2024

- **Rondi Michaux appointed Chief Growth Officer at Espire Dental**—Michaux was appointed as the Chief Growth Officer at Espire Dental, where she's served on the Board of Directors since July 2024. Michaux previously held the position of Director of Corporate Development at 42 North Dental and Dental Care Alliance. Most recently, she worked with iCreditWorks.
- **Dave Salciccioli Appointed VP of Operations at Shared Practices Group**—Salciccioli was named Vice President of Operations at Shared Practices Group. Previously, he served as Chief Strategy Officer at Singing River Dental Partners. Shared Practices Group says Salciccioli brings strategic leadership and operational expertise to the role.
- **Tend names Patricia Mahony Appointed as COO**—Lunghino will lead the company's mergers and acquisitions strategy. Rock Dental Brands say Lunghino brings a diverse background, having worked in the veterinary, healthcare and finance sectors before transitioning to the dental industry. Rock Dental Brands, which operates 109 dental clinics, recently secured \$90 million in additional funding from private equity groups TPG Twin Brook Capital Partners and Audax Private Debt to bolster its growth plans.
- **Eduardo Laventman appointed Lone Peak Dental Group's COO**—Laventman joined Lone Peak Dental Group as COO. With 17 years of experience at Dental Care Alliance, where he last served as President of the Specialty Division, Lone Peak Dental Group says Laventman brings extensive expertise to the new role. Lone Peak Dental Group was founded in 2003 and is headquartered in Denver.

Source: Group Dentistry Now

American Legislative Exchange Council adopts dental workforce model

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) adopted the ADA-crafted Dental Access Model Act, saying it'll address dental workforce shortages and increase office productivity. The model legislation introduces three components: expanded function dental auxiliaries, oral preventive assistants, and teledentistry regulations, each drawing from successful state initiatives. ALEC says delegating tasks to expanded function dental auxiliaries can significantly improve office efficiency, citing studies claiming productivity increases of up to 27%.

Source: ADA News

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STAFFING (cont'd)

Heartland Dental welcomes Sherianne James as Chief Marketing Officer

With over 30 years of experience in diverse industries, including consumer products and healthcare, James will lead the company's marketing efforts, focusing on brand growth, patient acquisition, and loyalty. Prior to joining Heartland Dental, she served as Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) for Essilor Luxottica's North America Professional Solutions Division. Pat Bauer, Heartland Dental President and CEO, says James' experience and approach to marketing will be invaluable as Heartland continues to grow its footprint across the U.S.

Source: Heartland Dental

Cal Dental USA announces James Jones as New CEO, effective January 2025

Jones will succeed Dr. John Kim, the company's founder. Jones joined the company 14 years ago as a dental assistant. As CEO, Jones said he is committed to continuing Cal Dental USA's growth and focusing on reducing costs to make dental care more accessible, as well as carrying forward the company's legacy of community-focused initiatives, partnerships, and charitable events while ensuring affordable healthcare.

Source: News File Corp

Dr. Jeff Osborne appointed Chief Dental Officer of Smile Source, which advocates for patient-centered, doctor-led care

The company named Dr. Jeff Osborne as its inaugural Chief Dental Officer, effective Dec. 2024. With over 35 years of experience, Dr. Osborne has been a key figure in Smile Source's growth from a small group to a nationwide network of over 1,000 independent dentists. In the role, Osborne said he will push for operational efficiency, clinical excellence and continuing education, as well as advancing patient-centered, doctor-led care and furthering the success of independent dentistry.

Source: Smile Source

Former Walmart exec joins Elite Dental Partners as CEO

Yu was appointed as the first female CEO and Chief Dental Officer of Elite Dental Partners, effective Dec. 2024. Dr. Yu previously served as the chief dental officer at Walmart and as the chief clinical officer at Mid-Atlantic Dental Partners. Elite Dental Partners supports 80 dental offices across 10 states.

Source: Group Dentistry Now

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STAFFING (cont'd)

Alabama Board of Dental Examiners resigns amid board scrutiny

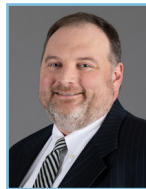
Blake Strickland, the executive director of the Alabama Board of Dental Examiners, resigned on Dec. 8, 2024, following growing concerns over the board's noncompliance with state statutes. An audit revealed several violations, including improper fee waivers and unapproved vehicle purchases. The board has faced criticism from local dentists, who have called its practices predatory and secretive. While Strickland's resignation was not unexpected, the board has committed to addressing any violations and finding a new executive director within 60 to 90 days.

Source: Alabama Daily News

For more information regarding our Dental Industry/DSO Practice, or if you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact:



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