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DSO Newsletter

Dental Support Organizations Market Intelligence

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Key Issues

AI can improve dental services by complimenting, not eliminating, human performance

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is playing an increasingly important role across a variety of industries and can benefit dental practices in new ways, according to a [report](#) by Glidewell, a dental materials and device manufacturer based in Newport Beach, Calif.. The company has reached a point where its software can generate crown proposals with a 98% acceptance rate. Glidewell has a [database](#) with millions of individual crowns sets, which gave it the ability to start collecting precise geometric data and has developed software based on stored information at the backend which it uses in the creation of its crown designs. Its cloud data is the basis of an algorithm that gives its lab the ability to distinguish tiny details of tooth morphology, allowing it to achieve outcomes that exceed human performance.

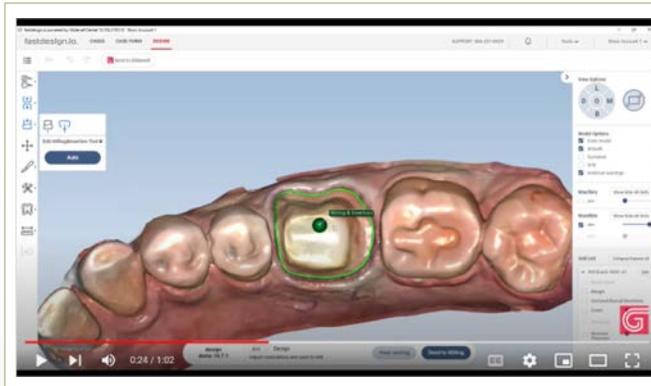
AI technology has far-reaching capabilities for the dental industry as dentists are beginning to shift their perceptions of this technology, as evidenced by the growing number who are discussing AI, machine learning and deep learning at conferences and [panels](#). AI is currently being applied in the clinical and business sides of dentistry, and can aid in the diagnosis and identification of dental disease, according to the American Dental Association.

Glidewell said the biggest misconception it encounters from doctors about AI is that it is replacing humans. The company said its goal is to leverage AI to eliminate mundane tasks that people don't want to do. It also said that while some doctors have high expectation of AI technology, "it's not magic" and it still requires humans

Key Issues (continued)

to make it function correctly. It is best used to complement the work of technicians and freeing them up to do more complex tasks. The company said the next phase with machine learning with Glidewell will include leveraging AI into something doctors can use proactively, moving digital innovations upstream in order to provide optimal results for patients.

Sources: *The American Dental Association, Glidewell*



Dental providers look at improving overall health outcomes through increased collaboration with physicians

The American Dental Association [said](#) dental providers are increasingly improving overall health outcomes by collaborating with physicians that emphasize mouth-body connections. One such practice that represents dental integration to improve the overall health of patients is the partnership of DSO Pacific Dental Services with Sahara Health Group, which [opened](#) a newly supported medical practice in Las Vegas in April 2022. The practice emphasizes the overall health of patients by addressing their medical and oral health care holistically. The practice is led by owner physician Elena Garcia, MD, and will conduct operations in the same location as Sahara Modern Dentistry. Sahara Modern Dentistry is owned by Lulu Tang, DMD and hopes to improve the overall health of each patient by working collaboratively and offering primary medical care, oral health care, salivary diagnostics, preventative medicine, chronic disease management and more.

The partnership aligns with Pacific Dental Group's goal of educating others on the link between their oral health and overall health, in what it calls the [Mouth-Body Connection](#). The practice of inking the presence of harmful bacteria and inflammation in the mouth, which can indicate and even cause systemic conditions throughout the body. The ADA and the ADA Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention said the initiative is one it plans to foster and encourage more of through outreach and education in 2023

Sources: *American Dental Association, AEGIS Dental Network, The Smile Generation*

Dental Support Organization News

[Pacific Dental opens 900th location](#)

Pacific Dental Services, one of the largest DSOs in the U.S., announced the grand opening of its 900th supported practice, marking another milestone in its 28-year history. Aspen Hill Modern Dentistry, led by dentist Bobby Mann, DDS, provides comprehensive oral health care and is committed to meeting its patients' needs. "I am thrilled to provide comprehensive oral health care to patients in Silver Spring, and it's exciting to know that our office is PDS' 900th supported practice," said Dr. Mann. "Our patients can expect only the highest level of care from our team, and we are committed to delivering them with the dentistry they want and need."

Source of the Spring

[ADA, ADSO align on priorities](#)

The American Dental Association (ADA) and the Association of Dental Support Organizations (ADSO) participated in a webinar, entitled Elevating Dentistry Together, which discussed the value of their collaboration and what it means for the future of dentistry. The recurring theme was that with fewer dentists entering solo practices, the two organizations need to work closely together to serve patients and the dental profession. One of the areas the two organizations highlighted as important to pursue jointly is advocacy for issues both at the federal level and with state dental associations. Another one of the major issues the two organizations are both addressing is workforce shortages. Both organizations agreed that generational differences are prompting more dentists to pursue the dental service organization model.

Dentistry Today

Mergers & Acquisitions

[Renew, AvaDent announce exclusive strategic partnership](#)

Renew and Global Dental Science, LLC (AvaDent) signed an exclusive strategic partnership agreement for AvaDent to supply prosthetic components to Renew for its proprietary fixed-removable, full mouth restorative process. Founded by Dr. Don Miloni, Renew is reimagining the dental arch restoration market with its denture product that can be completed in a one-day procedure. It allows patients the ability to transform their lives at a fraction of the market cost compared to many other traditional implant treatments.

Dentistry Today

[Great Expressions Dental Centers affiliates with Ascent Dental Care](#)

The affiliation will allow GEDC and Ascent Dental Care to bring comprehensive and patient-centric oral care services to patients in Mass. And marks the continued growth of Great Expressions in the Northeast. Dr. Kevin Coughlin, Ascent Dental Care founder, will join GEDC's team and continue leading Ascent. "I am excited about this partnership and feel this partnership will benefit our team and patients in the short and long term. Great Expressions recognizes our exceptional team, and I am confident we will continue to prove this exceptionalism every day," said Dr. Coughlin who added that it plans to continue growing its footprint in the Mass. Market.

Dentistry Today

Innovation & Future of Dental

[SmileDirectClub launched mouth-scanning iPhone app technology](#)

SmileDirectClub is rolling out technology that it says will allow users to use its app to 3D scan their mouth to get a teeth straightening plan using AI. The company said the system will take 1-3 minutes for the scanning process, followed by 15 minute to get the plan. SmileDirectClub saw demand for its teeth aligners soar in the early days of the pandemic. The company is hoping that customers will be more likely to purchase the treatment if they don't have to wait more than a few minutes to see what their mouth would look like.

Sources: SmileDirectClub

[SprintRay announces new OnX Tough Resin for Dental Prosthetics](#)

SprintRay, a digital dentistry and 3D printing company, announced the commercial release of OnX Tough resin, a next generation hybrid ceramic resin designed for 3D printing dental prosthetics. This new resin, which uses SprintRay's proprietary NanoFusion technology, provides durability and translucency for high-quality, same-day prosthetics. Dental prosthetics are in high demand, with the global market expected to reach \$9.71 billion by 2026. Approximately 178 million adults in the United States alone are missing at least one tooth, and 40 million are edentulous (missing all teeth). Traditionally, dental prosthetics are manufactured by sending digital or analogue impressions to a lab, with turnaround times averaging 3-4 weeks for some patients. First generation 3D printing technologies enabled in-office manufacturing of dental prosthetics with the advent of digital dentistry and 3D printing, but with significant limitations.

Sources: Manufactur 3D

[Cyberdodontics raises \\$15M for robotic root canals](#)

The system Cybertronics is developing will be capable of precise tooth cutting, down to around 30 microns at high speed, with patients expected to spend between 1 – 15 minutes in the chair for the procedure. The \$15M Series A round, led by dentist chain Pacific Dental Services, will go toward additional R&D and bringing the system to market. The system is supervised by the dentist and, like surgery robots before it, is designed to level access to such procedures amid a dentist shortage.

Sources: TechCrunch

Dental Practice News

[Dentists report high rates of marijuana use among patients, which could give rise to new dental issues](#)

According to an ADA survey, more than half of dentists reported seeing patients who are affected by marijuana or another drug use during dental visits. The survey of 557 dentists found 56% reported limiting treatment to patients who were high and, because of how marijuana and anesthesia affect the central nervous system, 46% of surveyed dentists reported sometimes needing to increase anesthesia to treat patients who needed care. The ADA has called for additional research around marijuana and oral health and will continue to monitor the science to provide clinical recommendations for dentists and patients. An ADA survey of 1,006 consumers on marijuana and vaping use also found 67% of patients say they are comfortable talking to their dentist about marijuana. The ADA recommends dentists discuss marijuana use while reviewing health history during dental visits.

Sources: ADA

Litigation and Compliance

[CDC health alert highlights importance of maintaining, monitoring safe dental waterlines](#)

The ADA is reminding dentists to follow established recommendations and make sure protocols are being followed for patient safety after the CDC reported that it is currently investigating a March 2022 cluster of suspected nontuberculous Mycobacteria infections in children at an undisclosed location. The CDC noted that in 2015 and 2016, children who had received pulpotomies at pediatric dental clinics in Georgia and California experienced nontuberculous Mycobacteria infections after an investigation confirmed high levels of the bacteria in the clinics' dental treatment water supplies. The CDC said that while infections are rare, dental waterlines are susceptible to developing biofilms due to the "long, small-diameter tubing and low flow rates used in dentistry and the frequent periods of stagnation."

Sources: ADA

[FQHC Borrego Health files for bankruptcy over fraud related to dental encounter fee agreements](#)

Borrego Community Health Foundation (Borrego Health), which was formerly known as the largest federally qualified health care (FQHC) non-profit organization operating in the nation, filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on September 12, 2022, in the US Southern District of California. Borrego Health claimed assets of \$50-100 million, and liabilities of approximately \$50-100 million. Most of its production income allegedly originated from various schemes of abuses and fraud related to dental encounter fee agreements, by subcontracted private dentists. Unlike typical subcontracted dental care from FQHCs, these uniquely constructed agreements by Borrego Health paid private dental providers on an encounter fee basis, and not via a fee-for-service methodology. As such, without intensive oversight by Borrego Health's chief dental officer, Dr. Timothy S. Martinez, and his subordinate staff, fraud and abuses were seemingly encouraged. The FBI raided Borrego Health and its retained billing contractor, Premier Healthcare Management, on October 20, 2020.

Sources: Dentistry Today

Litigation and Compliance (continued)

[Heartland Dental sued for alleged misappropriation, copyright infringement of a doctor's image](#)

Legal action was brought Heartland Dental by plaintiff Tara N. Hardin, DDS Inc. for alleged usurping and exploitation of intellectual property. The plaintiff alleges Heartland employed her image on their website and marketing materials without permission. Marketing was apparently aimed at attracting dentists to sell their practices to Heartland or affiliate with Heartland, by misrepresentation of a connection of Hardin with Heartland. Heartland is the largest DSO in the United States, and is affiliated with over 2,400 dentists, in more than 1,600 clinics, in 38 states. Heartland expands their chain of dental practices both with de novo start-ups and affiliations (purchase agreements) with existing small business dental practices and smaller DSOs.

Source: *Dentistry Today*

Events

[ICDO](#) - Aug. 24-26, 2023, UK

[Gartner Data & Analytics Summit](#) - March 20-22, 2023, Orlando Fla.

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