



January–
March 2022

DSO Newsletter

Dental Support Organizations Market Intelligence

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Key Issues

[ADA, coalition thanks lawmakers for passing bill aimed at preventing burnout among health workers as pandemic-related challenges continue to affect industry](#)

The ADA and 70 stakeholders praised Congress for passing the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act, legislation that will give healthcare workers better access to education and training in order to prevent stress and burnout. Lorna Breen, M.D., was an emergency room physician in New York who died by suicide in 2020 after treating COVID-19 patients. In a March 8 letter to leaders in the House and Senate, the groups, led by the American College of Emergency Physicians, thanked the lawmakers for sponsoring the bill.

In addition to providing better education and training, the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act also seeks to enable employers to engage with their workforce on mental health issues and to provide greater resources and accelerate solutions.

The coalition said the COVID-19 pandemic has magnified longstanding issues faced by front line healthcare providers and stressed there “has never been a more critical time” to address mental health, which includes dental service organizations who have had to pivot their model and workforce in order to ensure that their patients have the care and support they need.

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Key Issues (continued)

Dental Practice employees have been affected by the “Great Resignation” where the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics [reported](#) that in Nov. 2021 there were 4.5 million employees who quit their jobs. The healthcare sector reported the second largest number of employees who quit, yet was not as quick to hire back as other sectors. There are a number of reasons that healthcare workers don’t return back as quickly as other sectors and a Ipsos [research](#) showed that many healthcare workers love their careers, yet burnout due to ongoing strain has almost a quarter of workers saying they are contemplating leaving their jobs. Despite 73% of respondents [saying](#) they love working in healthcare, 52% said they feel burned out and 23% say they are likely to leave the field in the near future.

By giving employees better access to education, training and mental health support and by engaging with their workforce to examine whether they are experiencing stress or burnout, dental service organizations can address challenges their workforce are facing to prevent costly challenges resulting from employee turnover and can ensure their teams are heard and understood in order to thrive under future challenges.

Sources: The American Dental Association, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, The Atlantic, Ipsos, March, 2022.

DSO industry predicted to experience ongoing consolidation throughout 2022

Consolidation has been occurring in the DSO industry and this next year its [expected](#) to continue as there is more private equity-backed capital and institutional capital being invested into dentistry than ever before, according to Group Dentistry Now. Technology is also advancing the industry and is allowing DSO providers to offer dentistry through new ways that include incorporating technology such as AI, teledentistry and new payment technologies in order to streamline patient experiences.

Recent transactions include [Oakpoint’s](#) recent acquisition of Royal Oak Dental Group’s seven locations to expand its platform which provides support services backed by a clinical team. The platform provides human resources, finance, marketing IT, patient advocacy and compliance. Other transactions include Spark Dental Management’s [acquisition](#) of Children’s Dental Management and its 35 locations, Southern Orthodontic’s [partnership](#) with Hess Orthodontics, and Gen4 Dental’s acquisitions of Accelerate Dental, [Harris Dental](#) and [Smile One Services](#) and others.

Experts reflected on this trend as well, including Dr. John Luther, Chief Dental Officer at Western Dental who [told](#) the *Dental Tribune* that the pandemic has driven DSOs to provide more services under one roof and an influx of private equity insures that growth of dental service models will continue to grow and multiply, providing more opportunities than ever before.

Sources: Group Dentistry Now, Rock Mountain Capital, Southern Orthodontic, Gen4 Dental Partners, Dental Tribune

Dental Service Organization News

[Aspen Group to open TAG Oral Care Center for excellence](#)

The Aspen Group will open the TAG Oral Care Center for Excellence, a clinical facility designed to provide comprehensive dental care at no cost to underserved Illinois residents in summer 2022. The 25,000 sq. ft. clinic in Chicago will include 14 dental care rooms and two surgical suites and will offer patients access to the latest dental care technology. The center will be operated by a team of dentists and dental support staff who will offer free service to around 2,500 qualifying patients each year. The free services will include comprehensive dental procedures.

Source: Group Dentistry Now, March 1, 2022

[Heartland Dental Celebrates DSO Record Growth in 2021](#)

Heartland Dental experienced unprecedented growth in 2021 by adding 424 new practices to its footprint across its 38 states. Through the addition of 54 de novos, 92 Affiliations and 278 office locations through its acquisition of American Dental Partners, Heartland Dental now supports more than 2,300 doctors in more than 1,550 offices representing an increase of well over 150% in supported locations over 2020. In 2022 Heartland Dental, will focus on advancing single-office affiliation growth at higher levels, while also adding group practices and regional dental support organizations (DSOs) which may offer oral care specialties. Heartland Dental also anticipates 100% growth in de novos with plans to open 107 DeNovo offices in 2022 across Florida, Idaho, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, and more.

Source: Heartland Dental, Jan. 18, 2022

[Beacon Oral Specialists continues to grow across California](#)

Beacon Oral Specialists, a Texas-based oral surgery management services organization founded in 2020, partnered with Dr. John Tillner of Chula Vista Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Center. Beacon's affiliated practices continue to expand across Calif. and include providers Bay Area OSM, Atlanta Oral & Facial Surgery, Fairfax Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, Orange County Centers for Oral Surgery and Dental Implants, and Desert Oral Surgery with more coming soon.

Source: Beacon Oral Specialists, January 2022

[ApZme announces dental partnership organization, focusing on dental sleep medicine](#)

The initial ApZme [platform](#) is a combination of group practices with locations in Texas, Fla., and Ga. They plan to grow dental sleep medicine practices in conjunction with traditional dental practices. Dr. Kent Smith DDS, D-ABDSM, D-ASBA and Dr. Jeff Rodgers DMD, D-ABDSM, D-ASBA will be the as clinical directors. The group will be in 10 locations soon, with a goal of 30 locations by end of 2022, by adding partners who are focused on growing their Dental Sleep Medicine practice.

Source: Digital Journal, January 11, 2022

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Dental Service Organization News (continued)

[DentalPost releases 2022 Dental Professional Salary Survey report expects highest turnover among admin support positions](#)

DentalPost [released](#) its 2022 Dental Salary Survey Report for dental professionals and practices, where around 13,000 dentists and dental practice team members responded to questions about salaries, compensation, bonuses, benefits and work conditions in their dental teams and offices. The dentistry has been affected by the impacts of the pandemic and corresponding labor shortages, which have caused salaries to rise for a variety of positions. The survey indicates turnover could be as high as 30% this year among administrative team members, who are increasingly likely to find higher-paying positions.

Source: Dental Post, January 11, 2022

[DSO Leadership Summit Shares Fresh Perspectives on Group Practice Success](#)

Registration for the 7th annual DSO Leadership Summit is open and will take place October 6-8, 2022 in Nashville, Tenn. Emerging dental group and DSO executives, owners, investors and industry partners can register for the two-day event [here](#). The event is expected to draw around 400 attendees that include DSO executives, venture capitalists, and industry partners. The event will feature panels discussing business, staffing and technology challenges faced by emerging and mid-sized group dental practices.

Source: HR For Health, February 10, 2022

Mergers and Acquisitions

[Spark Dental Management acquires Children's Dental Management](#)

Spark Dental Management is backed by Rock Mountain Capital, and it has acquired Children's Dental Management (CDM) and its 35 locations in three states. This acquisition expands Spark's footprint to 74 locations in seven states. Dr. Jason Hartman, founder of Spark Orthodontics, was named President and Michael O'Donnell, CEO of CDM, was appointed CEO. In the fourth quarter of 2021 Spark closed on five other acquisitions. Spark was founded as Spark Orthodontics in 2010 by Jason M. Hartman, D.M.D., M.S.

Source: Rock Mountain Capital, January 12, 2022

Private Equity

[Smile Doctors receives strategic investment from Thomas H. Lee Partners](#)

Smile Doctors received a strategic investment from Thomas H. Lee Partners, a private equity firm investing in growth companies. The firm is investing alongside existing financial sponsor Linden Capital Partners in an equal partnership which will support Smile Doctors' efforts of continued growth and expansion. Smile Doctors said the expansion will allow it to become more accessible and to create new partnerships in order to further expand its services.

Source: Smile Doctors, January 5, 2022

[Investor ready to buy majority stake in largest Saudi dental chain](#)

Gulf Islamic Investments, a Dubai-based investment company is buying a majority share in Saudi Arabia's largest dental chain, ALMESWAK Dental Clinics, which runs around 85 clinics in 25 Saudi cities. The deal suggests healthcare investments in the kingdom are growing in appeal. The investment company will reportedly buy a 70% stake in ALMESWAK for around \$600 million. The 70% stake has been owned since 2017 by private equity firm Jadwa Investment, and the remaining 30% of the shares are held by Emirati healthcare company United Eastern Medical Services. Saudi Arabia's dental industry is undergoing a reset after a drive for "Saudization" of its dental workforce was confirmed in Oct. 2021. Saudi Arabia's Minister of Human Resources and Social Development wants at least 60% of jobs in selected healthcare specialties, including dentistry, to be held by Saudi nationals. Effective April 11, 2022, the Nitaqat Saudization program applies to all privately operated dental clinics in the country that employ three or more dental professionals.

Source: Dental Tribune, January 11, 2022

Innovation & Future of Dental

[New research outlines vaping's unique connection to periodontal disease](#)

Researchers from the NYU College of Dentistry completed the first study on the oral health of users of e-cigarettes. They found that vaping created a unique periodontal microbiome, compared with that of non-smokers and conventional cigarette smokers, and that participants who vaped experienced a worsened state of periodontal disease at the end of the study. The study compared the bacterial composition and cytokine concentrations of the subgingival plaque in conventional cigarette smokers, e-cigarette users and non-smokers over the course of six months. The participants in all groups exhibited some evidence of periodontal disease at baseline. Co-author of the study Fangxi Xu, a junior research scientist at NYU, said: "Vaping appears to be driving unique patterns in bacteria and influencing the growth of some bacteria in a manner akin to cigarette smoking, but with its own profile and risks to oral health."

Source: Dental Tribune, March 11, 2022

[Straumann SmileAward 2022 to be presented in two winning categories](#)

Dental professionals are encouraged to submit their most inspiring patient stories until 20 April in order to participate in this year's SmileAward contest. In 2021, the inaugural contest attracted 93 participants from 30 countries, and their clinical cases focused on immediate protocols. This year's competition asks dental professionals to show how they have changed their patients' lives in one of two different categories in order to share how dentistry can restore confidence and improve well-being. The SmileAward will reward dental professionals for full-arch rehabilitation patient stories in the Straumann category or for clear aligner orthodontic patient stories in the ClearCorrect category. Voting will be held from 1 May to 10 May and winners will be announced at EuroPerio10, which will take place from 15 to 18 June in Copenhagen in Denmark.

Source: Dental Tribune, March 10, 2022

[Interview: Dr Rune Fisker discusses key digital dentistry trends for 2022](#)

Dr Rune Fisker, senior VP of 3Shape, a developer and manufacturer of 3D scanners and software solutions for the dental and audio industries, discussed key trends to expect from digital dentistry to look out for in 2022. Fisker discussed the dental industry's race in comparison to become platforms like Uber, Netflix, Airbnb and others who have each disrupted their industries. There hasn't yet been a shift to that level in the dentistry industry despite increased adoption of 3D printing, intra-oral scanners, AI, digital dentures and clear aligners. Fisker said despite increasingly useful digital tools, each remain disconnected, and no platform has yet brought all of these tools together. There are a number of larger tech companies in dentistry trying to build a platform that brings these tools and approaches together to solve a range of problems, including 3Shape, which launched 3Shape Unite, an open platform that connects all the different digital dots in dental clinics.

Source: Dental Tribune, March 9, 2022

Dental Practice News

[Pacific Dental to host activities celebrating dental assistants nationwide](#)

Pacific Dental Services is joining the American Dental Assistants Association in celebrating the 45th annual Dental Assistants Recognition Week, March 6-12. Dental assistants are instrumental in strengthening the entire practice and ensuring the health and happiness of their patients and dental teams. PDS and its supported dental practices are embracing this year's theme, "Dental Assistants: Passionate About Our Patients, Dedicated to Our Profession," with a week of celebration and events to honor its dental assistants and those training to become DAs.

Source: Aegis Dental Network, March 3, 2022

[Align Technology receives top spots on Institutional Investor's 2022 All-America Executive Team and Most Honored Company lists](#)

Align Technology recognized three executives, Align's Investor Relations Program and annual Analyst Day, as well as the company overall in Institutional Investor's (II) 2022 Most Honored Companies Awards which celebrates the U.S. Companies who [ranked](#) at the top of II's All-America Executive Team survey. The rankings gauge the quality of U.S. investor relations programs as well as CEO, CFO, IRO, and ESG performance, as voted on by the buy- and sell-side analyst community for the 2021 calendar year. After tabulating the results, II announced that Joe Hogan, president and chief executive officer, ranked third in both the combined Buy Side and Sell Side category as well as the Buy Side category alone. John Morici, executive VP, global finance and CFO, ranked first in the Buy Side category and second in the Combined category. Shirley Stacy, VP of finance, investor relations and corporate communications ranked third in both the Combined and Buy Side categories with the entire Align Investor Relations program placing second in both categories.

Source: Align Technology, March 9, 2022

[Dynamic Growth Dental support appoints Dr. Heather Mitterer as COO](#)

The company promoted Heather Mitterer, Ph.D., SPHR, SHRM-SCP to Chief Operating Officer. As COO, she will be responsible for all day-to-day operational and administrative functions of the business, focusing on company culture, business systems and processes, team development, practice growth and organizational infrastructure. With dental offices across Pennsylvania, Dynamic Growth is a quickly growing DSO. Dynamic Growth made the highly prestigious Emerging Dental Groups to Watch in 2022 list.

Source: Group Dentistry Now, February 17, 2022

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Dental Practice News (continued)

[Absolute Dental adds 5 additional affiliated practices in Q4, concluding 2021 growth plan](#)

Nevada's largest DSO completed the acquisition of two dental practices in northern Nevada along with opening 3 new practices in southern Nevada, bringing the organization to a total of 37 affiliated dental practices throughout the state. These five additional practices complete Absolute Dental's 2021 defined growth plan of adding 13 additional practices throughout the year, which included a total of 6 new practices and 7 acquisitions, resulting in a 54% increase in total number of affiliated practices. Headquartered in Las Vegas, Absolute Dental is positioned to continue its growth trajectory in 2022 through additional acquisitions, new openings, existing practice expansions and maturation of all 2021 growth initiatives.

Source: Absolute Dental, January 11, 2022

[Erika Williams joins Dental Care Alliance \(DCA\) as Chief Talent Officer](#)

Williams will lead the recruiting team and oversee the organization's strategic efforts to attract talent and will lead the training and development team. Williams has 20 years of leadership experience in human resources. Most recently she served as the VP of Talent at Advantage Capital, where she oversaw the firm's talent acquisition, development, and retention strategies. She also spent 18 years in healthcare system recruiting at BJC HealthCare, one of the largest nonprofit healthcare organizations in the country. Prior to that, she worked in hospitality recruiting as a Regional Talent Acquisition Manager for national restaurant chains Olive Garden and Applebee's. DCA currently supports 370 allied practices and more than 775 dentists across 21 states. DCA's allied practices represent all dental specialties and treat patients under more than 130 brand names.

Source: Dental Care Alliance, January 25, 2022

[ProHEALTH Dental Welcomes Three C-Suite Leaders](#)

Based in Lake Success, New York, ProHEALTH Dental added three new clinical and business leaders to enhance their executive team as the company continues to progress into a new phase. To meet the needs of their growing network, ProHEALTH Dental welcomed Kai Zhao as their first Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Nicholas Elian as their new Chief Dental Officer, and Dr. Martha Miqueo as their new Associate Chief Dental Officer.

Source: Dentistry Today, January 23, 2022

[Smile Brands announces two new affiliate partnerships: Riley Dental Group and Dr. Richard Crossland](#)

Dr. Paul Riley and Dr. Vivek Solanki lead a team of 18 from their growing San Fernando, California location. The practice began in 1954. Dr. Richard Crossland began his practice in 1989 and look to expand his periodontal program and grow his team by partnering with Smile Brands. The DSO, based in Irvine, California, is one of the largest providers of dental support services in the United States. The company supports nearly 700 affiliated practices, with more than 7,500 dedicated team members across 30 states. Smile Brands supports a portfolio of over 75 brands including well-known regional brands: Bright Now! Dental, Castle Dental, Merit Dental, Midwest Dental, Monarch Dental, and Mondovi Dental.

Source: Smile Brands, January 5, 2022

Litigation and Compliance

[Align Technology announces settlement of outstanding litigation with 3Shape A/S](#)

Align Technology settled its longstanding patent infringement and antitrust litigation with 3Shape A/S which began in Nov. of 2017. The litigation included patent infringement claims pending in federal courts in the District of Delaware and the Eastern District of Texas, as well as petitions to invalidate patents before the United States Patent Trial and Appeal Board brought by both parties. In addition, 3Shape had an antitrust claim pending against Align in Delaware District Court. Terms of the settlement were not disclosed. Following the settlement, Invisalign customers may continue current practices of using scans from 3Shape Trios 2 and Trios 3 scanners for Invisalign case submissions in certain countries and territories outside the United States, China and Japan subject to Align's terms and conditions for Invisalign case submissions, the settlement and other applicable agreements.

Source: Align Technology, Feb. 7, 2022

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