

Start Up Companies Help U.S. Dentists Fight Back Against Corporate Dental Chains.

Internet technology and industry innovations provide affordable solutions for transforming the private practice dental office into competitive group practices.

LAKE FOREST, CA , USA, October 22, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The strong U.S. economy is



masking the challenges facing private practice dentists throughout the U.S. Specifically, the competitive threat that rapidly growing corporate dental chains (DSO's) and reductions in insurance reimbursements pose to local neighborhood dental offices.

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According to Dental Economics, DSO's already control 16% of all U.S. dental practices and they are growing nearly 15% per year. Meanwhile, private practice dental offices are declining 7% per year. Why is this happening? DSO's have significant advantages over neighborhood dental practices because they offer operational efficiency; have much larger

marketing budgets; and they offer more comprehensive in-practice services.

In addition, dental insurance companies have been relentlessly reducing treatment reimbursements making it even more challenging for the private practice dentist to compete. According to the American Dental Association, the average income of dentists has declined 9 out of the last 11 years.

A number of start up firms are creating services to help private practice dentists carve a path through this financial crisis. [MyPractice9](#), a Southern California start-up, has created a web application which allows private practice dentists the ability to find and contract with local dental specialists who will travel to their office to perform specialty dental treatments. The company describes it services as "Just In Time Group Practice Services" designed to counter the "all services under one roof" value claim made by DSO's.

"In the U.S., private practice dentists refer out nearly \$8 billion in treatment revenue to local dental specialists like oral surgeons and periodontists," said Michael Hill, CEO of Mypractice9. "In light of growing competitive pressures, it seemed obvious to us that dentists would be keenly interested in recapturing some of that lost practice revenue. The wonderful thing about our model is that the dentist, just as in the referral model, doesn't have to perform any specialty treatments. There is a rapidly growing population of specialists who are willing to travel a few days each month to help dentists within their practice. We created a vehicle to help facilitate those interactions. We provide the platform, tools and contracts to ensure that these engagements are managed effectively."

Federal and state law prohibits dentists from receiving any compensation for referral work. As a result, many dentists have decided to further their clinical training in an effort to expand treatment services to their patients. The most notable example of this trend is implant dentistry. Today, roughly 25% of all U.S. dentists are now placing their own implants rather than referring this work out to a local oral surgeon. While the procedure involves substantially higher clinical risk than traditional practice services, dentists are finding it necessary to explore new practice

service opportunities in an effort to remain competitive.

"There is no question that specialists are feeling the pinch as well," Hill added. "When a dentist decides to start doing their own surgical procedures it means fewer referral treatments for specialists. In the absence of a service like MyPractice9, more dentists will take on the more complex treatments and specialists will continue to see a decline in their dental businesses as well. Our bias is that specialists should be doing specialty work. With our model, the specialist gets to choose where they want to work, when they want to work and the types of cases they want to work on."

As the dental industry continues its technological and operational transformation other firms are filling in infrastructure that is needed to help the next generation dental practice. Mobile digital imaging services, for example, have begun popping up around the country. Vans, carrying the latest Computerized Tomography (CT) technology simply pull up in front of a dental office at a specified time. Patients step in and instantly receive their CT scan saving the dentist tens of thousands in equipment expense.

"All this disruption is actually a normal part of business cycles," said Hill. "The great news is that disruption always opens the door for more opportunities for entrepreneurial-minded companies. I have been in dentistry for 24 years and this is about as exciting of a time as I have seen."

Nicole Baker
mypractice9
949-668-0400
[email us here](#)

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