

WINTER 2025

Smiling

A Heartland Dental Publication

Rising to
New Heights




HEARTLAND.
DENTAL



Smiling Magazine Winter 2025

All rights reserved. Reproduction of stories, photographs, and advertisements without written permission is prohibited.

Founder and Executive Chairman
Rick Workman, DMD

Senior Leadership Team
President and Chief Executive Officer
Patrick C. Bauer

Executive Vice President and
Chief Operating Officer
DeAnn McClain

Executive Vice President and
Chief Information Officer
Craig Kabbes

Executive Vice President and
Chief Financial Officer
Travis Franklin

Executive Vice President and
Chief Growth Officer
Mark Greenstein

Executive Vice President and
Chief Marketing Officer
Sherianne James

Executive Vice President and Chief Human
Resources Officer
Kirsty Leyland

Senior Vice President and General Counsel
Tamra Kempf

Vision

To be a world-class company
and the leader in dentistry

Mission

To support doctors and their teams as they
deliver the highest quality dental care and
experiences to the communities they serve
while providing exceptional careers and
creating value for our stakeholders.

Article Contributors

Vice President of Communications
Jessica Thompson

Communications Manager
Kelly Kong

Communications Strategist
Victoria Downie

Contents

- 3 From the Heart**
A message from Pat Bauer
- 4 Building an Engine of Growth Through Education**
- 6 Shaping the Future of Patient Care Through Innovation**
- 10 Doctor Mastery Program**
Celebrating 10 Years of Growth, Mentorship, and Mastery
- 12 Built to Grow**
How Heartland Dental Empowers Hygienists to Thrive
- 14 Heartland Dental Welcomes Smile Design Dentistry into Its Supported Network**
- 16 Changing Lives One Smile at a Time**
- 18 From the Ground Up**
Dr. Nestor Villarreal's De Novo Journey in Naples
- 21 A Year of Flexibility, Focus, and Forward Momentum**
HDflex Turns One
- 24 More Time, More Impact**
What Affiliation Made Possible for Dr. Sean Bates
- 26 Welcome**
Newly Supported Practices

Heartland Dental is the nation's largest dental support organization, providing non-clinical administrative support services. What started from the entrepreneurial spirit of Rick Workman, DMD, with his single dental practice, has evolved into affiliating with over 3,000 doctors in over 1,900 locations across 39 states and the District of Columbia. The company is majority owned by KKR, a leading global investment firm.

From the Heart

A message from Pat Bauer Heartland Dental President and CEO

As I reflect on the year, I am proud to share the Winter 2025 edition of Smiling Magazine, which features the perspectives and achievements of Heartland Dental supported doctors, hygienists, and leaders. As we continue to navigate the rapidly evolving dental industry and address challenges in our external environment, their experiences provide meaningful insights that are valuable for all dental professionals.

This edition of Smiling Magazine also celebrates the theme of Heartland Dental's annual Winter Conference – Elevate: Rising to New Heights. In this magazine, you'll read inspiring stories about how Heartland Dental supported doctors and teams have reached new heights in building themselves and their teams and giving back to the communities they serve. Whether hosting a Free Dentistry Day to give back to those in need, growing personally and professionally through the Doctor Mastery Program, or embracing innovation with new technologies that are shaping the future of dentistry, these stories are not only a reflection of our collective progress but a powerful reminder of what's possible when we grow together.

Inside these pages, you'll meet supported doctors like Dr. Sean Bates and Dr. Nestor Villarreal, whose journeys through affiliation and opening a de novo practice showcase the power of support and partnership. You'll read stories from supported doctors, hygienists, and leaders who are innovating, advancing best practices and setting new standards in patient care.

We also celebrate an important milestone, the 10-year anniversary of our Doctor Mastery Program. What began as Dr. Workman's bold vision to help doctors achieve personal and professional expertise has now empowered 56 supported doctors to rise to new heights in their clinical skill, leadership, and mentorship.

As you turn each page, I hope you're inspired by the possibilities our industry offers and encouraged to explore all that you can achieve. We're not just celebrating stories of success, we're charting the future of this profession together.

Thank you for everything you do to help Heartland Dental, and each other.

Pat Bauer

President and CEO, Heartland Dental



Building a Clinical Confidence Engine of Growth

At Heartland Dental, education isn't just continuing education – it's how we accelerate confidence, retain supported doctors, and grow practices faster than anyone else. For more than 30 years, education has been treated as a business growth engine, not a classroom event – a philosophy first inspired by Walter Haley and still core to how we develop high-performing clinicians today.

One of the most powerful ways Heartland Dental helps fuel that growth is access to a network of Regional Doctor Mentors of Operations (RDMOs). These experienced supported doctors dedicate time to mentoring newer clinicians through hands-on learning, real-time guidance, and practice-based coaching. Their mentorship helps accelerate clinical confidence and strengthen team leadership across the network of supported practices.

In this article, you'll hear from three supported doctors—Kelly Buoniconti, DMD, FAGD, Ashley Housley, DMD and Richard Straus, DMD—who each serve as RDMOs and exemplify Heartland Dental supported practices' doctor-led culture in action.

A Culture of Transparency and Growth

Heartland Dental operates with open book management, which fosters a commitment to education and a culture that creates “results producing action.” Supported doctors and teams have open access to P/L and daily results, giving them the insights to track performance, benchmark progress, and learn from one another.

That openness transforms results. Doctors collaborate across regions, shadow peers, and adopt best practices that strengthen both patient care and operational excellence and push one another to achieve their highest potential.

Dr. Housley sees that commitment to growth firsthand. “The whole reason I started at a Heartland supported practice was the access to continuing education, I wanted to learn more after school and grow,” she says. “As I got further along in my career, I wanted more opportunities to get even better, whether it's aesthetics, implants, or leadership. We have so many great teachers and leaders to lean on, and such a supportive community.”

Always Learning. Always Leading.

HDU's tagline, “Always Learning. Always Leading,” captures the spirit of Heartland Dental's approach to education. From clinical workshops and leadership sessions

to self-paced e-learning and live virtual events, HDU offers accessible opportunities tailored to every learner's style and stage of growth.

More than 40,000 CE credits have been earned this year alone. But it's not just about learning, it's about action. “Ten years ago, I had no interest in endodontics, implants, or cosmetics,” says Dr. Buoniconti. “But I knew the only way I'd grow was with the endless CE Heartland provided.”

Today, Dr. Buoniconti proudly offers her patients comprehensive care at her practice – performing endodontics, implants, cosmetic restorations, and Invisalign®. “I was encouraged to complete the DMP program and earn my FAGD. That growth was possible because of the resources and encouragement Heartland Dental's support model provides.”

“For many new doctors, it's their first time doing a surgical extraction or root canal,” adds Dr. Straus. “We host workshops, offer shadowing, and answer their questions. That support accelerates their learning curve and builds long-term success.”

HDU's live clinical workshops—held in regions across the country—offer hands-on training in real clinical settings. Led by RDMOs and local mentor doctors, these sessions provide peer-to-peer learning and practical experience. Programs like the

Implant and Aesthetic Continuums build advanced skills over time, while the one-day Clinical Foundations Workshop delivers live-patient training in procedures like root canals, crowns, buildups, and extractions.

“Live clinical workshops and mentoring give doctors the confidence to take on procedures they know are right for their patients but might otherwise hesitate to perform alone,” says Jacob Berger, DMD, FAGD, Clinical Director. “Having a mentor present helps them apply their existing skills safely, gain real-world experience, and build clinical confidence.”

Growth That Extends to the Whole Team

Heartland Dental's commitment to continued development extends beyond doctors. Hygienists, assistants, and team members are supported with programs that build confidence, sharpen skills, and boost collaboration.

“I have hygienists who really want to grow and advance their careers, which I love,” says Dr. Housley. “They want to be high-impact—and I love seeing that same drive in them.”

Dr. Buoniconti agrees: “It's been my greatest accomplishment to watch my team members grow. Their clinical and communication skills help us thrive.”

“Education is mentoring and mentoring is education,” says Dr. Straus. “You have to be at the top of your game to mentor. While you're helping others, you're benefiting yourself, too.”

He adds, “What might take another doctor three years, we help them reach in one. That momentum reduces stress and helps teams hit their goals. Everyone wins.”

Mentorship: Learning, Leading, and Paying It Forward

Mentorship lies at the core of Heartland's educational engine. As supported doctors gain expertise, they share it, building networks of guidance and support that strengthen the entire organization.

“It's helped me step out of my comfort zone,” Dr. Housley says of her experience as

“As I got further along in my career, I wanted more opportunities to get even better, whether it's aesthetics, implants, or leadership. We have so many great teachers and leaders to lean on, and such a supportive community.”

Dr. Housley



Ashley Housley, DMD

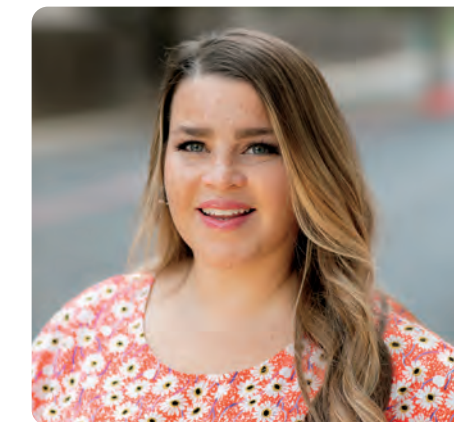
both a mentor and mentee. “I know I can call and ask questions. We're encouraged to ask questions, and that supportive community makes a difference. Even after 16 years, I still reach out to my mentors because I want to keep getting better.”

She now mentors other supported doctors as well as fellow mentors. “Education is huge to me,” she adds. “I love seeing new doctors grow and change. The doctor in my practice started right after school, and I got to mentor her closely and watch her develop as a clinician and leader. Outside the practice, I get to mentor other mentors, it's full circle.”

Dr. Buoniconti's path mirrors that cycle of learning and leadership. “Two years ago, I began my mentorship journey as a subregional doctor mentor. This year, I took on the role of regional doctor mentor,” she shares. “At first, I wasn't sure I was ready but over the last year I've taken ownership of it. My metrics have grown because I'm practicing what I preach, holding myself accountable and leading by example. The best way to learn something is to teach it.”

Dr. Straus can attest to that. “I'm 67 now, and years ago I was very comfortable in my practice. But when I moved into a new office with a partner doing all kinds of advanced procedures, I realized at 57 that I needed to up my game. It pushed me to think differently and finally start doing things I already knew how to do but wasn't doing.”

He believes that growth mindset is key: “You're never too old to do something a different way. Just because you think you're



Kelly Buoniconti, DMD, FAGD

“We host workshops, offer shadowing, and answer their questions. That support accelerates their learning curve and builds long-term success.”

Dr. Straus

good at something doesn't mean you are, until you see another way. Mentorship gives you that new lens.”

He's also quick to note what sets Heartland Dental apart: “When Heartland has recruiting events, one of the biggest things doctors say is they're joining because of access to the mentoring network. I really think it's unique in dentistry and it plays a huge role in helping new doctors ramp up quickly.”

Investing in People

Heartland Dental's growth story is powered by people – by supported doctors and teams who never stop learning, who lift others through mentorship, and who lead by example. When doctors and teams are empowered to operate at the top of their capabilities, excellence in care follows and with it, an engine of organic growth that shows no signs of slowing down.



Richard Straus, DMD

Shaping the Future of Patient Care Through Innovation

Heartland Dental offers the opportunity to integrate state-of-the-art advancements so supported doctors are well-equipped to deliver world-class dental care. This includes investing in advanced imaging, artificial intelligence, and minimally invasive treatments that improve outcomes and create more confident patient decisions. From iTero Lumina Wands and VideaAI powered by VideaHealth to enamel-regenerating solutions like Curodont™ from vVardis, these innovations are transforming how supported doctors communicate, diagnose, and care for patients.

Anna Singh, DMD, Senior Vice President of Clinical Operations, Timothy Quirt, DDS, MBA, Senior Vice President of Clinical Operations, Seth A. Gibree, DMD, FAGD, Senior Director of Clinical AI and Innovation, Todd Davis, DMD, FICOI, FAGD, Clinical Director of Technology Integration, Michael Badger, DDS, FAGD, FACD, DICOI, Rebecca Pounds, DDS, FAGD, and David Foster, DDS, shared how dental technology is reshaping their approach to dentistry and deepening patient trust.

How have innovations like the iTero Lumina Wand, (Videa)AI, or Curodont™ changed the way you communicate with patients or present treatment plans?

Dr. Badger: The three biggest words for me are efficiency, confidence, and clarity. With the Lumina Wand, patients can see in real time what I'm seeing. The images are so clear that there's no confusion. AI lets me communicate in a language patients understand. They can see it, believe it, and take action.

Dr. Davis: VideaAI has become like an. It alerts me to possible decay and helps me visually explain it to patients. When they see it for themselves, they trust what they're seeing, not just what I'm saying.

Dr. Pounds: AI has revolutionized how I educate patients. I use intraoral photos alongside AI to show areas of concern and explain why I'm recommending Curodont™. I find that when I tell patients, "We can fix this without a drill," they are ready to get the treatment today.

Dr. Foster: Technology is one of the five pillars of my practice's mission. We scan every new patient, review AI findings together, and talk about prevention using Curodont™ as a first line of defense. The result is a much more informed and trusting patient conversation.

Dr. Quirt: These tools have reshaped how we connect with patients. The

Lumina Wand gives instant visual clarity, and paired with AI and Curodont™, it shifts conversations from "what's wrong" to "what's possible." That builds trust, accelerates acceptance, and empowers patients to own their oral health.

Dr. Singh: The Lumina Wand has completely changed how we communicate. When patients see a high-quality image, they instantly understand. It sparks stronger conversations and leads to higher case acceptance. A picture really is worth a thousand words.

"At Heartland Dental, we never roll out technology without a full support plan for supported offices. We pilot, gather feedback, measure KPIs, and train not just doctors but DAs, hygienists, and front office teams. Everyone who interacts with patients needs to understand the technology to communicate effectively. That's how we create a seamless, confident experience across every role."

Dr. Singh



Anna Singh, DMD, Senior Vice President of Clinical Operations



Timothy Quirt, DDS, MBA, Senior Vice President of Clinical Operations

Dr. Gibree: For years, dentistry wasn't great at visual communication. AI now translates complex data into images patients understand. Color-coded visuals help them see what's happening in their own mouths, making discussions easier and more effective.

Can you share a specific example where one of these technologies helped you achieve a breakthrough moment with a patient?

Dr. Badger: Just recently, I had a patient who's a neurologist. We'd been monitoring his oral health for years, and with Lumina and AI, I was finally able to show him a clear, undeniable progression of wear and decay. It clicked for him, and we moved forward with 20 Curodont™ treatments that prevented future crowns.

Dr. Davis: For me, the breakthrough was in dentures. Scanning dentures used to be incredibly technique-sensitive, but the first time I used the Lumina, I realized it just works. That moment opened the door to digital dentures across my practice, two-visit dentures are now possible for more patients. It's a major leap forward in efficiency and comfort.

Dr. Pounds: One of my most powerful examples is personal, I have treated myself with Curodont™. Being able to tell my patients that I've used it and believe in it firsthand builds trust instantly. They know I wouldn't recommend something I don't believe in.

Dr. Foster: When we started scanning every new patient, I was hesitant. Now,

"The three biggest words for me are efficiency, confidence, and clarity. With the Lumina Wand, patients can see in real time what I'm seeing. The images are so clear that there's no confusion. AI lets me communicate in a language patients understand. They can see it, believe it, and take action."

Dr. Badger

with the Lumina Wand, I couldn't imagine working without it. The quality of the images is unbelievable, and patients finally get to see their teeth in detail. It's changed how we educate and involve them in their care.

How have your teams responded to these new tools, and what have you done as a leader to help them adopt and integrate these innovations into everyday practice?

Dr. Badger: I tell my team this is the direction we're going, it's about making

their lives easier. Once they see how patients react, the belief window goes up. My team's confidence in presenting treatment has grown tremendously because of these tools.

Dr. Davis: Change can be hard, but leadership means following through. I remind my team that technology is for the patient. My hygienist recently scanned a four-year-old using the Lumina and said it was the easiest scan of the day. Those moments show the team how tech can make their jobs easier and improve outcomes at the same time.

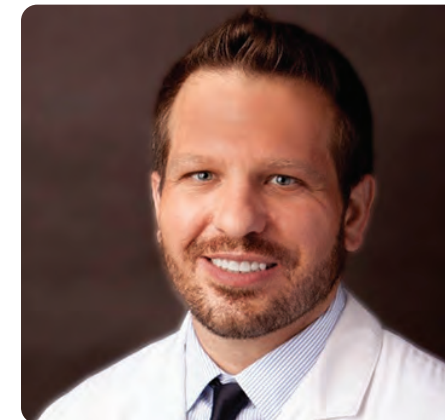
Dr. Pounds: Our team loves the technology and learning. Even when we hire new team members, we set the expectation that these tools are part of how we deliver care. When patients see teamwork and commitment, they feel they're in the right place.

Dr. Foster: Change is never easy, but it starts with vision and passion. As doctors, we must believe in the tools first. When our energy and belief are strong, the team follows. That's how innovation becomes culture

With technology how does Heartland Dental supported practices help ensure it is putting supported doctors in the best possible position to succeed and provide their patients the best care?

Dr. Singh: At Heartland Dental, we never roll out technology without a full support plan for supported offices. We pilot, gather feedback, measure KPIs, and train not just doctors but DAs, hygienists, and front office teams. Everyone who interacts with patients needs to understand the technology to communicate effectively. That's how we create a seamless, confident experience across every role.

Dr. Quirt: We don't chase technology, we integrate it with purpose in Heartland Dental supported practices. Every innovation we implement is designed to remove friction and amplify confidence so supported doctors can deliver care they're proud of and experiences patients remember.



Todd Davis, DMD, FICOI, FAGD, Clinical Director of Technology Integration



Seth A. Gibree, DMD, FAGD, Senior Director of Clinical AI and Innovation

Dr. Gibree: We're intentional about listening to our supported doctors. Their feedback helps shape how we innovate and implement technology. The goal is always to make care delivery easier and more effective, so doctors can spend more time patient-facing, that's where the real impact happens.

What excites you most about where dental innovation is heading?

Dr. Badger: AI is evolving so quickly that it feels like I'm learning something new every few weeks. These tools make us better clinicians and help us treat underlying conditions instead of just reacting to symptoms. They're making dentistry more analytical, consistent, and trustworthy.

Dr. Singh: We're just scratching the surface with AI. Clinical documentation, note-taking, and even patient financing could all be automated soon, freeing doctors and teams to spend more time caring for patients. AI will help doctors connect and communicate on an entirely new level.

"As a supported doctor, I'm grateful to help test new technology that improves both patient care and team experience. It's exciting to know we're shaping the future of dentistry together."

Dr. Foster

Dr. Gibree: I'm excited about how automation will simplify everything – from insurance verification to treatment presentation. The more we streamline those processes, the more time teams can spend face-to-face with patients. Dentistry is moving toward smarter, faster, more personalized care, and that's thrilling.

"We don't chase technology, we integrate it with purpose in Heartland Dental supported practices. Every innovation we implement is designed to remove friction and amplify confidence so supported doctors can deliver care they're proud of and experiences patients remember."

Dr. Quirt



Michael Badger, DDS, FAGD, FACD, DICOI



Rebecca Pounds, DDS, FAGD



David Foster, DDS

Dr. Pounds: AI will do so much more in our offices in the near future, note taking, periodontal charting, and beyond. It's going to help to improve the work flow, efficiencies, and allow us to be more focused on patient care.

Dr. Quirt: The future is about connection, linking data, insights, and people. AI will become the quiet partner in every operator, helping predict needs, document care, and personalize prevention before issues even start. The next leap will be technology that goes beyond efficiency to empathy. That's where the real magic happens.

Dr. Foster: As a supported doctor, I'm grateful to help test new technology that improves both patient care and team experience. It's exciting to know we're shaping the future of dentistry together.

As technology continues to evolve, Heartland Dental remains committed to purposeful innovation that empowers supported doctors to enhance patient care. From AI-driven diagnostics to minimally invasive treatments, these tools are reshaping the way dentistry is delivered – making it more precise, more personal, and more trusted. With a strong foundation of clinical leadership and a future-focused mindset, Heartland Dental is helping supported doctors rise to new standards of excellence – one breakthrough at a time.



HENRY SCHEIN®
SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Henry Schein is Proud to be Heartland Dental's
Partner in Elevating Patient Care

Practice Care is **our priority**



\$22.6M worth of product and cash donated in 2024 to various non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, UN agencies and industry partners.



Through the We Care Global Challenge, Team Schein Members packed and **donated 30,000 care kits to Ronald McDonald houses** around the world to support families with hospitalized children.



Since 2003, Henry Schein has contributed more than **\$20M in oral health care products** which has provided free oral health education and services to more than 9.5 million underserved children in the U.S.



An Ethisphere® Institute World's Most Ethical Company, **since 2012**.

ACE SOUTHERN
A DIVISION OF HENRY SCHEIN®

BIOHORIZONS®

HealthFirst

HENRY SCHEIN ONE

HENRY SCHEIN®
PRODUCTS

HENRY SCHEIN®
DENTAL

Doctor Mastery Program – Celebrating 10 Years of Growth, Mentorship, and Mastery

In 2016, Heartland Dental introduced the Doctor Mastery Program (DMP) with one clear goal: to help supported general dentists reach new heights, personally and professionally. As we mark a decade of the DMP, we celebrate not only its longevity but all of the doctors who have stepped into deeper clinical excellence, leadership, and impact through this five-to-seven-year journey.

More than 50 supported doctors have completed the program since its launch, earning the distinction of DMP graduates. Along the way, they've achieved AGD Fellowship, mentored peers, and transformed patient care in their offices, all while embracing Heartland Dental's vision for long-term, sustainable success.

A Vision with Purpose

The Doctor Mastery Program was the vision of Founder and Executive Chairman, Rick Workman, DMD, who believed that exceptional dentistry comes not just from skill, but from empowered, lifelong learners. While Heartland Dental has always offered access to extensive continuing education, DMP took it further: a five-to-seven-year journey open to all supported doctors, blending elite CE, mentorship, and milestone achievements, including up to \$250,000 in total bonuses for those who complete it.

At its core, DMP is about more than credentials. It's about growth. Supported doctors who step into this program often walk away with sharpened clinical skills, stronger leadership presence, and a renewed sense of purpose.

"DMP Is a Gift That Keeps on Giving" – Qais Musmar, DDS, FAGD

When Dr. Musmar first enrolled in DMP, some of his peers asked why he'd do it. But for him, the answer became clear early on.

"Once you go through the process, you realize the advantage is in the journey," he shared. "It expands your mindset and helps you break free of doing the same things over and over."

Through DMP, Dr. Musmar explored lasers, advanced bone grafting techniques, and procedures he once thought were outside his comfort zone. The growth wasn't just clinical, though. It transformed the way he led his team.

"To grow your business, you have to be a leader in your practice. DMP opened my eyes to what's possible, not just as a clinician, but as a leader in dentistry. With the knowledge you gain from achieving the

award, you not only gain the initial financial prize, but for the rest of your career you, your team and your practice will never stop growing! And over time that initial financial reward becomes insignificant compared to the growth of the practice!"

His advice? Don't wait.

"I wish I had done it right out of dental school instead of waiting until I was older. You have nothing to lose by signing up but everything to gain."

"It Became an Office Goal" – Lauren Stone, DMD, FAGD

For Dr. Stone, of Brownsboro Station Dental Care, DMP helped her take on challenges she once hesitated to pursue, like adding implants to her scope of care.

"The DMP pushed me to take more advanced CE, treat comprehensive cases, and say YES to more procedures," she said.

But it wasn't just her growth, it was her team's.

"DMP motivated me to not only work on myself, but to create a commitment to my team to lead well. It became an office-wide goal."

Dr. Stone credits DMP with helping her collaborate better with her RMO, PMO, and team, leading to a culture shift that impacted patients too.

"It allowed our practice to grow both as individuals and collectively. The result? A better overall experience for our patients."

"I Wouldn't Change a Thing" – Jacob Berger, DMD, FAGD

For Dr. Berger of Smiles at Lakewood Ranch, the Doctor Mastery Program arrived at just the right time in his career, when he was searching for direction and structure after dental school.

"The DMP gave me a clear set of goals, which kept me motivated and growing," he shared. "It pushed me to take on challenges I might not have pursued on my own."

In addition to strengthening his clinical expertise, DMP helped him develop a stronger business mindset and long-term vision for his career.

"Looking back five years later, I'm genuinely glad I did it, I wouldn't change a thing."

The Journey Continues

As DMP enters its second decade, the mission remains the same: to help build a community of confident, capable supported doctors who are committed to excellence.

Whether you're just starting out or considering your next big challenge, the Doctor Mastery Program offers more than CE, it offers a path to mastery, surrounded by mentors, systems, and a support network that believes in your potential.



Doctor Mastery Program Achievers

2025

Josh Ratcliff, DDS, FAGD
Anderson Family Dental

Helen Hoveida, DMD, FAGD
Dental Care at Hunters Green

Vishal Kalavadia, DMD, FAGD
North Vermilion Family Dental

2024

Kerolos Morkos, DMD, FAGD
McKinneyDentist.com

Erika Ynga, DDS, FAGD
Lorraine Road Dental Care

Lauren Stone, DMD, FAGD
Diamond Valley Dental Care

Leesa Ching, DDS, FAGD
Quirt - Wausau

Qais Musmar, DDS, FAGD
Reflection - Little River

Andrew English, DDS, FAGD
Smile for Life Dentistry

Grant Pizzo, DMD, FAGD
Dental Care of Huntley

Alexander Wright, DMD, FAGD
Family Dental Care of Champaign

Luis Gutierrez, DDS, MAGD
Sarasota Complete Dental

Nicola Toritto, DMD, FAGD
Oswego Commons Family Dental

Yong Woo Lee, DMD, FAGD
Dental Group of Rockford

Courtney Wedel, DDS, FAGD
Cross Timbers Family Dental

Tamara Bailey, DDS, FAGD
Quirt - Schofield

Ali Somjee, DDS, FAGD
Wyllie Dental Associates

Brandi Dinh, DMD, FAGD
Complete Dentistry of Estero

Tony Nader, DMD, FAGD
Rivercrest Commons Family Dental

Sandra Santos, DMD, FAGD
Rivercrest Commons Family Dental

Joshua Flavin, DDS, FAGD
Quirt - Wausau

2023

Matthew Kirlough, DMD, FAGD
Family Dental Care of Medina

Matthew Lark, DDS, MAGD
Oak Openings Dental

Tyler Wylde, DMD, FAGD
Dental Care of Huntley

Kyu Yo, DMD, FAGD
Schertz Family Dental

Phillip Neal, DDS, FAGD
Farrow Parkway Dental Care

Meaghan Collamore, DMD, FAGD
Rockingham Dental Group - Exeter

Gregory Cohen, DDS, FAGD
Dublin Dental Center

2022

Kelly Buoniconti, DMD, FAGD
Canyon Springs Family Dental

Jacob Berger, DMD, FAGD
Smiles at Lakewood Ranch

Tracey Upell, DDS, FAGD
The Lakes Dental Care

Kristine Smith, DMD, FAGD
Comfortable Care - Bee Ridge

Farai Kambasha, DDS, FAGD
Essington Family Dental Care

Felix Ky, DMD, FAGD
Cedar Creek Dental Care

Kylie Parrish, DDS, FAGD
Cedar Creek Dental Care

Thomas Devlin, DDS, FAGD
Sumter Dental Care

Anthony Callison, DDS, FAGD
McKinneyDentist.com

Trevor Madden, DDS, FAGD
McKinneyDentist.com

2021

Anthony Miller, DMD, FAGD
Middleburg Family Dental Care

Tanner Flaherty, DMD, FAGD
Dental Group of Springfield

Kathleen Beazell, DMD, FAGD
CC - Venice

Venu Maturi, DDS, MAGD
Oswego Commons Family Dental

Whitney Haidet, DMD, FAGD
Complete Dentistry of Estero

Benjamin Hanson, DDS
Brownsboro Station Dental Care

Johanna Moorefield, DMD, FAGD
Mission Hills Dentistry

2020

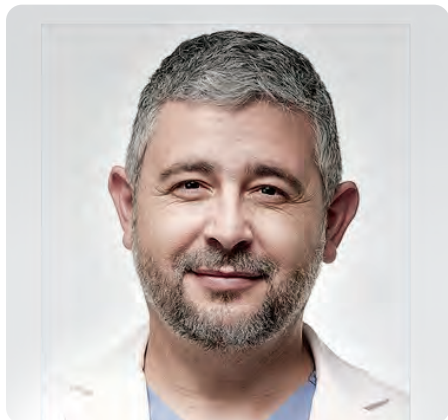
Dustin Wylde, DMD, FAGD
Advanced Dentistry

Marvin Berlin, DDS, MAGD
McKinneyDentist.com

Elizabeth Birr, DDS, FAGD
Quirt - Plover

Peter Pirog, DMD, FAGD
Moline Family Dental

Christian Becker, DMD, FAGD
Sumter Dental Care



Qais Musmar, DDS, FAGD



Lauren Stone, DMD, FAGD



Jacob Berger, DMD, FAGD

Built to Grow: How Heartland Dental Empowers Hygienists to Thrive

October marks National Dental Hygiene Month, a time to honor the essential role nearly 6,000 supported dental hygienists play across Heartland Dental supported practices. Hygienists are not only vital to oral health, but they are also leaders, educators, innovators, and caregivers who drive meaningful change in their teams and communities. At Heartland Dental, hygienists are empowered to grow clinically, explore leadership, and build careers they love through industry-leading education, mentorship, and continuous development.

We sat down with four supported hygiene leaders to learn how Heartland Dental has shaped their careers and helped them grow as clinicians, leaders, and mentors. The group included Amber Mendoza, RDH, Director of Hygiene Operations, Kieran O'Brien, RDH, Senior Hygiene Mentor of Operations, and Kim Dempsey, RDH and Kathryn Timson, RDH, Regional Hygiene Mentors of Operations

Why did you choose a Heartland supported practice, and how have you expanded your skills since joining?

Kathryn: I joined Heartland Dental 10 years ago, fresh out of hygiene school. It was my first job offer, and although I initially saw it as a temporary opportunity, I quickly realized it was the right place for me. I stayed because of the incredible support from my hygiene mentor, exciting educational opportunities, and the strong sense of community that Heartland Dental fosters. I've seen firsthand how Heartland invests in development- not just in technology and innovation, but in the people that elevate patient care every day.

Kim: Before I chose Heartland Dental, I was seeking a change. I wanted to be part of a culture that valued its team, offered access

to advanced technology, and aligned with my philosophy of patient care. Fortunately, Heartland Dental supported offices turned out to be everything I was looking for and

"I've seen firsthand how Heartland invests in development- not just in technology and innovation, but in the people that elevate patient care every day. "

Kathryn Timson



Kathryn Timson, RDH, Regional Hygiene Mentor of Operations



Kim Dempsey, RDH, Regional Hygiene Mentor of Operations



Amber Mendoza, RDH, Director of Hygiene Operations

more! From study clubs and The Probe to programs like IMPACT, Power of One, and Bell Achievers, I've developed both as a clinician and as a leader.

What inspired your journey from clinical hygiene into leadership and how did Heartland Dental support that transition?

Kieran: At the start of my journey, I knew I wanted to build myself. I was passionate about leadership and education, but I really had to "step out of my own head" and be brave enough to embrace those new opportunities! Heartland Dental supported that transition by providing training on topics that we weren't taught in school, mentorship, and a strong network through regional connections. This support allowed

me to grow, learn new procedures, and create environments where hygienists can feel trusted, respected, and secure while keeping patient experiences first.

Amber: My journey into leadership was inspired by a deep desire to make a broader impact not just on patients, but on the professionals delivering care. Early in my career, I found joy in mentoring peers, which evolved into a leadership mindset. Through mentorship from Heartland Dental leaders like Lori Hall, Nancee Shinn and Dr. Timothy Quirt, I was given opportunities to contribute to strategic initiatives and ultimately found my voice in leadership. Heartland didn't just support my transition, they championed it.

What advice would you give to other hygienists who want to grow their careers?

Kim: Look for opportunities to thrive. What sets Heartland Dental apart is its culture. We're given access to exceptional

educational resources and are encouraged to pursue continuous growth and excellence in our craft. Here, hygienists are respected as essential providers and are empowered to practice at the top of our licensure. Seek out new experiences, and you'll never feel stagnant in your career.

Kieran: Find your fit! As you continue your career, embrace new processes. When I first started, I never dreamed of the technology we have today, like our scanners, VideAI, and Curodont. We as a profession carry the torch for comprehensive care, and we can't let ourselves become outdated- if we don't educate ourselves on using these new technologies to their fullest, then we're standing in the way of patient care. Find training opportunities, speak up if you want personal progress, and be incredibly clear about what direction you want to grow!

Amber: Say yes to "stretching." Whether it's mentoring a new hire, joining a pilot program, or speaking up in a meeting- those small moments matter. They build

confidence, visibility, and momentum. Lean into the resources Heartland Dental offers and don't be afraid to ask for more. Most importantly, be always eager to learn. Growth isn't a straight line; it's a series of bold steps, thoughtful pivots, and meaningful connections. If you're ready to grow, Heartland is ready to grow with you.

At Heartland Dental, hygienists are essential care providers, leaders, and changemakers. Whether you're just starting out or looking to redefine your path, you'll find support, education, and empowerment every step of the way.



"If you're ready to grow, Heartland is ready to grow with you."

Amber Mendoza

PLAY FOR CARE CLASSIC



Heartland Dental proudly served once again as the Title Sponsor of the 17th Annual Play for Care Charity Golf Outing, held Friday, October 17, 2025, at Ardea Country Club at East Lake Woodlands.

This long-standing event benefits Gulf Coast Dental Outreach, helping provide essential dental care to underserved residents across Pinellas, Pasco, and Hillsborough Counties.

Thanks to sponsors, donors, and golfers, more than \$65,000 was raised to support access to care and both Heartland Dental teams took home top honors!

HEARTLAND.COM



Heartland Dental Welcomes Smile Design Dentistry into Its Supported Network

At Heartland Dental, growth isn't just measured in numbers, it's measured in impact. With a shared vision of elevating dental care, empowering supported doctors, and creating lasting careers, Heartland Dental and supported practices reached an exciting new milestone closing a key transaction with Smile Design Dentistry in September 2025.

Together, Heartland Dental and Smile Design Dentistry are opening new doors for supported doctors, for teams, and for the communities they serve.



STRONGER DENTAL SUPPORT TOGETHER

A Partnership Rooted in Purpose

For more than two decades, Smile Design Dentistry has been a trusted provider of comprehensive dental services throughout Central Florida and the Tampa Bay area. Over the years, the organization has built a people-first culture where teams thrive and patients receive quality care.

That same philosophy has guided Heartland Dental since day one. "Smile Design Dentistry's supported practices are a great fit for our doctor-led culture and support model," shared Heartland Dental President and CEO Pat Bauer. "We're excited to build on our shared belief to provide a support infrastructure that honors clinical autonomy, facilitates career growth, and helps supported doctors and their teams enhance exceptional patient care and experiences."

Meeting Florida's Growing Need

Florida's population continues to surge, driving increased demand for trusted dental providers. With more than 60 practices and a reputation for clinical excellence, Smile Design Dentistry stepped up to meet that need.

By joining Heartland Dental and supported practices, those practices now gain access to broader resources, support systems, and innovative tools, ensuring they can continue to serve patients with excellence as demand grows.

Behind Every Doctor Is a Strong Team

Heartland Dental's support model empowers doctors and teams to focus on

patient care rather than operations. From marketing and IT to payor relations, clinical supplies, and HR, every element of support is designed to make daily operations easier and more efficient.

For Smile Design Dentistry practices, this means more bandwidth for patient care, more energy for team development, and greater confidence in the systems supporting them.

Tools That Make Care More Innovative

Staying at the forefront of innovation is key to supporting doctors so they can deliver exceptional care. Heartland Dental's suite of advanced technologies, including AI diagnostics powered by VideaAI, non-invasive remineralization with Curodont™, and digital workflows enabled by Invisalign® and iTero™ scanners, are now available to Smile Design Dentistry-supported doctors.

"Smile Design Dentistry's supported practices are a great fit for our doctor-led culture and support model. We're excited to build on our shared belief to provide a support infrastructure that honors clinical autonomy, facilitates career growth, and helps supported doctors and their teams enhance exceptional patient care and experiences."

Pat Bauer

Learning That Lifts Careers

Through Heartland Dental University, Smile Design Dentistry team members now have access to the nation's largest clinical, operational, and leadership development platform. Whether expanding clinical skills or growing as leaders, team members have the resources to thrive. And when teams feel equipped and empowered, patients feel the difference.

A Shared Future, Built Together

This team combines strengths, honors legacies, and creates something even greater together.

With a strong foundation and shared vision, Heartland Dental and Smile Design Dentistry are proving that when the right people come together for the right reasons, the possibilities are limitless.



Whether you're starting early or working late, we're here when you need us.

We've Extended Our Office Hours

At DDS Lab, we are committed to evolving alongside the needs of our valued dental partners. Heartland Dental Supported Offices spoke and we listened.

Extended Customer Care and Technical Care Hours:

Monday – Friday: 8 AM – 8 PM EST / 5 AM – 5 PM PST

Saturday: 9 AM – 1 PM EST / 6 AM – 10 AM PST

Thank you for trusting DDS Lab with your practice's success.

5440 Beaumont Center Blvd, Tampa, FL 33634
(877) 785-1008 | heartland@ddslab.com | www.ddslab.com

©2025 DDS Lab. Rx only. All rights reserved.

Changing Lives One Smile at a Time

At Heartland Dental, service isn't just a value, it's a commitment that extends far beyond office walls and into communities around the world. Thanks to the generosity of partners like Henry Schein Cares, Dentsply Sirona, Leixir Dental Laboratory Group, Envista, and Colgate, supported doctors and team members were able to make a meaningful difference through four impactful mission trips with the Heartland Dental Foundation and the fifth annual Companywide Free Dentistry Day. From the hills of eastern Kentucky to the rural roads of Honduras, their efforts exemplified what it truly means to give back.

Global Impact: Honduras Mission Trip

In September, a team of Heartland Dental volunteers journeyed to Choluteca, Honduras, for the Foundation's international dental outreach of the year. Working alongside Mission Lazarus, a trusted local nonprofit, the team brought essential care to a community with limited access to dental services.

Over the course of the mission, the team treated 158 patients, performing 253 extractions, 87 fillings, and 20 root canals. The total value of care delivered reached \$140,218, but the true impact went far beyond the numbers.

"It's hard to choose just one moment that was the most meaningful. There are so many," said Tiffanie Smith, DDS, who

returned for her second year of serving in Honduras. "One of the most powerful parts for me is the connection with the people there. They are absolutely amazing, so warm, welcoming, and trusting. Some families walk five hours with young children just to have a tooth pulled, and they're incredibly appreciative. Even if we don't speak the same language, there's this unspoken trust. They know we're there to help, and they allow us to care for them in such a personal way."

For Dr. Smith, the mission was not only about serving others but also rediscovering purpose.

"I've been in dentistry for over 30 years, and like many of us, I've felt the grind," she shared. "But being immersed in a different

culture and giving back in such a hands-on way reminds me why I started this journey in the first place. It reignites my passion for dentistry."

Healing at Home

Closer to home, Heartland Dental Foundation hosted three domestic mission trips in Jenkins, Kentucky, a region where access to dental care is often limited by geography and economic barriers.

The first trip, held in April, brought together a team who performed 96 extractions, 35 fillings, and 10 cleanings, along with other critical services. Just two months later, a second wave of volunteers returned in June to continue the work, providing care to 49 patients, including 58 extractions, 45 fillings,



2025 Mission Trip to Honduras



April 2025 Mission Trip to Kentucky

and 7 cleanings. A third mission trip took place in October where the team delivered 36 extractions, 19 fillings, and 14 cleanings.

Supported once again by Henry Schein Cares and Dentsply Sirona, and coordinated on the ground by Smile Faith, these missions exemplified Heartland Dental's ability to rally skilled supported doctors around a shared purpose: using their talents to meet real human needs.

Free Dentistry Day: Every Office, One Mission

While the mission trips offered intensive, focused care in targeted communities, Heartland Dental's Companywide Free Dentistry Day (FDD) expanded that impact across the entire country.

On September 6, supported doctors and team members came together across 349 supported offices to provide \$2,688,877 worth of free dental care to 6,364 patients. Now in its fifth year, this annual tradition continues to reflect the Heartland Dental community's passion for giving back.

Among those leading this effort was Joshlyn Wilson, DMD of Dental Care at Coventry, whose team participated in this year's event.

"Free Dentistry Day, to me, is truly an honor," said Dr. Wilson. "Being a dentist is both a gift and a privilege, one that allows me to use my skills to make a real difference. I may not be able to end world hunger, but I do believe the passion I've been given is meant to serve others. Giving back to the

community through dentistry feels like a responsibility and a calling."


Dr. Wilson shared that her team looks forward to the event each year because it represents the heart of why they chose dentistry in the first place, removing barriers and restoring confidence.

"Every day in practice, we see the challenges that keep people from getting care, financial struggles, fear from past experiences, or simply the courage it takes to walk through the front door," she said. "On Free Dentistry Day, we have the chance to help people overcome those barriers. Whether it's relieving pain or restoring someone's trust in visiting the dentist, the impact goes far beyond one appointment."

"For us, it may just be a Saturday spent serving, but for our patients, it can mean the world," Dr. Wilson added. "It's something they've been needing or putting off for years, and we get to give that to them. It's humbling to lead a team that shares that same heart for service, and I'm proud to be part of Heartland Dental's support network that prioritizes focusing on these efforts and gives us the tools to make it all possible."

That commitment dates back to 2010, when Heartland Dental first launched the Free Dentistry Day program in collaboration with supported offices and supply partners nationwide. Since then, supported offices have delivered over \$18 million in free dental care to more than 50,000 patients across the country.

The Heart Behind the Work

Behind every mission trip and every free dentistry day was a person, a doctor, a hygienist, a team member, who volunteered their time and talent to serve others. Whether traveling internationally, supporting local outreach, or opening the doors of their own practices, our supported doctors and teams proved that clinical excellence paired with compassion is a force for good in the world. 



Dental Care of Coventry team during Companywide Free Dentistry Day

From the Ground Up: Dr. Nestor Villarreal's De Novo Journey in Naples, Florida

When most doctors think about the next chapter of their dental career, they imagine joining a thriving practice or expanding their patient base gradually. But for Nestor Villarreal, DDS an experienced dentist with years of clinical excellence under his belt, the path forward meant going back to the beginning, opening a brand-new De Novo practice in Naples, Florida.

"I was drawn to the opportunity to shape a practice from the ground up, both culturally and clinically," said Dr. Villarreal, now leading Bellaire Bay Dental Care, a Heartland Dental supported De Novo office. "I knew it wasn't going to be easy, but I was thinking long-term about what was best for my career. And most importantly, I knew I wasn't doing it alone."

Starting with Vision, Leading with Purpose

De Novo supported offices are brand new, state-of-the-art dental practices strategically placed in communities with a strong need for dentistry, like Naples. Designed to expand access to care for a growing population, De Novos are individually branded to reflect and serve the local community, while offering supported doctors the opportunity to build something meaningful from day one.

These beautiful, modern spaces feature high-end furnishings, spacious operatories, generous storage, large break rooms, and are equipped with advanced technology. For Dr. Villarreal, that setup allowed him to launch a fully equipped practice from day one and gave him the opportunity to build something meaningful, rooted in values and vision.



Nestor Villarreal, DDS

"Leading a De Novo allowed me to take everything I had learned over the years and apply it in a way that aligned with how I wanted to practice," he said. "From day one, we were doing all types of dentistry—implants, Invisalign®, RCTs, smile makeovers. We kept almost everything in-house, and that gave me the clinical variety I love while offering patients comprehensive care."

But the transition wasn't just clinical, it was deeply personal.

"It challenged me to step outside my comfort zone and truly lead, not just in the operatory, but as a mentor," he reflected. "I had to sharpen my time management, stay focused, and say yes every single time."

The Power of a Shared Mission

The most rewarding part of this journey?

"Watching the team grow and thrive

together," he said. "Seeing a shared vision come to life with people who are all committed to getting better every day, it's incredibly fulfilling."

That sense of pride is amplified by the milestones they've reached along the way. "Surpassing some of my personal best days and best months? That's been exciting. But more than that, it's about the impact we're making – on our patients, and on each other."

Backed by a Team That Knows How to Build

Even with a strong vision and deep experience, Dr. Villarreal is quick to credit Heartland Dental's support for making it all possible.

"Heartland's support was crucial," he said. "Even though I had a few team members

join me from my previous office, the recruiting team helped us find the right people who matched our culture. And the marketing team made sure we were busy from day one."

Coming from an established, high-volume practice, one of his biggest concerns was maintaining that same momentum.

"I didn't want to walk into a De Novo and not have patients. But they helped to make sure we were scheduled before we even opened. That meant I could focus on what matters most, patient care."

From support from operations and recruiting to training and marketing, Heartland Dental's end-to-end De Novo playbook helped Dr. Villarreal and his team move quickly from opening day to profitability.

Advice from One De Novo Doctor to Another

For supported doctors considering a De Novo but feeling hesitant, Dr. Villarreal offers straightforward advice:

"Surpassing some of my personal best days and best months? That's been exciting. But more than that, it's about the impact we're making – on our patients, and on each other."

"Don't let fear hold you back," he said. "Yes, there will be challenges, but remember, you're not in it alone. Heartland Dental has an incredible support team. They've collaborated with supported practices to do this many times, and they know what works."

His biggest tip? Lean into Heartland Dental's systems and processes from day one.

"Be consistent. Be firm about your expectations. And ask for Google reviews,

personally. As a De Novo, you need to stand out and get the community talking. Give your patients a WOW experience so they keep coming back and referring others."

And perhaps most importantly: "Stay grounded in your why. Be prepared to invest the time and energy early on, it pays off in the long run."

Looking Ahead: Building Beyond Year One

Seven years in, Dr. Villarreal still sees his De Novo as just getting started.

"There's still so much room to grow," he said. "We want to expand services, stay involved in the community through events and Free Dentistry Days, and keep learning so we can deliver the best care possible."

With a solid foundation, a loyal patient base, and a culture built on excellence and service, Bellaire Bay Dental Care is proof that a De Novo isn't just a practice, it's a powerful opportunity to lead, grow, and make an impact.



Bellaire Bay Dental Care Team



Practice performance
is a heavy lift.
Think again.

50% smaller wand¹

Multi-angled
cameras



Introducing the new iTero Lumina™ intraoral scanner, the next generation of digital scanning technology.

The iTero Lumina scanner pushes the boundaries of what intraoral scanners can do and sets a new standard for practice performance. With effortless scanning and superior visualization², this small wand means a big leap for your practice.

¹ Compared to iTero Element™ 5D imaging system wand, excluding the wand cable.*

² For Invisalign record-taking cases only. Based on a survey in September 2023 of n=22 users who participated in a global limited market release, working with iTero Lumina intraoral scanner for an average period of 6 months, representing both Invisalign trained general practitioners, orthodontists and their staff in NA, EU and APAC, who were presented with a 4 point level of agreement scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree with the following statement: "iTero Lumina intraoral scanner 3D model is comparable to that of an intraoral photo." and "iTero Lumina intraoral scanner photorealistic scans enable orthodontic clinical assessment the same way intraoral photos do." and "iTero Lumina intraoral scanner 3D model's superior 3D model eliminates the need to take intraoral photos." and "iTero Lumina intraoral scanner 3D model's superior 3D model boosts patient engagement."**

*Data on file at Align Technology, as of November 15, 2023.

align

© 2025 Align Technology, Inc. Align, iTero, iTero Lumina and iTero Element are trademarks of Align Technology, Inc. 001554-US-EN-A

iTero lumina™

A Year of Flexibility, Focus, and Forward Momentum: HDflex Turns One

One year ago, Heartland Dental officially launched HDflex, a game-changing staffing platform designed to solve one of the most persistent challenges in dentistry: the growing demand for flexibility amid nationwide hygienist and dental assistant shortages. Since then, HDflex has helped supported practices across the country rise above staffing disruptions, maintain continuity of care, and create new opportunities for team members.

"HDflex has played a significant role in our practice over the past year," said Joshlyn Wilson, DMD of Dental Care at Coventry. "Like many offices, we've experienced growth, but also periods when we were short on dental assistants or hygienists, whether due to illness, family needs, or other circumstances. Having HDflex as a dependable resource has been a true game-changer."

"It's been a lifesaver for our practice," added Stephanie Flinchum, DMD of My Dentist, Midtown. "We found ourselves down two hygienists unexpectedly, and their schedules were fully booked. Without

"It's been a lifesaver
for our practice. We
found ourselves
down two hygienists
unexpectedly, and
their schedules were
fully booked. Without
HDflex and the
fantastic hygienists
from Heartland Dental's
network of supported
offices, we would've
been in a serious bind."

Stephanie Flinchum

HDflex and the fantastic hygienists from Heartland Dental's network of supported offices, we would've been in a serious bind."

The ability to post a shift and have it filled quickly, often by professionals already trained in Heartland Dental's systems and processes, has helped reduce stress and maintain productivity.

"Before HDflex, a single absence could mean rescheduling patients or canceling an entire day," said Dr. Wilson. "That was always disheartening because our goal is to provide consistent, reliable care and our patients depend on us. Now, we're able to keep our schedule intact without unnecessary stress."

"The best part was that most of the hygienists who filled in were from other Heartland Dental supported offices and already knew Dentrix and our systems," said Dr. Flinchum. "They fit in seamlessly, delivered excellent care, and even helped convert adjunct procedures and SRPs."



Stephanie Flinchum, DMD

For both supported doctors, the value of HDflex extends beyond logistics, it's made a cultural impact.

"It's helped us create a healthier work environment," said Dr. Wilson. "Our team members know they can take time off when needed without feeling guilty. And several of our assistants have even picked up HDflex shifts at other offices, earning extra income and building relationships across the community of Heartland Dental supported practices."

"Each hygienist brought something new to the table," Dr. Flinchum added. "Hearing different verbiage, learning new tips, it's been refreshing and collaborative."

The reliability of the system has made a real difference in high-pressure moments too.

"One morning, about 30 to 45 minutes before our day started, a team member fell ill," said Dr. Wilson. "Our PMO submitted a shift request through HDflex, and it was filled almost instantly. That kind of reliability



Joshlyn Wilson, DMD



The My Dentist Midtown Team

“HDflex has played a significant role in our practice over the past year. Like many offices, we’ve experienced growth, but also periods when we were short on dental assistants or hygienists, whether due to illness, family needs, or other circumstances. Having HDflex as a dependable resource has been a true game-changer.”

Joshlyn Wilson

takes away so much stress, especially when it’s last-minute.”

“We’ve even used HDflex when our hygienist returned part-time after maternity leave,” said Dr. Flinchum. “It helped us maintain hygiene hours and avoid overloading our remaining staff.”

How HDflex Works: Easy to Use, Built for Offices


Team members log onto HDflex and post available shifts. Those shifts are prioritized first for internal Heartland Dental supported hygienists and dental assistants. If they remain unfilled after a set time, they’re opened to trusted agency partners like Kwikly, helping to ensure coverage and continuity.

“There’s no interruption in your day, no inconvenience for your patients, and no scrambling to find coverage,” said Dr. Wilson. “It just makes sense. The peace of mind it brings is unmatched.”

“It’s easy to use, and the quality of support

we’ve received has been outstanding,” added Dr. Flinchum. “If you haven’t tried it yet, don’t wait.”

Looking Ahead: The Future of Flexibility

After one year of real-world success, one thing is clear: HDflex isn’t just a temporary fix for staffing shortages, it’s a positive step forward. 

The ability to post a shift and have it filled quickly, often by professionals already trained in Heartland Dental’s systems and processes, has helped reduce stress and maintain productivity.

my
Smile
care

Choose MySmileCare as your primary financing option.

Give your patients more reasons to smile. MySmileCare’s average credit line is **\$5,200** and boasts a **70% activation rate**, allowing your patients to receive the treatment they need today!

Why choose us?



Flexible payment options

Tailored financing plans that suit the diverse financial needs of patients



Streamlined process

Simple application process with one-click submit



Exclusive loyalty

Patient financing available for use exclusively at Heartland Dental practices

Contact us

Want to learn more? Visit our resource center: go.breadfinancial.com/heartland-home MySmileCare training needs? Email us: fieldsalesfinance@breadfinancial.com



Servicing by comenity

MySmileCare Credit Card accounts are issued by Comenity Capital Bank

More Time, More Impact: What Affiliation Made Possible for Dr. Sean Bates

For years, Sean Bates, DDS poured everything into his private practice, Sorrento East Dental in Florida. As the sole leader, he wore every hat – clinician, business owner, mentor, scheduler, and sometimes even IT support. While the work was fulfilling, it came with a price: a demanding administrative load, growing pressure to juggle responsibilities, and limited time to focus on what he loved most, his patients.

On July 30, 2023, that changed. Dr. Bates affiliated with Heartland Dental and a Heartland Dental supported practice, opening the door to new resources, support, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Finding the Right Partner

What initially drew Dr. Bates to Heartland Dental and a supported practice wasn't just its size or reputation, it was the people.

"I was inspired by Heartland Dental's strong reputation and support model, but what truly made an impact was my visit to HeartStart in Effingham, Illinois," he recalled. "HeartStart is designed to give supported doctors and team members a full understanding of the support Heartland provides, and during that visit, I had the opportunity to meet Dr. Workman in person. Hearing his vision for Heartland Dental supported doctors and practices both where it is today and where it's headed really solidified my decision."

In his time as a private practitioner, Dr. Bates had come to realize what was missing: structured support for continuing education, leadership development, and team growth. "All of the shortcomings I felt, Heartland Dental had systems for," he said. "It became clear that this was the right next step for my practice, my team, and my future."

Support That Makes a Real Difference

Since affiliating, Dr. Bates has seen meaningful improvements across the board but especially in his work-life balance.

"Although the practice is still doctor-led, my focus has become far more patient-centric," he shared. "I no longer have to manage every single facet of the practice

alone. Heartland Dental's support team has dedicated team members who help track collections, production, profit and loss, everything. It's incredibly refreshing."

One of the most immediate benefits? The ability to fully unplug at the end of the day.

"I can leave work at a reasonable hour now," he said. "And I don't have that anxiety of wondering what I missed administratively. Plus, knowing there's a dedicated after-hours team answering calls gives me peace of mind that no patient is ever left unattended."

Tools That Empower Growth

Among the many systems and resources available at a Heartland Dental supported practice, one stands out to Dr. Bates as having the greatest impact: leadership coaching.

"Leadership coaching has been huge for us," he emphasized. "It's helped align me and my team around what we're actually trying to achieve. We've been able to reduce errors in scheduling, supply ordering, and day-to-day operations. We're more efficient, more united, and more intentional."



Sean Bates, DDS

Learn more about affiliating with Heartland Dental



Rediscovering the Joy of Dentistry

"Affiliating has allowed me to simply enjoy being a dentist again," Dr. Bates said. "With so many of the private practice variables removed, I now have more opportunities to connect with my patients and deliver the kind of care I've always strived for. It's elevated everything, personally and professionally."

Advice for Doctors Considering Affiliation

To peers considering affiliation but still weighing the decision, Dr. Bates offers candid and encouraging advice:

"Take a serious look at your work-life balance," he said. "Then take a look at your practice and ask yourself: What are your goals for today and for the future, whether financial or growth-related? Then ask: How am I going to get there?"

He continued, "Whatever your goals are, Heartland Dental's support model has a proven system and track record to help you achieve them. And most importantly, you don't have to do it alone."



Dental Laboratory Group

PRECISION & PARTNERSHIP FOR EVERY CASE



Comprehensive Lab Services For All Case Types



Custom Training Programs To Boost Productivity



Fast and Direct Access To Your Support Team



Advanced Digital Workflows For Efficiency and Accuracy



Innovative End-to-End Digital Printed Denture Solutions

LEIXIR.COM



C.A.C.

KNIGHT DENTAL

THOMPSON SUBURBAN

PRECISION CRAFT

YORK

BLUEBOX

EASYDENT

NXT LVL

SHOWCASE

4G

WELCOME!

Heartland Dental's Newly Supported Practices

Heartland Dental and its network of supported practices continue to achieve strong growth through its de novo and affiliations programs. Since the last Smiling Magazine in July 2025, Heartland Dental has welcomed 87 new supported practices to its support network, collaborating to open 21 de novos and welcoming 66 affiliations.

Affiliations

FLORIDA

Lucie Dental

NORTH CAROLINA:

Inspire Dental – Apex

Inspire Dental – Cary

Inspire Dental – Chapel Hill

Port City Family and Cosmetic
Dentistry

VIRGINIA

Dental Care on Smile Way

**SMILE DESIGN DENTISTRY
SUPPORTED OFFICES**

Smile Design Dentistry – Arcadia

Smile Design Dentistry –

Cape Coral

Smile Design Dentistry –

Carrollwood

Smile Design Dentistry –

Clearwater

Smile Design Dentistry –

Clermont

Smile Design Dentistry –

Connerton

Smile Design Dentistry –

Countryside

Modern Family Dentistry

Smile Design Dentistry -

Dade City

Smile Design Dentistry -

Davenport

Smile Design Dentistry -

Downtown

Eagle Creek Dentistry

Smile Design Dentistry -

East Boca Raton

Gerard R. Valentini, DDS

Smile Design Dentistry - Fletcher

Smile Design Dentistry -

Fourth Street

Smile Design Dentistry -

Gainesville

Smile Design Dentistry -

Golden Acres

Smile Design Dentistry -

Hernando

Smile Design Dentistry -

Inverness

Jackson Dental

Smile Design Dentistry - Lady Lake

Smile Design Dentistry - Lake Mary

Smile Design Dentistry - Lake Wales

Smile Design Dentistry - Lakeland

Smile Design Dentistry - Laurel Ridge

Smile Design Dentistry - Leesburg

Smile Design Dentistry - Lithia

Smile Design Dentistry - Lutz

Maples Dental

Smile Design Dentistry - Mount Dora

Smile Design Dentistry -

Mulberry Grove

Smile Design Dentistry - Naples Park

Smile Design Dentistry -

New Port Richey

Smile Design Dentistry - Ocala

Smile Design Dentistry - Ocoee

Smile Design Dentistry -

Orange Blossom

Smile Design Dentistry - Orange City

Smile Design Dentistry - Osprey Cove

Smile Design Dentistry - Palm Harbor

Smile Design Dentistry -

Ponte Vedra Premier Dental

Smile Design Dentistry - Riverview

Smile Design Dentistry - San Carlos

Smile Design Dentistry - Sand Lake

Sebastian Dental Spa

Smile Design Dentistry - Sebring

Smile Design Dentistry - Silver Springs

Smile Design Dentistry - Spring Hill

Smile Design Dentistry - St. Pete

Smile Design Dentistry - Tampa Palms

Smile Design Dentistry -

Tarpon Springs

Smile Design Dentistry - Toledo Blade

Smile Design Dentistry - Trinity

Nicholas G Rendon, DDS

Smile Design Dentistry - Villages

Smile Design Dentistry -

West Boynton Beach

Smile Design Dentistry -

West Bradenton Dental

Muir Dentistry

Smile Design Dentistry - Westchase

Smile Design Dentistry - Willa Springs



De Novos

ARIZONA

Dental Care on Lone Mountain

Gilmore Dental Care

Dental Care at Compass Park

Dental Care at Hudson Station

FLORIDA

Islandside Dental Care

Dental Care on Holly Hill

Dental Care at Providence

Plaza Collina Dental Care

Lake Britt Dental Care

East Cress Dental Care

San Carlos Dental Care

Blue Horizon Dental Care

Mirasol Walk Dental Care

MICHIGAN

Dental Care at Midtown

NORTH CAROLINA

Meadow Farms Dental Care

Dental Care at Clear Crossings

Dental Care on Fernwood Drive

South Carolina

Spears Market Dental Care

TENNESSEE

Dental Care on Port Royal

TEXAS

Bracken Hill Dental Care

Dentistry at Saddle Creek

OLIVIA
DIGITAL DENTAL LAB





DESIGNED & CRAFTED BY USA'S BEST TECHNICIANS

WELCOME **SCULPTURE!**
OLIVIA PARTNER LAB

VISIT OUR BOOTHS





DIAMOND
— TRUSTED LAB —

SINCE 2022

an eds company



Take steps to rediscover your passion with the support of Heartland Dental.
Connect today with a representative to discuss a business solution that is right for you.



Join the 3,000+ supported doctors who found
their solution with Heartland Dental.

heartland.com
(877) 903-6427

