

## Dental Tourism Survey Reveals Large Savings and High Levels of Satisfaction

The world's first dental tourism survey, carried out by RevaHealth.com, reveals high levels of satisfaction among the thousands of dental tourists questioned. Patients who had travelled abroad to receive treatment revealed an average satisfaction rating of 84 percent, along with an average cost saving of 60 percent of the cost of their treatment locally.

More than 95 percent of respondents stated that cost was the main reason why they considered dental tourism in the first place, but when it came to choosing which clinic to visit, quality was the deciding factor.

Patients reported wide variations in the amount of the money they saved and in the abilities of certain clinics to communicate effectively. Unsurprisingly, there were also variations in satisfaction between countries as a whole, with patient satisfaction highest overall for clinics in Hungary, Poland and Thailand.

Patients were relatively unaware of their dental treatment options before visiting RevaHealth.com. Only 54 percent knew exactly what treatment they needed, and a full 30 percent had no idea of where they intended to travel to. In addition to this, only 50 percent of patients had visited their local dentist prior to making their enquiry with an overseas clinic.



## Survey Says Dentists Will Vote Republican

Two out of three dentists in a recent *Wealthy Dentist* survey said they would vote for the Republican party in this November's presidential election. Among Democratic dentists, only one in three preferred Hillary Clinton to Barack Obama. Whether a dentist was male or female was highly correlated with political opinion. The average male dentist in this survey favored the Republican party, while the average female dentist leaned toward the Democrats.



## Small-Diameter Dental Implants Increasingly Popular In the U.S.

Millennium Research Group's U.S. Dental Marketrack shows that small-diameter (less than or equal to 3mm) dental implants are becoming increasingly popular in the U.S. Revenues for these implants are growing at a faster rate than those of regular-diameter dental implants.

The U.S. market for small-diameter dental implants grew more than 30 percent in 2007, generating more than \$20 million in revenues. The increasing number of general practitioners incorporating dental implants into their list of services has contributed significantly to the rising sales of small-diameter dental implants.

"Patients often prefer the small-diameter to large-diameter dental implants because they involve less surgical time and are a more cost-effective option," says Chris Shutts, senior analyst at Millennium Research Group. "Moreover, small-diameter dental implants usually require fewer steps to place and can be placed noninvasively, making them a simpler solution for a clinician new to implantology."

Although currently only a few manufacturers offer small-diameter dental implants approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for long-term use, more competitors will enter this market over the next five years. The large population base that can benefit from small-diameter dental implants, in addition to continuous education efforts on the part of implant manufacturers, will increase dentist awareness of this treatment option, thereby facilitating the growth of this segment through 2012.

# Industry Roundup

## Market Moves

**Nobel Biocare Holding AG** said it has agreed to buy **AlphaBioTec Ltd**, a leading dental implant company in Israel, for \$95 million. The Swiss implant maker said the acquisition will help to reinforce its position as it provides immediate access to some of the fastest-growing market segments in implant dentistry, such as Under the deal, Nobel Biocare will obtain all rights to AlphaBioTec's trademark, brand names, innovation pipeline, research and development network and proprietary manufacturing facility in Tel Aviv. AlphaBioTec has a market share of more than 60 percent in Israel and an export business that has been growing at a pace in excess of 35 percent during the past few years, according to Nobel Biocare. The transaction is expected to close in the second quarter of 2008.

**Whip Mix Corp.** announces the purchase of the assets of the Lab and Occlusion product lines of **Water Pik Inc.** The product lines include the internationally recognized Hanau™ and Denar® brands of articulators, face bows, alcohol torches, burners and flasks. The acquisition supplements the existing Whip Mix articulator, face bow and accessories offering and strengthens the company's role in dental education and clinical occlusion diagnosis. The products will continue to be distributed through dealers globally to dentists and laboratories and directly to teaching institutions in North America.

UAB spinoff **BioHorizons Inc.** has added to its dental implant market by combining with digital dentistry company **DTI Dental Technologies Inc.** The Birmingham, Ala., company announced Thursday it merged with the company that uses digital data and computer aided design to make crowns and other dental products. BioHorizons headquarters will remain in Birmingham. The combined company will generate about \$150 million in revenues, making it one of the largest implant dentistry companies in the world, the company said. The company will have 23 operating facilities in North America, eight international facilities and more than 1,000 employees.

**SensAble Technologies, Inc.** announced that **NOBILIUM/TICONIUM**, divisions of CMP Industries, LLC, have signed to become a **SensAble Authorized Production Center.** NOBILIUM/TICONIUM have been trusted names in the dental industry since 1934, and are leading suppliers of investment casting materials, alloys and equipment to the dental industry. The SensAble Authorized Production Center Program complements today's introduction of the SensAble Dental Lab System, a touch-enabled integrated solution for the scan, design, and fabrication of common dental restorations.

**Carousel Capital** is investing in **Brasseler USA**, a Georgia provider of dental and surgical instruments. Brasseler USA markets

its products to dentists, dental laboratories, dental schools, hospitals and surgery centers throughout the United States and Canada. The company was founded in 1976. Charlotte-based Carousel is teaming with the chief executive of Brasseler USA in the acquisition of the company. CEO Don Waters will have significant ownership in the business, as will certain members of his management team. Financial terms of the agreement weren't disclosed.

**National Dentex Corp.**, announced its results for the fourth quarter and year ended Dec. 31. Sales for the quarter totaled \$41.4 million compared to \$40.6 million a year earlier, an increase of 1.9 percent. Net income for the quarter was \$656,000 or \$.12 per share on a diluted basis compared to \$369,000 or \$.06 per share on a diluted basis in 2006.

**3D Systems Corp.**, announced that **Sirona Dental Systems, Inc.**, has chosen its InVision® DP (Dental Professional) 3-D Modeler to launch Sirona's new inInfiDent wax pattern service. After extensive research and testing with the 3-D Printer, Sirona has announced plans to use 3D Systems' InVision® DP 3-D Modeler to fabricate inCoris WAX patterns as part of Sirona's inInfiDent service beginning in March 2008. The new inCoris WAX patterns are used by dental technicians who want fast, consistent and economical fabrication of full cast crowns, copings and bridge frameworks as well as full contour

units for press ceramics or over metal and pure zirconium oxide substructures.

## Awards and Appointments

**Stanley M. Bergman**, Chairman and CEO of **Henry Schein, Inc.**, was presented with the Foundation of Excellence Award in Corporate Leadership by the **New York State Dental Foundation** at its third annual Foundations of Excellence Awards luncheon in New York City. Bergman was recognized for his success in leading the corporation, and for his initiatives to increase access to oral healthcare and to improve quality of life by giving back to communities around the world.

**KOMET USA** today announced the hiring of **Mary P. Heston** as the company's National Account Representative. The announcement was made by Warren A. White, COO of Sales and Marketing at KOMET USA. Heston's main focus will be to plan and prioritize national account sales activities toward achieving KOMET USA's sales and growth objectives. White added she will also manage and support the existing client base, while developing additional accounts.

## Noteworthy

The following attended **Ivoclar Vivadent's Empress Esthetic and e.max Press Technology Course at LVI** in February: Diana Jacob, CDT; Angel Eustacio,

CDT; Dr. Greg Sanchez; Terrance Reck; Walt Wodzinski; Carol Sullivan, CDT; Masateru Okuma, RDT; Dr. Soheil Khodadadi; Karlo Shabani, CDT; Ryan Hegedus, RDT; Pamela Smith, CDT; Garry Clements, CDT; Aaron Garner; Archie Jugarap; Eileen Babcock; Bob Walther; and Ernie Dymond, CDT.

**TeamSmile**, a non-profit organization led by **Dr. Bill Busch**, teamed up with the Kansas City Chiefs, local volunteer dentists, and **Henry Schein, Inc.** to provide 300 kids with free oral healthcare screenings and treatments at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri.

**The Identalloy Council** recently held its annual Board of Directors meeting in Las Vegas Nev. Identalloy Executive Director Charles Yenknor reported that a total of seven new companies became Licensees of the Council in 2007, four alloy companies and three ceramic companies. Programs approved for 2008 include journal advertising and sponsorship of podium speakers on behalf of IdentAlloy/IdentCeram. The Identalloy Council Inc. is a nonprofit organization formed to raise healthcare standards through the documentation of alloys and ceramic materials used in dental restorations.



Ivoclar Vivadent

## Lawmaker Urges Regulation of Dental Restorations to Protect Patient Safety

Florida Rep. Stan Jordan (R-Jacksonville) has filed legislation backed by the Florida Dental Laboratory Association to implement more stringent regulations to protect patients receiving the dental restorations affixed into the mouths of millions of Americans each year.

Dental restoration products – the porcelain crowns, dentures and bridges that American dental patients have permanently seated in their mouths – are currently under-regulated, with few legal requirements for technicians to be certified and no mandates for dentists to document or disclose the source of dental work to patients, Jordan said.

Jordan's legislation, HB 923, will require all dental laboratories to disclose to dentists where a product was manufactured and what materials were used, and provide certificates of authenticity. It further requires dentists to include these records in a patient's dental chart so patients can request the information and so health officials can track and trace a dental restoration to its source should a health problem later emerge. Finally, the bill requires dental laboratory techni-

cians to maintain continuing education every two years.

"Such common-sense regulations are critical, we support them 100 percent and we thank Rep. Jordan for his leadership on this issue," said Bennett Napier, co-executive director of the Florida Dental Laboratory Association. "Many dental devices are made from porcelain fused to metal or from metal alloys. If manufactured incorrectly, these products could be contaminated with unacceptable levels of lead or other toxic heavy metals that could make patients sick - especially if they come from some third world countries that don't have the same dental material standards that are used in the United States."

If a patient does become ill from exposure to such toxic materials, chances are they would report their health issue to a medical doctor – not their dentist, Napier said. Without adequate records to track the faulty product to its source, it is difficult for health officials to respond to protect other patients.

"I believe it is an urgent priority to correct this problem and establish a paper trail for these products," Jordan said.

"It's not very often that industries ask for tighter regulation of themselves, but the Florida Dental Laboratory Association and the National Association of Dental Laboratories have been speaking out about the need to protect patients as the number of dental restorations manufactured by foreign dental laboratories increases each year."

NADL has formally asked the U.S. Food and Drug Association to protect patient safety and require labeling and disclosure of the source of dental devices to patients, ensuring all such products can be traced back to the laboratory that made them.

The association has also testified before the Presidential Interagency Working Group on Import Safety to urge the federal government to recognize the need for more stringent oversight, including promoting certification of dental technicians employed at both domestic and foreign laboratories, mandating that dental laboratories register with the FDA or with state health departments, as well as increasing inspections of the content and quality of imported dental-restoration products.

FDA President Linda McGee, owner and operator of Suncoast Ceramic Studio in Brandon, Fla., said she supports Jordan's bill.

"I am proud of the dental crowns, bridges, dentures and other dental restoration products that I and our technicians manufacture out of the highest-quality materials," McGee said. "Our industry makes medical devices for the patient based upon a prescription from a licensed dentist. Because these products will be with that patient, in some cases, for the rest of their lives, it is too important to leave an open door for unsafe or untraceable materials." **JDT**

