MouthMobile takes dentistry to underserved

Aspen Dental, on a mission to give America a healthy mouth, starts ‘The Healthy Mouth Movement’

By Aspen Dental Staff

Living in one of the wealthiest countries in the world, it would be easy to assume that access to dental care isn’t a problem in the United States. But sadly, this is not the case. The statistics are sobering. Last year, 100 million Americans didn’t visit a dentist. More than 47 million people live in places where it is difficult to access dental care, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that there is a shortage of nearly 4,600 dental health professionals in the United States.

Yet while the health care debate rages on, the issue of oral health is largely absent from the discussion. For many, dental care is a luxury, not a priority. When times get tough, it is not surprising that people put off visits to the dentist. For far too many Americans, dentistry is a luxury, and not a priority. Patients who struggle financially put off dental care and live with infection and pain — and that has an impact on their overall health and quality of life.

When an emergency strikes, people turn to our nation’s hospitals. In April, a new analysis from Rutgers University found that the use of emergency departments for dental care — especially by young adults in low-income communities — poses a substantial challenge for our nation.

One of the organizations that is responding to the oral health crisis is Aspen Dental.

‘Community giving’ initiative to serve thousands, raise awareness

Aspen Dental is on a mission to give America a healthy mouth and has started The Healthy Mouth Movement, a community giving initiative designed to deliver free dental care to thousands of people in need in communities across the United States.

Through the Healthy Mouth Movement, Aspen dentists and team members across 27 states will devote a day to providing dental care to those who need it most — free of charge, no questions asked. And the newly constructed Aspen Dental MouthMobile, a fully equipped dental office on wheels, is going directly into communities to not only provide free service, but raise awareness of the importance of oral health.

Teaming with Oral Health America and local partners

During the past several months, The Healthy Mouth Movement has been traveling around the country, teaming up with Oral Health America and local partners along the way. Dentistry is a generous profession. There are myriad ways to give back, whether through individual volunteer efforts or through great organizations such as Missions of Mercy and the American Dental Association’s Give Kids a Smile program. And by working together, we can make a difference — one patient at a time.
3 reasons your website should be optimized for mobile users

Diana P. Friedman, MA, MBA

As of January 2014, 58 percent of adults Americans owned a smartphone.¹ With the continued advancements in cellular networks and expanded device accessibility, a rapidly increasing number of existing and prospective patients are using mobile devices rather than a desktop browser to browse your practice website.

A strong mobile presence helps you get in front of prospective patients at the moment they’re looking for your practice. If your site doesn’t look good or function properly on a smartphone, it won’t take long for prospective patients to move on to one that does. Here are three reasons you want to ensure your practice website is mobile optimized.

1. **Mobile is taking over** — When you consider 87 percent of smartphone users access the Internet using their phones,² it’s a safe bet that the vast majority of prospective patients are looking at your site on one of these devices. Without a mobile optimized website, you damage your brand and encourage them to seek out competitive providers.

2. **Mobile users take action** — Today 92 percent of smartphone users seek local information on their device and 89 percent take action after looking up local content.³ You want that action to be to contact your office for an appointment. If your site is hard to read on the mobile device or does not provide a “click-to-call” phone number, that action will likely take place with another dental care provider.

3. **Mobile users will quickly move on** — 61 percent of consumers who visit a website that isn’t mobile-friendly will leave to visit a competitor.⁴ This fact alone should sound an alert that your practice website needs to be optimized for mobile devices.

The bottom line is that not having a mobile-optimized site can hurt your relationships with current patients, and drive away prospective ones.

**Taking the next step**

Refraining from optimizing your website for mobile is not an option if you are concerned about sustained practice growth and profitability. The preferred design methodology and the one Google recommends, for a mobile optimized website is called responsive design. A responsive designed practice website will adapt automatically to whatever screen size a patient is using to view it — whether that be a desktop computer, tablet or smartphone. When choosing a company to help market your practice and create a web presence to attract and retain patients, make sure the company has experts in responsive design who work only with the dental industry. With that first step, your efforts to create a mobile-friendly practice will pay off.

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**References**

Program targets older adults’ oral health

Oral Health America, with its Wisdom Tooth Project, aims to reverse growing crisis in U.S.

By Jennifer Gilbert
Oral Health America

Older adults — the most rapidly growing segment of the population in the United States — are facing a crisis when it comes to oral health. According to a 2013 Harris Interactive survey commissioned by Oral Health America, 23 percent of older adults have not seen a dental provider in five years, 70 percent do not have dental insurance, eight out of 10 uninsured seniors could not pay for a major dental procedure and 33 million live where dentists and clinics are scarce.

Oral Health America, a national nonprofit that aims to change lives by connecting communities with resources to increase access to care, education and advocacy for all Americans, is working to turn these statistics around through the Wisdom Tooth Project™ (WTP), a program that focuses entirely on older adults.

Website supports effort

This past fall, the WTP launched www.toothwisdom.org, a first-of-its-kind Web portal providing oral health information and local and national resources for older adults, caregivers and oral health professionals.

At the same time, the WTP released “A State of Decay,” a biennial publication that evaluates states on five leading indicators of adult oral health: adult Medicaid dental benefits, inclusion of older adult strategies in state oral health plans, edentulism, dental health professional shortage areas and community water fluoridation.

The report garnered local and national media attention when more than half of states failed to achieve a rating of 50.0 or greater. Regional symposia also unite diverse groups of health professionals and community leaders with the aim of inspiring strategic change to improve the oral health of older adults.

The WTP’s latest endeavor is Tooth Wisdom: Get Smart About Your Mouth. This health education program will empower older adults who are aging at home to improve their oral health through daily self-care and increase their knowledge about oral health.

Committee vets scientific accuracy

To ensure the program is scientifically accurate and accessible, an older adult advisory committee has been assembled, consisting of professionals who attended last year’s “Collaborative Health Care for Older Adults: A Symposium for Creating Inter-professional Community Models” and have a continued interest in geriatric oral health.

The committee meets regularly to discuss the education program and offer recommendations.

To learn more about Oral Health America and the WTP, you can visit www.oralhealthamerica.org and www.toothwisdom.org.
Oral cleansing and care line launched

TRIOLOGY™ Professional Oral Cleansing & Care, a line of biologic debriding rinses and serums designed to enhance dental procedures and patient comfort, has recently been introduced to the U.S. dental market. The products, sold exclusively through dental and medical practices, is manufactured by NOWsystem Inc.

TRIOLOGY Debriding Rinse and TRIOLOGY Debriding Serum deliver cleansing powered by Tritiserum™, a proprietary blend of biologic ingredients and carbamide peroxide. The patent-pending formulations integrate with saliva to improve removal of bacteria, fungi, debris and irritants, working both supragingivally and subgingivally. According to the company, this cleansing action, coupled with a balancing of the pH, increases the potential for accelerated healing and reduced pain, inflammation and infection.

The rinse is available in eight-ounce and two-ounce bottles, as well as a one-ounce spray for situations when rinsing is not practical. The serum is available in a 2 cc syringe, as well as a 2 ml pen for gentle self-application by patients.

"Superior cleansing is the key to faster healing and reduced inflammation, infection and pain," said Janice King, NOW-system co-founder and CEO, "and TRIOLOGY is the key to superior cleansing." The TRIOLOGY formulations are the result of more than 10 years of study, product development and clinical research, according to the company.

TRIOLOGY Debriding Rinse can be used for days or weeks prior to dental procedures to lessen inflammation or infection, or at the beginning of in-office exams to reduce airborne spread of bacteria. Additionally, it is intended for use during and following any dental or hygiene procedures to lessen inflammation or infection, or at the beginning of in-office exams to reduce airborne spread of bacteria.

The rinse, particularly the spray version, can also be used by patients with dry mouth, xerostomia, halitosis and metallic taste disorder.

TRIOLOGY Debriding Serum can be used for days or weeks prior to dental procedures to lessen inflammation or infection, or at the beginning of in-office exams to reduce airborne spread of bacteria. Additionally, it is intended for use as an adjunct to the following dental and hygiene procedures for removal of debris and irritants: extractions, root planing, routine prophylaxis, periodontal scaling, gingival curettage, core retention techniques, implant and crown procedures, and operative and postoperative procedures.

According to Dale Winetroub, NOW-system co-founder and COO, among the studies documenting the efficacy of the TRIOLOGY formulations is an extensive antimicrobial analysis by Indiana University in which TRIOLOGY Debriding Serum and Rinse were shown to have roughly double the germ kill power of chlorhexidine gluconate. He also noted that because TRIOLOGY Debriding Serum and TRIOLOGY Debriding Rinse formulations contain only biologic ingredients and carbamide peroxide, there is no need to limit the frequency of usage.

TRIOLOGY Debriding Rinse and TRIOLOGY Debriding Serum are currently distributed by Goetze Dental and Burkhart Dental.

Dental practices in regions where sales representatives from these two distributors are not located can order the product online at www.triologycare.com.

(Source: NOWsystem Inc.)