

Dental Practice of the Year

The Winner:
Greenleaf Family Dentistry, Inc.
Dr. William R. Flora, DDS

What is even more impressive is that Greenleaf Family Dentistry has reached this high level in only seven years. When Dr. Bill Flora graduated from the Indiana University School of Dentistry in 1992, he knew that he wanted to return to his roots in Elkhart to pursue his vision and realize his dream of making a difference in the community. No one builds a practice like this alone and Dr. Bill credits his wife, Kris, with a tremendous amount of support along the way. They have two children, a son, Conner, and their daughter, Noelle.

Pursuing a vision

Dr. Flora envisioned the type of practice he wanted to build at the beginning of his career. He knew that people expect to receive quality dentistry, so quality was a given. He felt that he could best win the confidence of his patients by showing them that he cared about them. He saw that the ingredient that was missing from most health care was the personal touch. He vowed that his practice would supply the four Cs: comfort, care, concern, and compassion.

Dr. Bill and his team have discovered through experience that these are the qualities that patients are searching for in a practice. The qualities are all about meeting the needs of the people in their community. To say it is one thing. To follow through with a personal touch to everyone who walks through the doors, who calls on the phone, who is encountered in the stores and at the mall is what takes time and effort. This office is making a difference in the community, in the neighborhoods, and in the schools. This effort has set them apart. Everyone in this office has become a great communicator and an even better listener.

Sometimes pursuing the four Cs can mean a hygien-

by Joseph A. Blaes, DDS

The “Dental Practice of the Year” program is designed to give dentists throughout the United States an opportunity to compare themselves to one of the most successful practices in the country. Success can be defined in many ways, and the Dental Practice of the Year program is judged based on a series of parameters, including practice growth, team management and growth, practice productivity and profitability, physical environment, and use of current technology. More applications were received this year than ever before, and the applications reflected an outstanding group of dentists and practices.

The winner of the 1999 Dental Practice of the Year Award is Greenleaf Family Dentistry, Inc., located in Elkhart, Ind. The Dental Practice of the Year Award is sponsored by *Dental Economics* and the Levin Group.

The judges based their selection of the winning dental practice on the excellence that Dr. William Flora has achieved in the majority of these critical parameters.



Dr. William Flora and his wife, Kris, are flanked by Drs. Joe Blaes (left) and Roger Levin (right) during the award presentation for the 1999 Practice of the Year.

ist spends her allotted time just listening to a troubled patient. Teeth are not cleaned, but strong relationships are formed. When you talk to Dr. Flora's patients, they will tell you that Dr. Bill and his team are special people.

Practice growth and productivity

One criterion for the award is that practices must show significant and positive growth in each of the last three years. Greenleaf Family Dentistry, under the guidance of Dr. Flora, has experienced outstanding growth. This growth of this practice is even more significant when you realize that the practice moved into a new facility and worked 29 fewer days in 1999. Traditionally, practices that move or remodel facilities see a decline in practice growth in the first year, but not Greenleaf.

This practice has continued to grow because of Dr. Flora's realization that he did not learn it all in dental school. He determined that his education would probably never end and began to seek out the courses that would help him to expand his practice. He attended numerous multi-day, hands-on courses in varying areas of general dentistry to ensure that he was able to provide excellence in treatment. The range of services

offered by the practice is extensive. Dr. Flora commits himself and his team to providing the highest level of dental care while simultaneously offering outstanding customer service.

His vision included a desire to master as many aspects of practice management as possible. He then attended numerous courses in practice management and worked with various experts in order to create the necessary business systems to support excellent diagnostic and clinical treatment. Dr. Flora and his team truly understand the necessity of combining both practice management and clinical parameters to properly satisfy the needs of all patients.

Dr. Flora is currently enrolled in a national multi-session, hands-on cosmetic dental program offered through the Louisiana State University Department of Continuing Education. He is entering another comprehensive multi-week prosthetic program to take his skills to even higher levels. His desire to continually improve has clearly been one of the keys to his success.

It is important to understand that Dr. Flora does not merely attend the next educational course offered in the Indiana area, but he has strategically identified programs that teach services he feels his practice needs to

PRACTICE OF THE YEAR

provide. Dr. Flora frequently contacts national experts to find out which programs they feel are best for him to attend.

Team building and growth

One key to success in any practice is having a highly motivated team. Dr. Flora creates an environment where he focuses the majority of his time on dentistry and dental patients. He has developed an outstanding team of individuals that keep all aspects of the office running properly.

He developed a position for an office manager and hired Katherine Hargarten. She handles all aspects of staff development and practice operations. Together, they developed excellent business systems that have been documented and placed in a manual format for easy access. Each team member has access to the written step-by-step systems, and new staff members use them as a guide to quickly advance in their positions. New team members are added each year as Greenleaf Family Dentistry increases in size. The new employees quickly adapt to the culture of the practice, as a result of the step-by-step manuals, and the practice has been able to maintain high levels of efficiency.

Many dentists realize that it is quite possible to increase overall productivity and profitability while decreasing stress and having fun. This can only be accomplished by establishing repeatable step-by-step systems — similar to the ones developed by Greenleaf Family Dentistry. By following the systems on a daily basis, stress is reduced and the practice has been able to achieve excellent production and profitability.

During our visit, it was evident to us that this is a motivated and fun environment without the normal hustle and bustle seen in many dental offices. Dr. Flora and his team are able to move patients through a normal day without rushing or without experiencing stress and frustration. This is due to the high level of confidence and respect that Dr. Flora has for his entire dental team.

Another key aspect is establishing positive relationships between the team and patients. The Greenleaf team has learned that the key to customer service and trusting relationships is communication. They listen to their patients and to each other. The goal of the entire team is to establish a high level of trust with patients. All team members go out of their way to make each appointment a positive experience for every patient.

This has dramatically increased word-of-mouth referrals. During the visit to the practice, the positive attitudes and high energy levels of the team impressed us. It is quickly evident that everyone works together and that this is a truly fun environment.

Dr. Flora acknowledges that his successful practice and this prestigious award would not be possible without this dedicated team of professionals including:

- Hygienists Linda Moore, RDH and Geri Fortney, RDH
- Assistants Dawn Elkins and Shari Walker, RN
- Expanded Functions Assistant Deb Tretheway
- Hygiene Assistant Angie Henry
- Administrative Assistant Vicky Shaw.



State-of-the-art facility

A visit to this practice quickly makes one aware that you are in a special environment that is dedicated to taking care of patients. The dental team of Greenleaf Family Dentistry exhibits an outstanding attitude and one that makes all visitors immediately feel welcome. A combination of the facility, accouterments, and the personalities of Dr. Flora and the outstanding team have led to the practice's success.

In early 1999, Greenleaf relocated into a new facility. The new office occupies 3,600 square feet and has eight treatment rooms. In designing the structure that would meet the needs of the practice, Dr. Flora involved his team first. He asked them to help by writing down everything that they would like to have in a new facility. He then took all the ideas and incorporated them with his own. His next step was to hire the national architectural and design firm of Dr. Michael Unthank.

At Greenleaf Family Dentistry, a team member at the front desk warmly greets patients. You are made to feel welcome and comfortable while check-in information is processed and your arrival is logged into the computer. You experience a tastefully decorated reception area that clearly radiates a feeling of warmth and comfort. If you wish, you may enjoy a freshly brewed cup of coffee, tea, hot chocolate, juice, or bottled water from the beverage center. A separate activity room is available for children to enjoy assorted games in their own fun area.

From the greeter area, the front desk curves gracefully around a corner into a separate vestibule facilitating the privacy of the patients who are checking out. Business office team members are impeccably dressed and often wear matching black or camel blazers that

PRACTICE OF THE YEAR

proudly display the practice logo. There are several areas where a patient can converse with an administrative team member. One leaves the front desk knowing that while this is an efficient office, the team members have not lost the personal touch that makes a visit to this dentist enjoyable.

Greenleaf Family Dentistry has created a virtually paperless office. The entire practice makes efficient use of computer systems, enabling all patient and office information to be maintained in the computer database. Advanced computerization enables the front desk team to work more efficiently. Many of the problems associated with record-keeping, scheduling, and financing have been virtually eliminated from the practice.

The entrance to the practice is at the approximate midpoint of the physical structure. A glass-enclosed consultation room is just off of the reception area. In this room, Dr. Flora displays his impressive collection of diplomas, certificates, and accomplishments. By openly displaying his credentials, he helps foster a sense of trust and confidence. The consultation room also has an area dedicated to patient education. Patients can receive a complete treatment presentation with any necessary visual support.

The treatment rooms are just past the consultation area. Rather than a walk down a long hall, patients go either to the right or left for a number of identical treatment rooms. The team members themselves are attired in coordinating custom-designed scrubs that create a more relaxed environment for the patients.

Six treatment rooms are off the main hallway, and two private treatment rooms are at the end of the hall. Both of the latter rooms can be completely enclosed for patients who want complete privacy, and these treatment rooms are frequently used for longer, more complex procedures.

Dr. Flora and the dental team are justifiably proud of the state-of-the-art sterilization center. The center incorporates a unique design for separating the dirty instruments from the clean.

Instruments are routinely cleaned, passed through the ultrasonic, packaged in a surgical wrap or in the T.O.M.S. tray system, and placed in a chemiclave for sterilization. This mode of sterilization virtually eliminates dulling of instruments and rust. Upon removal,

Greenleaf Family Dentistry has integrated and is using technology to its fullest potential, creating an almost paperless office. The technology at Greenleaf Family Dentistry, Inc., includes:

- Intraoral cameras in each unit (DMD Telicam)
- Fully computerized charting (Practiceworks)
- Digital radiography (Gendex Denoptic)
- Magnification glasses for doctor and hygienists (Designs for Vision Inc., Orasoptic)
- High-powered curing light (DMD Apollo 95E)
- Patient Education System (DVD) in each unit (CAESY DVD)
- Air abrasion unit (Sunrise Danville Engineering)
- Fiberoptic headlight (High Q Marketing Inc. Altair SA)
- Ultrasonic scalers in each unit (Parkell Turbo 25-30)
- The Smile Channel in reception room and consultation room (CAESY DVD)
- Patient headphone/CD system in every treatment room
- Instrument sterilization (Chemiclave by Barnstead Thermolyne)
- Instrument trays system (T.O.M.S. system by Thompson Dental)
- Ultrasonic cleaner (L & R)
- Handpiece sterilization (SciCan Statim)
- Handpiece lubrication (A-dec Assistina 301 Plus system)



they are stored for the next procedure. The office handpieces are cleaned and then lubricated in the A-dec Assistina. This unit cleans and lubes the handpieces consistently and accurately without the mess of canned lubes. The handpieces are then sterilized in a SciCan Statim for quick turnaround.

Telephones are situated throughout the office, encouraging effective communication between staff members anywhere in the facility. The staff room is large enough to accommodate the entire team for a team meeting, lunch, or any office get-together. This room has a warm, inviting feel to it. A separate entrance from the outside enables staff members to come and go without traveling through the reception area.

Dr. Flora's private office was designed to give him an opportunity to relax during lunch or at other times. The

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PRACTICE OF THE YEAR

office is large enough for the associate that he hopes to add in the future.

The importance of technology

Greenleaf Family Dentistry has invested heavily in technology and uses it. Many offices purchase various technologies but do not necessarily use them. Dr. Flora's goal was to design a paperless "universe" within his practice, and he uses technology to accomplish this goal.

Computer systems run his office. Whether logging in a lab case in the office lab, maintaining patient records in the clinical area, or updating schedules at the front desk, software controls the office. All of the different technologies in the practice are integrated into the management software. Each treatment room has a computer monitor that can display the schedule, digital radiographs, interactive education, probing charts, patient records, or intraoral camera images. In addition, each treatment room is equipped with a 27-inch television monitor for patient education and entertainment.

The practice has integrated the newest technologies to create efficient systems and outstanding communication. The staff never wonders if a patient has arrived, if the practice is running late, what services are to be provided, or when the patient chart or file will arrive in the treatment room. Everything is available through integrated technology systems.

In essence, Greenleaf Family Dentistry has been able to reproduce the normal day-to-day operations of a dental practice with technology. This has made it faster and easier for both Dr. Flora and the staff to operate within the practice — as well as leaving an indelible impression upon patients. This practice clearly embodies where technology will eventually take most dental practices. They have

worked hard to integrate the technology and are far ahead of the curve.

Greenleaf Family Dentistry is truly a practice that has brought together all of the management, clinical, and technological systems. The ultimate goal was to provide superior patient care and that has been achieved.

Both Dr. Flora and his team are deriving tremendous satisfaction from their relationships with patients. Dr. Flora has been an outstanding leader who has dedicated himself to creating a positive office environment, motivating his team, and exemplifying the behaviors that he expects from others.

One of the hallmarks of the practice is its relationship with patients. The dental team is constantly coming up with new ideas to "wow" the people who come to them for care. Some of these ideas are: thank you notes, courtesy calls to patients, movie tickets, pagers for parents, community service projects, a wonderful office cookbook, team biography notebook, special occasion flowers sent to patients, special cookouts for patients, and many more.

Dr. Flora is happy to have dentists visit the practice and see first hand how it operates. This is his chance to give back to dentistry.

Dental Economics and The Levin Group personally visited the practice, met with Dr. Flora and his team, and toured the facility. We are delighted to announce Greenleaf Family Dentistry, Inc. as the winner of the 1999 Dental practice of the Year.

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If you believe your practice possesses the aforementioned criteria, give us a call and talk to one of our customer service representatives at (888) 973-0000. You might have what it takes to be the 2000 winner of the Dental Practice of the Year award. Call now!