Two general practitioners launch an advanced dental education center in America’s heartland.

By Linda Holeman, Assistant Editor
They have seen the future, and it is education.

In 2001, Drs. Robert Margeas and Paul Polydoran of Des Moines, Iowa shared a vision: to create a first-rate center for intellectual and clinical exchange for dentists in comfortable, modern surroundings. Two years and $1.5 million later, the Iowa Dental Group and Center for Advanced Dental Education opened its doors. The inaugural course, “Incorporating ITI Implants Into Your Practice,” featured the expertise of Dr. Frank Higginbottom and drew more than 75 participants.

“We wanted to create an affordable environment for dentists who want to learn and share experiences,” says Dr. Margeas, a general practitioner who also is an instructor at the University of Iowa dental school. “Our mission is to share knowledge in an intimate setting.” Hands-on courses covering porcelain veneers, bonding, implants, and occlusion are scheduled throughout 2004 and will feature live-patient and audio-visual demonstrations. All courses are eligible for continuing education credit.
PRACTICE WHAT YOU TEACH

Dr. Margeas and Dr. Polydoran

The center was the brainchild of Dr. Polydoran, a general practitioner for more than 40 years. The two clinicians merged operations in July 2001 and quickly realized the 1,000-square-foot, four-operatory facility was inadequate for their needs. “We were very cramped in our old office,” says Dr. Margeas. “The sterilization area shared space with the laboratory, while our panoramic X-ray machine had to be set up in our private office. We did not have a consultation room, and setting up financial arrangements was difficult because the reception area and business office were virtually on top of each other.”

The doctors began scouting new locations but were soon disenchanted with what was available. They wanted high ceilings, open areas with ample windows and natural light, and rooms that flowed logically. They concluded quickly that the only way to achieve their ideal office was to custom design and construct a new facility. It was natural to dovetail this goal with their dream of creating a top-notch, advanced educational facility.

Dr. Polydoran began by meticulously researching everything he could about building design, perusing dental journals and even attending design seminars. He soon devised an outline that addressed their need for space, beauty, and performance. “We wanted a one-of-a-kind facility,” explains Dr. Margeas. Next, they interviewed architects, selecting Scott E. Stouffer, a firm with no prior experience in dental office design, and, therefore, no preconceived ideas of what a dental office should look like. Construction began in October 2002 and was completed one year later.

The results are a breathtaking blend of airy comfort and state-of-the-art function. The two-story, 5,000-square-foot facility accommodates both practices as well as the Center for Advanced Dental Education. The upper level houses the Iowa Dental Group, a general practice that emphasizes cosmetic, implant, and reconstructive serves. The practice employs three hygienists, three assistants, and three administrative personnel.

Natural light permeates the facility, which provides a calming ambience and banishes any hint of the usual clinical austerity. The reception area features a dramatic vaulted ceiling balanced with warm cherry paneling, lush plants, and a soothing blue and gray color scheme. Glass panels with patterned frits separate the business office from the reception area, providing an artistic solution to the need for both privacy and openness. This concept is repeated in the consultation room and the doctors’ private offices, which are directly adjacent to the administrative area.

The facility boasts seven operatories equipped with custom rear delivery cabinets and A-dec delivery systems that feature KaVo, BienAir, and NSK electric handpieces. “Dental equipment can be intimidating to patients, so rear delivery is an important feature in our treatment rooms,” states Dr. Margeas. The open, spacious feel extends to these rooms with vaulted, cantilevered ceilings; indirect lighting; and glass walls that afford a relaxing view of the outdoors. The operatories are equipped with KaVo dental chairs and stools, A-dec overhead lights, and wall-mounted Planmeca X-ray units. Each treatment room also has a 19-inch flat panel monitor for viewing CASEY patient education programs and DVDs, as well as Internet usage.

The facility has its own custom sterilization room complete with a recessed L&R ultrasonic cleaner, KaVo quarto care handpiece lubrication system, Midmark 11 sterilizer, Harvey sterilizer, and two Statim 2000 units. The practice also boasts an in-house laboratory that includes two KaVo laboratory benches with KaVo electric lab engines. Dr. Margeas stresses that while the expense of building such a facility may seem overwhelming, the rewards have been immediate and profitable. “In just four months, we’ve seen a 25 percent increase in patients,” he says.
The building’s lower level is dedicated to the Center for Advanced Dental Education. The center consists of a lecture area with a ceiling mounted LCD projector for live video and PowerPoint presentations and a fully equipped treatment room for live-patient demonstrations. Hands-on courses feature BienAir electric hand pieces and Kerr LEDemelon lights for up to 18 participants. The open space allows attendees to move freely between the lecture area and operatory.

The Center has attracted some of the top names in dentistry as course instructors. “By teaching at the University of Iowa and lecturing throughout the country and Canada, I’ve been able to meet highly respected clinicians who share our philosophy,” Dr. Margeas says. He also has talented clinicians on board who mentored him early in his career. “Dr. Gerald Denehy (head of operative dentistry) got me interested in bonding. And I did clinical research in porcelain bonding with Dr. Mark Jensen in 1986. Dr. K. William ‘Buddy’ Mopper and Dr. Robert Nixon encouraged me to teach and lecture, while Dr. Peter Jordan gave me an opportunity to do hands-on courses in Canada.” He adds, “Dr. Polydoran, of course, is not just my mentor, but my friend. He inspired me to make this vision a reality.”

Dr. Nixon is co-director of the Center, and he will present hands-on courses throughout the year. Also slated are Dr. Denehy and Dr. Marcos Vargas of the University of Iowa College of Dentistry, and Dr. Mopper, now with Cosmedent, who will offer a course on direct resin bonding. Drs. Margeas and Polydoran also will teach hands-on courses and lectures.

Both doctors are understandably proud of the facility. “We share a passion for excellence,” says Dr. Margeas. “We consult each other on cases, including diagnostic work-ups, and actually share in the treatment of patients.” The CADE represents a culmination of their dream to make advanced education affordable and readily available in America’s heartland.


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Dr. Margeas and Dr. Polydoran gratefully acknowledge the support and expertise of ...