

# DENTAL RESOURCE

A DENTIST'S GUIDE FOR PRACTICE GROWTH

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## What Would You Do?

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# GAME CHANGERS

## IN ADULT TREATMENT

**W**hereas orthodontic treatment has become virtually ubiquitous for adolescents and pre-teens, nearly all orthodontists have experienced a rise in demand for adult treatment in their practice over the past few decades. This trend can be traced to many factors, such as the aging of the baby boom generation, greater awareness and desire for dental cosmetics in adulthood, improved socio-economics of this age group, desire to care for dentitions that now last longer, and many other factors.

Consequently, orthodontists have responded to the demand for adult treatment and almost universally report a rise in the percentage of their practices that are adult patients. Frequently, however; there are practical and logistic differences in treating adults as opposed to younger patients. For instance, adults, young or older, are involved in work place situations and may not want to have unsightly appliances as a part of their appearance. This would certainly be true for patients that may be in the public eye or even of celebrity status. Yet, ironically, these are the very same potential patients that are seeking a better dental appearance.

As this trend evolved, dental suppliers responded with more cosmetic type appliances, first clear brackets, then tooth colored or porcelain brackets as well as more streamlined and comfortable appliances. Largely though, these were developments and modifications to the time-tested and honored braces that were traditionally used for children. Many attempts to develop removable appliances that were more effective were made, and many partially succeeded, but these appliances remained limited in their ability to treat a wide variety of case types.

All of that has changed now. In a recent editorial, the editor of the "Journal of Clinical Orthodontics" stated that "Invisalign was clearly the major game changer in orthodontics over the past decade and a half" (May, 2012).

Invisalign is an advanced form of removable appliance, coupled with computer simulation and manufacturing technology to deliver an appliance system that is nearly invisible yet with the capacity to perform movements previously only possible with fixed appliances. It consists of a series of clear plastic "aligners" that fit very comfortably over the teeth which the patient changes for a new one on a regular basis, usually every two weeks. The patient is asked to wear these aligners full time, day and night, removing them only to eat. By proceeding through the sequence of aligners, each unique and with small pre-programmed movement designed into it, the desired results are achieved.

By combining computer simulations which the orthodontist sequences and controls in the treatment planning phase with 3-D printing technology, very accurately formed aligners are sequentially produced which can impart force applications to the teeth to effect very controlled and directed movements, previously not possible by conventional removable appliances. The Invisalign system has proven to be very effective, and offers many other advantages.

Among them:

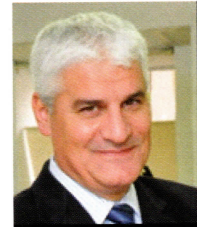
- Fewer appointments needed
- Elimination of appliance breakage and emergencies associated with braces
- Greater comfort
- Better hygiene
- Nearly invisible
- Great results

The reader is cautioned, however; to be wary of certain limitations that remain critical. First, and perhaps most importantly; Invisalign is to be viewed as a new appliance and technique. In many ways, a superior one, but many of the same rules of orthodontic treatment planning and execution still apply. Consequently, a trained and experienced provider remains of paramount importance. Prospective patients are implored to seek out qualified providers, and preferably orthodontic specialists, for their care. Many dental offices offer Invisalign services, but lack the training and experience needed to provide the best possible results.

Along those lines, the dictates of retention of the result still remain as well. In many cases, the retention of the result requires more thought and expertise than the actual treatment! Again, a qualified and experienced specialist is the best insurance that long term retention is being designed into the case.

Other exciting and promising developments or "game changers" have recently evolved as well. Our fast-paced quick-fix society has stimulated developments in an attempt to expedite treatment. Much research exists which has led to the evolution of various acceleration technologies, specific to tooth movement. "Osteogenic Acceleration" (a surgical method), "Propel" and "AcceleDent" are examples of commonly employed techniques and devices that can cut treatment time in half, and are proving to be both effective and comfortable to the patient.

In summary, orthodontic therapy has evolved to the point where now patients can benefit from appliances that are at once; effective, comfortable, invisible and expedient. Can it get any better than that? From where I'm sitting, it just might! <<



**Dr. Frank Celenza is a uniquely qualified dual specialist in the fields**

**of both Periodontics and Orthodontics. This dual certification positions him perfectly for the understanding and treatment planning of multi-faceted adult and teen dental needs. He has been involved in post graduate teaching for over twenty years and is an acclaimed speaker worldwide. Dr. Celenza has received numerous awards and commendations, and has authored many scientific articles and textbook chapters. He has been in practice for over twenty years in New York City and more recently in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey as well as Scarsdale, NY. He is also the product of a long line of dental specialists, both his father and brother are recognized Prosthodontists.**