

Upsizing Midwestern Style



Dr. Dennis Collins set out to build one of the finest, physical dental facilities in the Midwest, to fill it with the best dentists and to perform the best dentistry possible. True to his intentions, Collins Dental Group P.C. opened on January 14 with all the grandeur that comes with king-size square footage, from the free-flowing harmony of Prairie style architecture inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright design, to the practice-enhancing qualities of state-of-the-art dental technology.

This one-of-a-kind, 16-operator office measures 10,500 square feet – but not so big that it loses sight of the Midwest values deeply engrained in residents of the DeKalb/Sycamore area in Illinois. You'll see those values in the way Dr. Collins treats his patients and staff, and in the loyalty to his four associates, whom he considers practice owners. You'll also sense the trust he places in the people who share his work ethic and vision through the relationship with his builder, and dental supply company – his partner in dentistry for over 26 years.

Dr. Dennis Collins

Addressing the Void

Dr. Collins turned to Patterson Dental and Equipment Specialist Jim Plescia to equip his office in 1988. This was office number two; a ballast that caught fire destroyed the first office. Dr. Collins and Plescia had worked together before, when Plescia was with another dental supply company. The two shared similar ideals for moving the practice forward – collaboration that only strengthened within Patterson’s total-package approach to doing business.

This rebuilt office, considered state of the art at the time, led to substantial practice growth over 19 years. But the doctor’s other businesses were blooming as well. He owns grain and swine farming operations and is also interested in real estate, most recently developing a 14-acre commercial area called Prairie Professional Park – anchored by the prime lot on which his new office now stands.

Despite his business successes, Dr. Collins felt that his dental practice came up short in one major area: technology. “I wanted to be digital and to address the state-of-the-art needs for patients,” he explained, “and the building’s space and structure wouldn’t allow for those things to happen.”

Executing Creatively

The handpicked team tasked with constructing his office of the future included Steve Irving (Irving Construction), a builder the doctor knew well; Patterson’s Jim Plescia for dental design equipment and cabinetry, as well as Patterson

technology and installation specialists; Medical Design Specialist Dan Donile; and architects Lew Sur and Mark Zinni (Zinni Architects, Ltd.), who specialize in Frank Lloyd Wright designs.



Dr. Collins and Patterson Equipment Specialist Jim Plescia have worked together in different capacities since 1982.

Dr. Collins instructed from the onset that there would be no constraints on costs associated with benefiting the patient. “I had extreme confidence in my team to create the office I wanted,” he said. “When you can say that your dental supplier has your best interests at heart, it takes away a lot of worries. I never had to worry about receiving a good deal or the right information about equipment or technology.”

To help ensure a smooth transition to digital technology once construction ramped up, Patterson set up a mock operatory in vacant building space within the office park, complete with chairs, cabinetry, digital computer systems

and flat-screen televisions for staff training. The model also provided builders with valuable insight into the dental-related needs of the project. “This group activity and training, along with ongoing education, helped our staff buy into the technology to get us where we are today,” Dr. Collins said.

“I am a people person. With Patterson, I have the people content and framework that enable me to be creative, from my Equipment Specialist Jim Plescia and Patterson Representative Michael Gaurke to Lead Service Technician Kenny Werderits, who has been installing my equipment for 20 years.” Technical Service Technicians Doug Filomena and John Saltijeral were also an integral part of technology installations.



Martha Collins, the doctor’s wife, oversaw the interior design, keeping in mind the relationship between function and utmost patient comfort. Original artwork from local artists, all of whom are art professors at Northern Illinois University and patients of Dr. Collins, hangs throughout the building and helps to underscore the relationship between visual beauty and the artistic components of creating a beautiful, healthy smile.



Kiosks with Patterson EagleSoft's Fast Checkin program enable patients to fill out required forms and information electronically.

The reception area also features two 50" flat-screens and runs CAESY Patient Education presentations continuously.



A-dec chairs and A-dec Stelte semi-custom cabinetry furnish every operator. Integrated technologies include Schick digital X-ray, Progeny Preva Intraoral X-ray, EagleSoft software and CAESY Patient Education and the Planmeca ProMax Digital Pan. And 37" flat screens showcase Schick X-rays and CAESY presentations.

Starting Out on the Right Foot

Every true Midwesterner knows the importance of a proper introduction. As a result, the foot of each operator chair extends toward the entryway. "My goal is to walk into the operator facing the patient to shake their hand," Dr. Collins said. Other "must-haves" included larger-than-average operatories (at least 12-feet long) and rear delivery systems, allowing enough room to walk around the chair.

The spaciousness also allows for luxuries like a masseuse room and complimentary patient appointments before or after treatment, private offices for associates and a staff lounge area that also serves as a community room.



The full basement houses the mechanical equipment and provides full access to wiring, piping and plumbing for each operator.



Staying with a Practice Staple

Dr. Collins used Patterson EagleSoft software in his other office, but now benefits from seamless integration with a top industry recommendation, Schick digital X-ray, as well as CAESY Patient Education. Every operatory also features a 37" monitor, which Dr. Collins wanted from day one, positioned for optimal patient viewing of Schick X-rays and CAESY presentations. (See more on Dr. Collins' transition to digital on pages 52-53.)

Besides plugging into EagleSoft's powerful functionality as the heart of today's ultra-productive office, added efficiencies have resulted from eServices like electronic claims service and real-time patient eligibility – which provides a quick, online breakdown of benefits. "EagleSoft has all the capabilities to fit where we were, but also to expand to fulfill our needs for the future," Dr. Collins noted.

For his equipment, Dr. Collins desired the security he had always known with A-dec, combined with a high-end furniture presence that aligned with the office esthetically. A-dec's semi-custom Stelte cabinetry and walnut ultraleather chair upgrades met both requirements. Two A-dec Preference ICC Sterilization centers meet the needs of all 16 operatories. One unit services the east operatories; the second, placed opposite the other, streamlines sterilization for north operatories. "In our goal to be the dentist for patients who want the latest equipment and technology," Dr. Collins declared, "we don't take second – whether it's lab work, equipment or technology – because we feel in the long run, that's what is best for patients."

Just months after opening, the sheer number of new patients suggests they may feel the same way. New-patient visits have increased



The office is moving in the direction of a full-scale lab, with four ergonomically designed Dental-Arte workstations furnished with vacuums and electric handpieces.

well beyond the impact of adding two associates. Yet, in the midst of this success, the words that roll off the doctor's tongue remain patient-centered: "Just as my dental supply and building teams have my best interests at heart, I have my patients' best interests at heart. To do this, you really need to be up to date, in my opinion. The older clientele may not demand technology now, but the practices of tomorrow need to stay current and to change. People are leaning more and more that way. As you attract a younger clientele, technology is what they demand."



Dr. Collins opened his 10,500-square-foot Collins Dental Group in Sycamore, Ill., on the prime lot of a professional park he developed. The doctor imported 25 semi-truck loads of Colorado red rock to dress up his office location – a connection that stems from his days at the University of Colorado, where he completed undergraduate studies.



Practice Profile

DENTAL PRACTICE
Collins Dental Group P.C.
Sycamore, Illinois

Dr. Dennis J. Collins
Dr. Bryce D. Deter
Dr. Mary Ann Wines
Dr. Amy E. Newkirk
Dr. Stephen L. Woodrick

OFFICE
Square feet: 10,500

This practice is a member of
Patterson Plussm Gold.

OPERATORY EQUIPMENT

- A-dec Stelte Cabinetry with Corian Countertop Upgrades
- A-dec Chairs, Delivery Systems, Lights, Stools
- A-dec Walnut Ultraleather Upholstery Upgrade
- A-dec Preference ICC Sterilization Center
- Dental-Arte Custom Lab
- Patterson EagleSoft Software
- Schick Digital X-ray
- CAESY Patient Education
- Patterson Hardware
- Progeny Preva DC Intraoral X-ray Systems
- Planmeca ProMax Digital Pan
- A-dec W&H Handpieces
- RamVac VSC Combo 10 Duplex Vacuum System
- DentalEZ CA-829D Air Compressor
- Patterson Electric Handpieces
- Simplified Systems Communication System
- Porter Digital Flowmeter Kit
- SciCan Hydrim L Instrument Washers
- A-dec Lisa MB Sterilizer
- Midmark M11 Sterilizer
- Hu-Friedy Instrument Management System (IMS)
- Dentsply Cavitron Prophy-Jet Air Polisher
- eMagine[®] Supply Management Software
- Patterson Office Supplies

PATTERSON TEAM

- Rex Plamann
Branch Manager
- James Plescia
Equipment Specialist
- Michael Gaurke
Sales Representative
- Ken Werderits
Lead Service Technician
- Doug Filomena
Service Technician
- John Saltijeral
Service Technician



From left to right: Rex Plamann, Doug Filomena, Michael Gaurke, Jim Plescia, Ken Werderits, Dr. Dennis Collins and John Saltijeral.