

# More Than a PERFECT SMILE

From thorough COVID-19 precautions to promoting awareness of the mouth-body connection, the cosmetic dentistry practice led by **Dr. Robert Lantzy** protects patients' overall health.

by **BILL DONAHUE** photography by **JODY ROBINSON**

Over the course of the three-month shutdown, members of Dr. Lantzy's Newtown-based practice researched the best ways to protect their patients—and themselves—from the virus. Then, with recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the American Dental Association, and the American Dental Hygiene Association, they implemented a multifaceted plan rooted in safety, comfort, and reassurance.

"COVID-19 is real in this world, and it requires real precautions," Dr. Lantzy says. "Before we opened back up, we had team meetings weekly to determine what was needed for each of us to feel safe, and to make sure our patients would feel safe as well."

The practice's newly adopted preventive measures are, in a word, comprehensive. A pre-screening interview makes sure patients are not experiencing symptoms before coming to the office. Social distancing measures such as having patients wait in their vehicles until they're called in for their appointment limits patient-to-patient interaction. Increased personal protective equipment includes upgraded gowns, face shields, and N95 facemasks. Patients may also notice a pre-procedure rinse, Plexiglas partitions, curtains or doors designed to contain aerosols, and medical-grade air purifiers in every treatment room, as well as high-speed evacuators that remove 98 percent of aerosols at their source.



"What patients don't see is that we've also instituted 20-minute buffers in between patients so the rooms have time to settle," Dr. Lantzy adds. "We've also adopted UVC (ultraviolet-C) disinfection lights to clean our treatments rooms. It's a multilayered approach, and it's placed us at the forefront of disinfection protocols."

Marg Lantzy, the practice's office manager, suggests patients often come in a bit apprehensive. Once they see

the high level of protections in place, however, they quickly relax. "We had a young couple with a baby at home who were taking turns coming in for dental appointments," she says. "The wife came in first and called her husband from the chair and said, 'You have nothing to worry about.' The husband came in an hour later and was at ease. The process we've implemented is a lot to undertake in some ways, but it's all worthwhile if it helps people stay healthy."

### Making Connections

Going above and beyond to protect patients' health is nothing new at Dr. Lantzy's office. He and his team pride themselves on their ability to

provide "complete health dentistry," meaning they care for a patient's overall health by focusing on the connection between oral health and total body health.

In fact, the practice has adopted a bold, ambitious vision: to contribute toward the improved health of 1 million people by 2025. Dr. Lantzy, as well as registered dental hygienists Jennifer Gallagher and Marcie Lear, are working toward this goal not only by ensuring the health and beauty of patients' smiles, but also by collaborating with cardiologists, sleep physicians, and other medical professionals throughout the area.

"People know us as a cosmetic dental practice, but we're really focused on overall wellness," Dr. Lantzy says. "Our country's medical system is largely reactionary. We're trying to go from a reactionary approach to a proactive approach. The body is a beautiful vessel if you take care of it. We've gotten very good at treating diseases, but it's better to prevent people from getting sick in the first place.

"The mouth is the window to the whole body," he continues. "The key is to keep the mouth free of inflammation, because periodontal disease has been associated with heart attack and stroke. As many as one-third of global deaths are cardiac related. We're also able to do saliva testing to show eight genetic markers specific to oral systemic inflammation and specific bacteria that can contribute to gum disease or systemic disease."

Dr. Lantzy believes that good health begins with a good night's sleep, as sleep patterns tend to affect other health factors, such as diet, exercise, and the ability to manage stress.

"Good sleepers tend to be better eaters, and are less likely to be overweight," he says. "We've adopted single-use disposable sleep machines to determine if sleep levels and oxygen levels are optimal, for adults and chil-



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dren. Better sleep affects almost everything in our lives, including a child's ability to learn and overall development."

Once complete, the resulting sleep study can be sent to a sleep physician for prompt diagnosis. A diagnosis might reveal sleep apnea, for example, which could endanger a patient's life in severe cases. Treatment might include a CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine or an oral appliance that



opens the patient's airway.

"Once patients receive treatment and find they're getting better sleep, many of them call back and say they never knew what a difference [treatment] could make," Dr. Lantzy says. "They're less tired, they feel refreshed, and they feel like they can handle whatever the day brings."

From improved dental health to deeper sleep to better overall health, Dr. Lantzy and his team treat every day as an opportunity to live out the practice's tag line: "Caring Professionals Providing Exceptional Dentistry."

"A good day is when you save someone's smile," he says. "A great day is when you save someone's life." ■

→ **ROBERT A. LANTZY, DMD, LLC**  
**11 Friends Lane, Suite 100**  
**Newtown, Pa.**  
**(215) 860-5901**  
**buckscountydental.com**