

IS IT TIME TO LICENSE DENTURISM IN ALL 50 STATES?

By Lorin Berland, DDS

Practicing dentistry in Texas for the last 35 years, I had little interaction with the Denturist community. Even so, Dentures and Denture-Wearers have always been on my mind. I got my start working in a denture focused practice while still in High School. By the time I graduated from Loyola Dental School in 1981, I had developed a great respect for the people who create natural, beautiful and functional dentures. Furthermore, by working directly with patients in the practice, I witnessed daily the huge impact that dentures could have on someone's life, appearance, health, ability to enjoy food, and perhaps most important, their self-esteem.

Over the course of my career, Dentures and Denture-Wearers were the inspiration for my clinical and educational work in cosmetic dentistry, including the Lorin Library Smile Style Guide, which was designed to help the patient, dentist, and denturist choose the right smile for each individual. It wasn't until recently, when I launched a new line of Denture Care Products to treat Oral Infections and Dry Mouth, that I've had the opportunity to meet Denturists and learn about the many benefits they bring to their patients. After attending the National Denturist Association and Washington/Oregon Denturist Conferences this year, I firmly believe that Denturists should be licensed in all 50 states!

Dentistry is changing rapidly, North America is aging, and there are now a wide range of options to treat the growing edentulous population. However, perhaps due to my experience as a denture tech, it seems that the dental industry is focusing on treatments with increasing complexity while neglecting the denture solution that started the profession. After all, dentures were the original cosmetic dentistry. And for the vast majority of people with missing &/or doomed dentition, dentures are still the best treatment. Beautiful great-fitting dentures require a high degree of training, skill and artistic ability. Unfortunately, dental schools are cutting back on denture education. A telling example happened to me fifteen years ago, when I hired a new prosthodontist with the assurance he knew everything there was to know about dentures. But when he did his first denture, I was shocked to find out that in all his training he had never seen or heard of Gothic Arch Tracing. After I showed him, he was shocked as well!

New dentures from a properly trained and experienced professional is a minimally invasive and affordable solution. New advances in denture technology (scanning, digital, and more) have the potential to make dentures better than ever. But denture-wearers in the states without Denturists are reluctant to go to the dentist for new dentures, and maybe for good reasons. It was probably a dentist who removed their teeth in the first place! Without easy and affordable access to quality denture care, these people continue to live in quiet toothless misery, with dirty old dentures that no longer fit, suffering from long-term chronic infections and sore spots that just become a part of everyday life.

The edentulous population is already huge and growing even bigger. We need more health professionals to maintain the health and quality of life of denture-wearers. Denturists have the education, training, and passion required to help denture-wearers. The current high cost and extensive time commitment for a dental degree makes a degree in Denturism an increasingly attractive option. Licensing Denturists in all 50 states will make quality denture care more affordable and accessible for the current denture wearing public as well as for future denture-wearers. This is the age of specialization and Denturists are denture specialists.

Denturists benefit everyone. When working together, Denturists and Dentists can provide high quality extractions, implants, and dentures more economically to more people. This has been verified by the many successful practices in states where Denturists are licensed. Patients who live in areas with Denturists have better access to better dentures, and tend to replace their dentures on a timelier basis. All edentulous and potentially edentulous people in the United States deserve the best. That is why I believe Denturists should be licensed in all 50 States.

Biography:

Lorin Berland, DDS, is one of the most published authors on clinical dentistry and dental education with over 100 articles, best-selling books and instructional videos including the Lorin Library Smile Guide. Dr. Berland was recognized by the AACD for "Outstanding Contributions to the Arts & Science of Cosmetic Dentistry", and has been featured in major national print and TV publications for his work. Dr. B began his career as a denture technician, and after more than 35 years of listening to patients and running a multi-specialty practice, he has started Dr. B Dental Solutions with a line of products specially designed to treat the real issues affecting people with oral appliances, like Oral Infections and Dry Mouth, which can be found at www.DrBDentalSolutions.com. For more information, contact Dr. Berland at info@drbdentalsolutions.com or 1-844-372-3368 (DRB-DENT).



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