The Future of Dentistry, Today

Heartland Integrates Biolase Handheld Diode Laser into Office, with Plans for More

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Dr. Samson Liu,
Vice President of Clinical Affairs and full-time practicing dentist in Wildwood, Missouri
FOR THE MAJORITY of their existence, lasers were reserved for the world of superheroes and intergalactic warfare. When the first laser was unveiled 50 years ago, the world looked on, impressed with the potential of its seemingly magical properties. Few people could imagine how this futuristic innovation would one day impact their daily lives. Fewer still would believe that laser technology would make a routine trip to the dentist easier.

Fast forward to the year 2011 and meet everyday superhero, Dr. Samson Liu. Armed with a laser, he fights battles like gingivitis and dental anxiety. Dr. Liu is one of Heartland’s own and he has been testing dental lasers for use on soft tissue in his Wildwood, Missouri, office. A 1999 graduate of Northwestern University Dental School, Dr. Liu has been with Heartland for more than 10 years and currently serves as Vice President of Clinical Affairs, in addition to practicing full time.

Dr. Liu has been evaluating the ezlase™ 940, a soft-tissue diode laser made by Biolase, for company-wide use in the future. But not the future of comic books or science fiction. Heartland Vice President of Administration, Chad Thompson, hopes to see 25 Heartland offices
using the device by February. “The laser is really the next step for our offices in terms of technology. Now that we have rolled out Kodak digital radiography in all of our offices, this is our next tool to improve the quality of patient care,” Thompson said.

What additional benefits does this technology offer? Doctors can anticipate higher case acceptance and increased patient referrals, according to Biolase, because most procedures can be performed using topical anesthetic only, with minimal bleeding, swelling or post-operative pain. Doctors can also expect less need for injections, sutures and hemostatic agents.

The laser also makes many procedures more efficient. “Take crowns for example,” said Dr. Liu, “The laser cauterizes the surrounding soft tissue, causing little to no bleeding, thereby improving the precision of the crown margins. Anytime you can get a quality digital image or a superior impression means better fitting crowns and less remakes for the patients.”

With the ezlase™, the bottom line for the patient is decreased anxiety and Dr. Liu has witnessed this firsthand. “When parents come in with their child for a frenectomy, they are scared of the procedure and think it will put their child in a lot of pain. When I explain that I can do the procedure in a few minutes with no bleeding, just topical anesthetic and minimal recovery time, they are much more comfortable. In fact, they often stay in the room for the procedure and are quickly amazed with the results,” said Dr. Liu.

In this type of scenario, the benefit is twofold for the patient. “Parents and young patients are happy and relieved that I can do the frenectomy quickly and virtually painlessly, and it also saves
The only Total Diode Solution™ for all of your patient needs.

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“When lasers first came to dentistry, they were bulky machines that had to be rolled around the office on a cart; it would have been impractical and expensive to have one for each operatory. But with the ezlase™? It’s almost like a glorified iPod!” said Dr. Liu, who also likes its smartphone-like features.

Additionally, the ezlase™ uses disposable tips of varying sizes and angles, rather than a complex fiber-optic threading system. “You simply pop on the one you want. You can bend the tip to aim precisely where you need to be,” said Dr. Liu.

Constructed of rugged Liquidmetal® rather than plastic, the ezlase™ is built to last. “Durability is important because this is a big investment. Mine has withstood plenty of abuse—from daily use to being in my luggage on flights,” Dr. Liu attested.

One of the biggest perks of the ezlase™ is versatility. It boasts an output of 7 watts, compared to the industry standard of 2.5 watts for soft tissue lasers. The adjustable power allows for many applications, from soft-tissue surgical procedures and hygiene to pain relief and laser whitening, all the while making it more comfortable for the patient. Top procedures, according to the manufacturer, are laser curettage and sulcular debridement, troughing for impressions, gingival recontouring, frenectomy, treating ulcers and lesions, whitening and providing temporary relief of minor pain.

As lasers become more common in other arenas, Dr. Liu believes patient expectations are changing. “Patients are more aware now than ever about the use of lasers in other fields of medicine. They might have had laser eye surgery, laser hair removal or even laser acupuncture. With such exposure, they come to expect these innovations to extend to our office as well. Seeing that we are constantly improving our technology gives patients more confidence in the doctor and team,” he commented.

As attractive as a laser may be, actually getting one can be cost prohibitive. Thompson, who oversees technology at Heartland, believes this latest initiative will change that. “This is...
“We wanted to work with the best company possible and to stay with the same brand over time. These people know their product and offer quality support,” said Dr. Liu.

A worldwide leader in dental laser technology, Biolase also makes the Waterlase MD™ Turbo, the number one hard- and soft-tissue dental laser. Thompson believes their 25 years in business will prove advantageous to Heartland, its doctors and patients. “Like Kodak with digital radiography or Tulsa with endodontics, Biolase is an industry leader. They know the business and have been doing this for a long time,” he said.

Thompson said he is eager to see the ezlase™ roll out in Heartland offices and believes its success will prepare Heartland Dental Care for the future. “This technology improves patient care, which is always our number one goal,” he explained.

At Heartland, the future of dentistry has arrived. Cape and tights optional. HDC

Stay tuned for Heartland’s next technological venture. Come see us at the Chicago Dental Society Midwinter Meeting, booth 3936!

“Less than 10% of dental offices in the United States utilize lasers and I’m proud to say that I’m one of them.”

Bill Greider, DMD
Advanced Technology and Laser Dentistry, Fort Myers, Florida

one area where being with Heartland has big advantages,” he said. “We have been able to invest our time and resources into research and development. We have physically trialed many lasers before deciding on the ezlase™.”

Heartland doctors will receive the most comprehensive training available. “Not only will Biolase do regional continuing education and doctor training, but they will come to each office and work one on one with our doctors,” said Thompson.

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