



Successful Model: Dental

Project: Sanford Dental Clinic Canby

Population: Residents of Canby, Minnesota (pop. 2,000) and surrounding rural area. The medical clinic serves about 8,000 patients, including the 75 residents of the Sylvan Court Nursing Home and the adult handicap residents of the Robert E. Miller homes.

Description: In 2003 we weren't looking to get into the dental business; but it became apparent that the departing dentist was unable to sell his practice and the community was going to be without local service.

The cost of buying a practice or setting up a new practice is prohibitive for a dentist in private practice—especially with the risks associated with a limited (and not growing) rural population. We assumed that dentists might be similar to medical doctors in that they have been trained in their medical specialty, but may not want to actually operate a business—a separate skill entirely. We believed that it would be attractive to a dentist coming to Canby to be part of a medical group.

We had observed the productivity issues related to families forced to leave the community for dental care—our own employees needing to take time off from work to transport their children or themselves, rather than a quick walk after school or a short break from work. We knew every other business in the community was experiencing the same absenteeism.

As the biggest employer in Canby, Sanford Canby Medical Center (SCMC) is fully aware of the importance of keeping shoppers local. When dental patients left the community for care, they also bought groceries, gas and other items.

The Sanford Dental Clinic Canby is committed to quality—we will compete with any clinic on quality work and the use of the best materials and equipment. We do not try to be the low cost provider and do not compete on price. However, our fees are well within the range for the area.

Within the hospital: The dental clinic is a department of Sanford Canby Medical Center—just as the medical clinic is a department, the hospital, nursing home, therapy, dialysis, senior housing, home care are departments. The dental staff has the advantage of the employee benefits available to SCMC staff, which is more attractive than that usually offered by private dental practices.

Recruitment: We began recruiting using the model we've established for medical doctor recruitment. Dr. Bteddini responded to an ad in a national dental journal. We didn't "go outside the United States" to recruit Dr. Bteddini—he had been in the country for about four years—first in Michigan and then in California. He was already a legal resident of

the United States, so no immigration process was necessary (although we have hired physicians on J-1 visas and helped them through the immigration process). Dr. Bteddini interviewed at several practices in Minnesota—including a large practice in Rochester and one in Minneapolis, but he chose Canby because it gave him more autonomy. He is committed to quality and what he experienced in California was “production dentistry.” He was also ready for the relief from traffic and the hassle of large cities!

Plans for the Future:

The room originally set aside as a surgical suite was completed in 2008. The dental hygienist completed course work through the University of Minnesota for “expanded functions” and will include those services for her patients. Dr. Bteddini is in the third year of a three-year advanced degree program at the University of Minnesota in dental implants and esthetic dentistry.

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The Minnesota Office of Rural Health and Primary Care Successful Models Web site is <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/orhpc/models/index.html>.