

BUSINESS SNAPSHOT: Dentist's Office is One-Stop Shop

By Jennifer Stuck
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It can't be easy being the guy nobody wants to visit, but it hasn't gotten to dentist Gregg Melfi of Dental One. Sitting on a leather couch in his waiting room, complete with palm tree, big screen television and artificial waterfall, he is all smiles.

For the past five years, the Rhode Island native has been located in East Milton at 480 Adams St. A resident of North Attleboro, Melfi moved to Massachusetts to pursue the technology he calls "the future" of dentistry.

"My old partner didn't really want to go in that direction," he explained.

That direction involves the use of lasers and computers to investigate and correct dental problems. Melfi said he is among of the 6.5 percent of dentists who use a system called CEREC to replace broken areas of teeth, as opposed to old-fashioned crowns.

CEREC allows Melfi to take a scan of a broken tooth, and generate a 3-D computer image with which he can design a replacement for the missing piece. Instead of taking impressions, putting on a temporary

crown, asking a lab for a crown that fits, and causing the patient to come in for two or more visits, Melfi sends the design from the computer to one of two machines in his office that can cut it out in porcelain in only 10 minutes.

"I get what I'm looking for because I designed it," he said. It also allows him to restore teeth in a single visit.

"We've done three, four, sometimes even five in one visit," he said. "That's where we came up with Dental One."

With all the fancy equipment, one might think it costs a fortune, but Melfi said it "doesn't cost a dollar more" than a traditional crown.

"In fact, sometimes it's less," he said.

He calls the process "more conservative" because there isn't as much loss of the original tooth as in traditional crowns, where a large part is drilled away. He also said it "bonds what's left of the tooth and makes it stronger."



Dr. Gregg Melfi

He said the material stands the test of time. Though dentists have only been using CEREC a few years now, the prototype was made 20 years ago, and 94 percent of the replacements done then are still intact.

"[CEREC] actually surpassed my expectations," he said.

Melfi said he chose to become a dentist because it involves two areas he enjoys: medicine and art. However, he added, "some areas of medicine, it's hard to balance the family life."

He has three children with his wife, Elizabeth: Jim, 16, Alex, 14, and Christina, 13. On top of his practice and raising three teenagers, Melfi is learning to play the drums, which is something he always wanted to do, he said.

In case you are wondering, he is aware he shares a name with mobster Tony Soprano's psychiatrist, Dr. Melfi, on the HBO series "The Sopranos."

"When I first came to the area and people weren't familiar with me yet, when I'd have to call in a prescription, the guys would go 'Yeah, okay, right.' And I'd have to say 'No really! That is my name!'" he said.

Now that he is established in town, Melfi said his next step is opening up a second office in Easton. He will train a second dentist to help in the Milton office, which would allow him to open on Fridays.

Dental One is currently open Monday through Thursday.