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CLEARING THE AIR

Off-shore dental laboratories and the question every dentist should ask their laboratory

SEATTLE, Wash.–Jan. 2010–Off-shore dental laboratories might be one of the most highly debated topics in the U.S. dental profession today. *Dentaltown* magazine recently spoke to Modern Dental Laboratory USA (MDL USA) to clear the air and to learn more about overseas restorations since MDL USA works with the largest dental laboratory in the world, which is located in Shenzhen, China and operates under the most rigid global standards in medical device manufacturing. MDL USA discusses its transparency, how it is able to handle laboratory issues locally, and why the number one question dentists should ask their dental laboratories is if they have certification, not its country of origin.

This cover story is featured in the February issue of *Dentaltown*, which is available beginning the week of Feb. 7.

Beginning this year, MDL USA is working with others in the dental industry to improve dental health care by raising awareness about the importance of using certified dental laboratories. MDL USA and its partners feel this issue is a paramount for three reasons: First, only an alarmingly low 3 percent of dental laboratories in the United States have been certified at the basic level offered; second, according to a survey conducted by *Lab Management Today*, over two thirds of dentists state that inconsistent quality and technical problems are the top reasons they leave their laboratories; and lastly, in 2008 fears emerged about off-shore restorations containing dangerous materials, which a study published by the American Dental Association (ADA) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) proved to be unfounded. While the ADA and CDC have proven that country of origin is a very poor predictor of product safety and quality, dentists can get help in evaluating a dental laboratory's ability to produce safe, consistent and high-quality restorations, and that is through laboratory certification. Laboratories that have proven

their competency by subjecting themselves to an evaluation and obtaining certification – which requires that manufacturing processes are all documented, taught and followed – provide dentists with a certifiable level of confidence that its restorations meet industry standards, are consistent, safe, and most importantly perform to dentist’s expectations.

“We learned a long time ago that there is a very high correlation between organizations that obtain certification, are able to meet industry standards, and those organizations producing consistent, safe and high-quality products,” stated manufacturing expert and CEO and President of MDL USA Patrick Tessier. “As an industry, we should collectively strive to proactively improve dental health care by promoting laboratory certification. “

Modern Dental Laboratory USA services the entire United States with award-winning service centers in Seattle, Los Angeles and Chicago. Its overseas dental laboratory has been a pioneer in the global dental business since 1976, and is the largest dental laboratory in the world. Its laboratory is one of the only dental laboratories to obtain the highest level of certification in the dental laboratory industry, the ISO 13485:2003 certificate, which is the international standard in quality management for medical device manufacturing and is the most rigid global standard in manufacturing, exceeding even those of the Food and Drug Administration. MDL USA’s laboratory obtained this level of certification because its goal is to eliminate variability in its processes so that its dentists always get consistent, safe and high-quality restorations. For more information, please visit www.monderndentalusa.com.

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