



"What's in Your Mouth?" Campaign Summary and Key Messages

Campaign Purpose: The campaign was launched to highlight the role and value of a trained and educated dental technician as part of the dental restorative team.

Campaign Overview: Poorly-made dental restorations – whether made in America or abroad – can lead to a range of health consequences for patients, and in turn, legal consequences for dentists. Growing demand for dental work in America has created a market that features both high-end and economy-priced work. Dental restorations increasingly are being imported from countries like China, India and Vietnam. Depending on the country, those dental laboratories may not be subject to the same scrutiny that domestic laboratories receive from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Domestic labs remain unregulated in more than 40 states. To ensure better outcomes for safe dental restorations, it is extremely important that dentists and patients have a full understanding of where their dental restorations are coming from and what materials are used in the process.

Campaign Key Messages:

- The ability to deliver a high standard of care in restorative and cosmetic dentistry is enhanced by working with a formally educated, trained and/or certified dental technician.
- Dental technicians bring considerable experience and subject matter expertise in the areas of dental materials; technology utilization; shade verification and implant dentistry.
- Dental technicians can be a true partner in helping dentists to grow their practice.
- Most state dental practice acts do not regulate or set standards for operation for dental laboratories or dental technicians. It is important to work with individuals and companies that have voluntarily achieved "third party verification" of their skills, knowledge and operating standards.
- Dental technicians, although generally operating behind the scenes in the oral health team, are a crucial part of ensuring delivery of quality dental care.
- Full disclosure of patient contact materials that are used in their restorations and also in what country such finished restorations are manufactured are important.
- Approximately 25 percent of domestic dental laboratory sales and 38 percent of actual restorations are manufactured overseas. There are 42 countries that currently have foreign dental laboratories registered with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Why Now?

The domestic dental laboratory profession is going through significant consolidation. From 2006-2017, it is predicted that the number of dental laboratories in the U.S. will have been reduced by 39 percent. It is crucial that this level of transparency exists and that there is a full understanding regarding the qualifications of the dental laboratory and dental technician involved in the delivery of services.