# Group Dental Practices and Dental Support Organizations

## An Introduction

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# Group Dental Practices and DSOs

In a **group practice**, more than one dentist provides clinical care at one or more locations.

A **multi-site** or **multi-location group dental practice** is a type of group practice that has more than one location in one or more states.

A **dental support organization (DSO)** is a particular business model used by some group dental practices.

**What, exactly, is a DSO?**

# What is a Dental Support Organization (DSO)?

DSOs are business entities that dental practice owners contract with to manage the administrative, marketing and/or business sides of that dental practice.

DSOs, which can be owned by private equity firms, do not provide patient clinical services. All patient clinical services are provided by, and under the direct supervision of, the licensed dentists supported by the DSO.

By supporting the business and other nonclinical needs of dental practices, DSOs allow dentists to focus on delivering patient care.

# DSOs are One Type of Business Model

Each DSO has its own unique characteristics. DSOs vary in size and structure, and they exist in every U.S. state and internationally. State law dictates how a DSO may operate in each U.S. state.

DSOs are one of the many types of business models that a dentist can choose. Other business models may include:

Dental partnership organizations (DPO)
Dental management organizations (DMO)
Dental specialty organizations
Etc.

# Some Dental Practices Use a DSO's Brand Name

Some DSOs build new dental practices ("de novo"), some contract with existing practices, and some do both.

Some dental practices are easily identifiable as being supported by a DSO, for example if multiple practices share the same brand name.

# Some Dental Practices Keep Their Individual Names

When a dentist affiliates with a DSO, they may or may not keep their original practice name. Sometimes you can tell they're part of a DSO because they use the DSO's website template or other resources.

In other cases, you can't tell if a dental practice is supported by a DSO. These are sometimes called "invisible DSOs."

# What is a Dental Support Organization (DSO)?

Each DSO is different and has a unique business model and culture.

There are hundreds of DSOs in the U.S. and around the world, supporting thousands of dentists and dental practices. A DSO can support fewer than 10 or up to 2,000 practices or more.

Each DSO offers many different benefits to the dentists working with them, including:

- Mentoring, coaching, and education opportunities
- Paths to ownership
- Work/life balance

# Largest DSOs in the U.S. *(As of June, 2023. Source: Dr. Bicuspid)*

## 1. Heartland Dental
Number of affiliated/supported practices/offices: 1,700+
Brands: Individualized
Locations: 38 states

## 2. TAG – The Aspen Group
Number of affiliated/supported practices/offices: 1,100
Brands: Aspen Dental, ClearChoice Dental Implant Centers
Locations: 45 states

## 3. Pacific Dental Services
Number of affiliated/supported practices/offices: Nearly 1,000
Brands: Individualized
Locations: 25 states

## 4. Smile Brands
Number of affiliated/supported practices/offices: Nearly 700
Brands: Bright Now! Dental, Castle Dental, Merit Dental, Midwest Dental, Monarch Dental, Mondavi Dental, A+ Dental Care, Decision One Private Practice Group, and Johnson Family Dental
Locations: 30 states

## 5. Sonrava Health
Number of affiliated/supported practices/offices: 560
Brands: Western Dental, Mid-Atlantic Dental Partners, Brident Dental & Orthodontics, and Vital Smiles Dental & Orthodontics
Locations: 20 states

## 6. MB2 Dental
Number of affiliated/supported practices/offices: 550
Brands: Individualized
Locations: 38 states

## 7. Affordable Care
Number of affiliated/supported practices/offices: 425+
Brands: Affordable Care Dentures & Implants, DDS Dentures + Implant Solutions, Advanced Dental Implant Center
Locations: 42 states

## 8. Dental Care Alliance
Number of affiliated/supported practices/offices: 400+
Brands: Individualized
Locations: 22 states

## 9. Smile Doctors
Number of affiliated/supported practices/offices: 390+
Brands: Individualized
Locations: 28 states

## 10. Freedom Dental
Number of affiliated/supported practices/offices: Nearly 350
Brands: Individualized
Locations: 42 states

## 11. Great Expressions Dental Centers
Number of affiliated/supported practices/offices: 349
Brands: Great Expressions, Ascent Dental Care
Locations: 9 states

# Selected Resources

www.groupdentistrynow.com

www.theadso.org

www.beckersdental.com

Contact:
Cathy Haibach
Senior Manger, Large Group and DSO Membership
American Dental Association
haibachc@ada.org