

FOCUS AWARDS 2002



Now that the series of pieces following up the Focus Awards finalists for 2002 has now reached its conclusion, it seemed a good idea to look back and see how the previous year's finalists are doing and get an update on their progress since the Focus Awards 2001.

THE WINNERS

Woodlands Dental Practice were the 2001 winners. The activities that made them stand out from the rest were:

- Introduction of three new telephone lines to prevent patients getting the engaged tone when they call.
- Recruitment of extra reception staff who all attended a customer care course. They also built a special confidential area to the reception.
- A special emergency slot every morning for two hours, no appointment can be booked during this time. Also a 24-hour emergency bleep which is taken on rotation between the dentists.
- A CDS dentist comes in to treat special need patients and phobic patients with the aid of sedation.

Philip Ratcliffe, the Practice Principal said that it has been an interesting 18 months since the 2001 Focus Awards: they have had a visit from the Minister for Health, Mrs Hazel Blears and they have become a field site for the Modernization Agency of the NHS. Philip felt that their bid to become a field site was strengthened by their success at the Focus Awards and gave the practice a better profile.



The winning team from 2001, Woodlands Dental Practice, Wirral

Philip didn't realise that winning would bring such a high profile and was amazed by the razzmatazz of the presentation day. This all really encouraged the staff who enjoyed the attention and the fact that their efforts were being recognized. It was good for staff morale too; half of the prize money went to the staff as a bonus and half went to a local charity. The staff continue to play an active role and go on various courses and have a staff away day. Everything that they were doing before the Focus Awards has been continuing and the practice is taking the ideas forward.

The next big projects are the direct hospital appointment booking, developing electronic patient records and use of the NHS net to communicate between practices and hospitals, which is all part of the new dental IT strategy. The practice did not apply for the 2002 awards because Philip recognizes that there are lots of worthy practices who deserve a moment of glory. They had a brilliant day and enjoyed the reception afterwards, the staff still talk about it today.

THE FINALISTS

The decision to choose Woodlands as winners was a difficult choice, as all the finalists were very impressive.

The Melbourne Practice

The Melbourne Practice were noted for

- Offering free oral cancer screening sessions.
- Providing personal childcare facilities while parents are receiving treatments.
- A nervous patient initiative, taking more time to speak to patients in the waiting room.
- Providing a welcome booklet, patient information leaflets, competitions and window displays.

Patricia Smith the Practice Manager says they are still improving things at the practice and coming up with new ideas. Applying for the Focus Awards has made the practice think more about patient focus, although they are often raising money for the local community charities and will be running competitions in National Smile Week. Many of their



Preparing impression materials, Melbourne Dental Practice, Derbyshire

patients have been attending for many years and when they read about the award in the local press, sent letters of congratulations to say that the reward was well deserved. The whole experience was a really good morale booster for the staff. New patients notice the award and poster in reception and comment on it, reminding the staff of how well they have done. It also makes the patients feel proud too, they think it is brilliant to be associated with the practice.

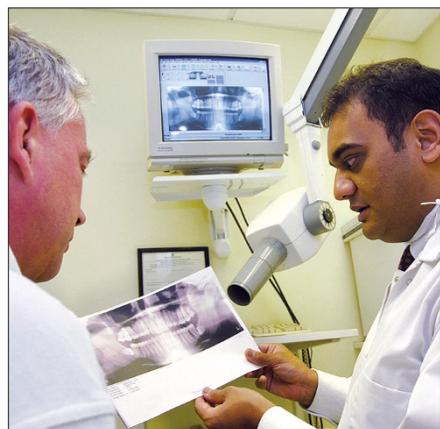
The prize money went on some new toys for the waiting room and a microwave for the staff-room; a staff reward that could be used by all. The Focus Award has also helped in recruitment; when the practice needed a new dentist recently, they used their 'award winning' status to attract applicants.

MP Dental Practice

Reached the final for

- Weekly staff discussion forum for general topics and best practice discussion.
- A receptionist trained as an oral health educator.
- Links with Age Concern including a cross-referring facility.
- Treatment portfolios for patients to take away with charts, digital radiographs, treatment plans and information sheets.
- Interactive patient education on ceiling-mounted monitors showing real-time images.

Joint Practice Principal Dr Patel, said that the practice is carrying on with the patient-centred approach that took them to the final of the Focus Awards. They are now a field site for the Modernisations Agency, which he feels goes hand-in-hand with the quality of care emphasized in the Focus Awards. The awards also helped to develop a sense of team awareness and increased staff morale. The practice website, newsletter and welcome pack all mention that the practice was a finalist in the Focus Awards; many patients notice it and



Patient education at the MP Dental Practice, Bermondsey, London

Focus Awards get bigger and better for 2003

The Focus Awards 2003 is going to be an even bigger and better event than the last two years.

This year the awards are open to nominations from practices and clinics in England, Northern Ireland and Wales and the prizes will be awarded in five categories, reflective of the areas that practices are showing innovation in. This year

there will be awards for:

- Excellence in children's dental care.
- Excellence in treating those with special healthcare needs.
- Excellence in patient information and involvement.
- Excellence in creating a patient friendly environment.
- Excellence in the development of good practice.

For further information on the Focus Awards 2003, contact the BDA Media and Public Relations team on 020 7563 4146

comment. It was a good PR exercise and still is, even 18 months later. Patients definitely respond to it and Dr Patel recommends practices to get involved.

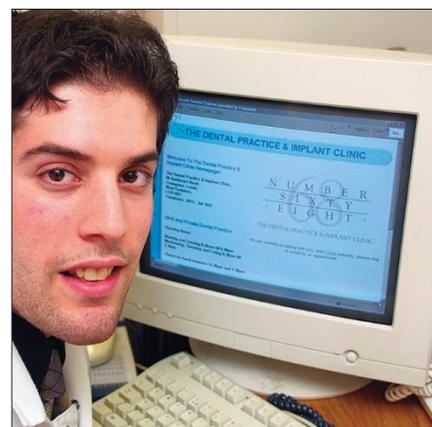
68 The Dental Practice

Showed innovation with

- Regular patient surveys.
- A specially trained anti-smoking advisor.
- An interactive website including patient education.
- Pre-treatment discussions and follow-up calls.
- A groundfloor surgery for disabled access.

The practice continued to work hard to maintain and build on the standards of patient care after getting to the final of the award. The main thing they did was to obtain some new equipment in the practice to aid in their preventive approach. Dr Sherer was interviewed on local radio about the new equipment and their success in this national competition.

Their prize money went back to the staff by helping to fund their Christmas party. Dr Sherer said it was an honour to be presented with an award. He has since moved practices and is considering



Dr Sherer from 68 The Dental Practice, Leeds, with their website

applying with the new practice as they are always trying to think of innovations.

Strelley Health Centre

Stood out for

- Special relaxation techniques for children, special care patients and their carers.
- Community workshops in oral health to train staff in local clinics.
- Oral health resource library for the community.
- Extensive refurbishment to create pleasant surroundings.

Improvement is part of the remit at the Strelley Health Centre so they are always trying to think of ways of making things better. They spent their prize money from 2001 on more distraction toys for child patients and more resources for the library.

They are spending the whole of May on National Smile Week, as they have so many ideas that they do not all fit into one week. These include getting every school in Nottingham involved in raising the awareness of the dental health message.

The team at Strelley Health Centre enjoyed the 2001 Focus Awards so much that they entered again in 2002 and are already getting their ideas together for 2003.

Naomi Davis



Staff at the Strelley Health Centre, Nottingham encourage staff to read the literature