



Green dentistry

Dr. Steven Koos

Co-founder, ORA Dental Studio and ORA Oral Surgery & Implant Studio, Eco-Dentistry Association Gold Certified Charter Practices

DPR: What made you decide you wanted to open green practices?

Dr. Koos: All of the co-founders which is myself, my partner Dr. Goran Kralj, Dr. Mladen Kralj and Dr. Reggie Thurston, we were all classmates and we were all employing eco-friendly practices in our personal lives and we wanted to extend that into our workplace. We decided from the onset that we were going to build practices, from the ground up, that were sustainably designed and also would function in an eco-friendly, green fashion. I'm a physician as well and many hospitals now are being constructed via LEED protocols but there was never any focus on private practice, which is where we wanted to make a difference and stand out, as well as hopefully set an example for the next generation of practices to come. As a business model we wanted to demonstrate this could be a 'win-win situation' for everyone, for patients, for the community and for the practicing doctors. We've enjoyed an enormous amount of success, being able to open four offices in two years and we're in the planning stages for a fifth one.

DPR: Why would you encourage other dentists to take steps toward making their practice more environmentally friendly?

Dr. Koos: Well the most critical thing is it's doing the right thing. It benefits the team and the community and the patient and, lastly, it also will really benefit the provider's bottom line. For a few small investments there can be big financial gains and savings. This streamlines a practice and its efficiency. For example, eliminating single-use items and using metal sterilizable, autoclavable substitutes. That's a money saver right there. Also becoming a digital practice. Digital radiography and digital patient charting saves a tremendous amount of resources, time and money.

DPR: How does a green practice benefit the patient?

Dr. Koos: Our paramount tenet is simple—what's good for the environment is good for the patient and vice versa. But our focus is to give patients the most comprehensive, positive experience available for their oral health and that includes incorporating state-of-the-art technology, but at the same time ensuring the technology employed is both minimally invasive to the patient and minimally invasive for the environment.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Steven Koos