



**FREE HEALTH CARE
ADVICE JUST A
PHONE CALL AWAY**



Citizens in Houston, Harris County and the eight surrounding counties now have a new resource at their fingertips – a 24-hour Nurse Triage Call Center that will help them with healthcare questions and choose the most appropriate place for care.

Regardless of healthcare affiliation, primary care provider or insurance status, a bilingual staff is available 24 hours, every day to answer calls on the Nurse Health Line – 713-338-7979 – to assess callers' primary health concerns and direct them to an appropriate level of care.

"When you don't feel well, the last thing you want to do is wait in a crowded emergency room," said Dan Wolterman, president and CEO of Memorial Hermann Health System.

"This new, free community-wide resource lets you talk directly with a registered nurse who will ask questions, determine what level of care you need, then refer you to an appropriate resource. It's important to note that this service is not just for Memorial Hermann patients; it is available to all residents living in Harris County and the greater Houston region."

After an assessment is made, callers will be advised to seek care with their physician of choice or be referred to local emergent care centers. Additionally, community health workers will be available to provide information on free or low-cost community resources or clinics.

The Nurse Health Line is not designed to assist with life-threatening conditions or emergencies. People with life-threatening conditions and emergencies should immediately call 9-1-1.

All calls to the Nurse Health Line are confidential and addressed by a staff of professionals who are experienced in assessment of clinical situations. To help patients who call, nurses use their training, experience, evidence-based decision-support tools, and peer-reviewed materials to conduct their assessments.

Accelerations in orthodontics

By ANNIE HARMON

Tribune Correspondent

With advancements in orthodontics, the process to correct misaligned teeth has gone from years to months. Dr. Ray McLendon, the national expert in Invisalign braces and founder of Clear Choice Orthodontics, is introducing his patients to AcceleDent, a new technology which cuts the treatment time in half.

Invisalign has made substantial strides in the expediting the pace of orthodontics. AcceleDent, made by the Houston based company, OrthoAccel Technologies, Inc., is a separate treatment that works with Invisalign to accelerate the process even further, but works just as well with regular braces.

Orthodontics works by remodeling the bones surrounding your teeth. AcceleDent speeds up bone remodeling by using tiny vibrations, or micropulses. The vibrations of this hands free device accelerate tooth movement, but are so gentle that McLendon says, "When they studied [AcceleDent] they gave half the study a placebo where it didn't vibrate at all, and the other half the vibration one, and it was mild enough that they couldn't figure out which was vibrating and which wasn't."

According to McLendon, the technology behind AcceleDent already existed as a medical device and has been researched and applied to broken bones. When Michael Lowe from Rice University applied that same principal of healing bones to speed up the process of correcting the teeth, he found amazing results. Not only did the FDA approved AcceleDent speed up the treatment times, but many patients have reported less discomfort from their orthodontics.

Lowe chose McLendon to help develop and promote the AcceleDent after learning of McLendon's role of training doctors in the use of Invisalign. When Invisalign was introduced in 1999, it received less than favorable reviews from orthodontists who claimed it only worked for small adjustments, if at all. McLendon began using Invisalign at his Kingwood practice in early 2000, and had success through his tenacious efforts and research.

McLendon says, "I had to make it up. And in the early days I would even modify the aligner or put some extra pressure on

the aligner, or cut away an aligner and add a little button and a rubber band. Jokingly, but not jokingly, the doctors would say, 'well you cheated.' And I would say the teeth don't care. The patient is expecting me to give them a certain result. And there is no cheating, it's just doctoring, so I did literally make it up."

Before most doctors had treated 30 patients with Invisalign, McLendon had successfully treated 1,000.

"So there was a pretty huge information gap there that the company saw I had in experience. I was getting results that others had not been getting," said McLendon. Soon after, Invisalign hired McLendon to head up a clinical advisory board, and titled him vice president for training and doctor support.

Now, using a combination of Invisalign and AcceleDent, McLendon is seeing significant results in treatment time and feels this will make orthodontics more attractive to the market. Patients want to attain their new smile quickly, according to McLendon, because the smile represents more than just their teeth:

"From a business point-of view, and even from a humanitarian point of view, it would be smart to understand what it is people are really asking us for. They are asking us for straight teeth, but not because they just want straight teeth- they're hoping those teeth are going to do something else great for their life, whether it's find the right gal, find the right guy, be more confident in public speaking, to get the right job, be a better interviewer- another words, people are not just coming for their vanity."

McLendon believes that with the aid of a 20 minute a day regimen of AcceleDent, most Invisalign treatments will be condensed to three to seven months.

Once the AcceleDent is purchased, it is used at home and can be recharged at any outlet, or by inserting the USB port into a computer. When plugged in via a computer, patients can keep track of their progress with a program called FastTrac. Patients are told they can use the device while engaging in daily activities such as texting, watching TV, or reading.

According to the OrthoAccel Technologies, Inc. website, the Kingwood/Atascocita dentists who carry AcceleDent are Paige Orthodontics and Clear Choice Orthodontics.

For more information, visit acceleDent.com or clearchoiceortho.com.

Dr. Ray McLendon ushers in new technology.

