

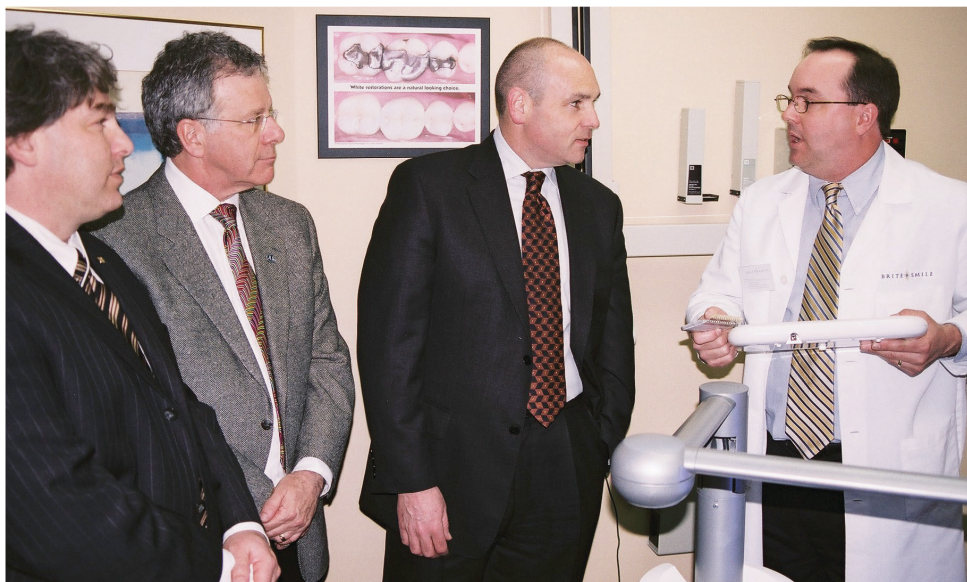
# An Evening with the Honourable George Smitherman

*Minister of Health Updated on New Dental Technology*

Over 130 dentists, industry representatives and ODA officials attended a reception showcasing 'Technologies in Dentistry' at The Dental Learning Centre (TDL) in Oakville, Ontario on March 31, 2005. The Honourable George Smitherman, Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, who was the special guest for the evening's event, toured the facility, observed the demonstrations and was updated on the latest advances in new dental technology.

In 1867, when Barnabus Day led the creation of the ODA, education for dentists was a prominent feature of the Constitution developed by Day's Committee. Throughout its existence, the ODA has continued to play a critical role in continuing education for dentists. Supporting that mandate for ongoing, meaningful learning, dentists are also very fortunate to have an outstanding facility such as The Dental Learning Centre to assist continuing education through hands-on typodont and live patient programs.

The Dental Learning Centre, founded by Dr. Paul Eisner, exists to support and encourage growth in the dental profession. According to Dr. Eisner, "We attempted to create a truly Canadian facility where dentists and their teams could develop diagnostic and clinical skills as well as technical competency. For a practice to really reach its full potential, and an individual's professional career to have the most meaning, the pursuit of lifelong learning needs to be a predictable, consistent experience.



(from left) Dr. Steve Goren, Dr. Paul Eisner and the Honourable George Smitherman toured the facility.

We are proud that this can be done locally at TDL without extensive, expensive and frequent travel to the U.S., and can be provided by our very own talented and passionate Canadian educators."

ODA President Dr. Steve Goren outlined the importance of participating in the political process at the local level, and shared his experiences of working with his MPP, the Honourable George Smitherman, at the community level since his election in 1999. Dr. Goren noted that both his and Minister Smitherman's roots in the community run deep, and that over the years he is

“proud to have worked with George to help improve the lives of many of the less fortunate in our community.”

After a welcome and introduction from Dr. Goren, Minister Smitherman spoke about some of the challenges currently facing his ministry and described the position of the dental profession in the larger picture of health care for Ontario. “Community is an important word in the overall strategy of the Ministry of Health, just as it is for the Ontario Dental Association. We share a goal to provide high quality health care to those citizens most in need at the local community level.” Minister Smitherman went on to outline how his own riding of Toronto Centre Rosedale includes communities such as Regent Park that need improved access to comprehensive health-care services which can be delivered in a timely and compassionate manner. “The ODA holds a well-respected reputation in the Ontario Government” said Minister Smitherman, “and I am encouraged that the Ministry of Health and your association have been able to work together to resolve many of the issues on the ODA’s agenda.”

Minister Smitherman acknowledged the importance of continuing education for professionals, noted that he learned much during the impressive tour, and that he was truly amazed by the technology he observed. The Minister also pointed out how encouraged he was to see that such an innovative, completely equipped and functional facility exists to train our dentists in Ontario.

The Health Minister briefly outlined something of his vision for changes to Ontario’s health-care system, emphasizing again the importance of establishing local, community-based programs that would address the health needs that are of most concern to the individuals in these communities. The Health Minister also spoke about the importance of having dentists work with their MPPs and participate in their communities across Ontario.

Minister Smitherman was thanked by Dr. Eisner for his remarks and his attendance. In closing, Dr. Eisner noted that the dental profession constantly aims to maintain the highest level of oral health care for patients throughout Ontario. He expressed the view that ongoing continuing education stimulates practitioners to ask such questions as:



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- What are the things I do every day in my practice that I would like to do better?
- What else can I offer my patients to enhance their dental health, appearance and quality of life?
- What can the oral health team learn to enrich our patient relationships, ourselves as professionals and our entire practice?

Dr. Eisner stated that “providing such a resource is the mission of The Dental Learning Centre.”

The ODA would like to extend sincere appreciation to The Dental Learning Centre for hosting the event, and thanks to the sponsors for their support. The sponsors in attendance included BriteSmile, Dentsply, Henry Schein-Ash-Arcona, Ivoclar-Vivadent, MCC Cabinets, Patterson Dental, SciCan, Scotiabank, Sinclair Dental, Straumann, and Willis Supply. Attendees were able to see demonstrations such as HealOzone and BriteSmile’s one-hour in-office tooth whitening system, as well as displays of laser dentistry handpieces, chairside CAD/CAM equipment and innovative new dental implant systems. ■



Minister Smitherman in discussion with TDLC attendees.