Museum showcases the latest technology for dental practices

By Fred Michmershuizen, Online Editor

There’s no doubt that any dentist who has been to a dental meeting recently knows a lot about new technology. Now, thanks to a new exhibit at the National Museum of Dentistry, members of the general public will get to see much of this new technology as well.

The new exhibit showcases some of the most technologically advanced dental treatment systems available for dental offices — from digital X-ray systems that expose patients to less radiation to foot-operated computers that improve the efficiency of procedures, reduce patients’ time in the office and improve oral health.

“The ‘Tomorrow’s Dental Office … Today’ exhibit gives us an opportunity to feature some of the latest advances in dental care, showing how far the techniques of modern dentistry have come and their positive impact on the public,” said National Museum of Dentistry Executive Director Jonathan Landers, in a press release announcing the new exhibit.

The exhibit is made possible through the support of Benco Dental, a privately owned, full-service distributor of dental supplies, dental equipment, dental consulting and equipment services.

“We were honored to be selected to put together the ‘Tomorrow’s Dental Office … Today’ exhibit for the National Museum of Dentistry,” said Benco Dental President Charles Cohen. “It’s an exciting venture, bringing dental technology to the general public.”

The “Tomorrow’s Dental Office … Today” exhibit includes the following:

• Dental operator equipment from A-dec that was developed to optimize patient ease and comfort in the treatment room while enabling dentists to perform more efficient dentistry.
• The A-dec 500 dental chair, featuring a slim headrest and backrest to give the dentist more leverage in the back of the mouth.
• The A-dec 500 dental chair, featuring a flat surface, which can be wiped down and easily disinfected.
• The NuAguatCone Beam CT unit from Vatech, featuring switching technology for digital panoramic radiographs or CT scans. The unit has dedicated sensors for each system and an imbedded camera for proper patient positioning.
• The LAVA Chairside Oral Curing System from 3M ESPE, a digital impression system that allows the dentist to both capture and view continuous 3-D images, as well as create precise digital impressions. The benefits of digital impressions include increased patient comfort and decreased seating times.
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• The SP Newton LED advanced piezoelectric device from Acteon, which uses ultrasonic vibrations and an array of tips for tooth cleaning, root canal procedures, periodontal surgeries and cavity preparation. The LED lights provide illumination for procedures in the back of the mouth.
• The SuproLIFE (light induced fluorescence evaluator), an intraoral camera and cavity detection device in one. Switching to blue LEDs allows the dentist to see variations in the health of a tooth’s dentin, which can aid in decay detection and decay removal during treatment.
• The MiniLED Autofocus 2 dental material curing light from Acteon that automates the curing process through a complex geometry.
• The Cleankeys keyboard, featuring a flat surface, which can be wiped down and easily disinfected.
• The NOMAD Pro handheld X-ray unit by Aribex, the first for intraoral use. The unit’s light weight and rechargeability allow for its use on humanitarian missions in remote areas and for dental forensic identification following mass disasters. The internal shielding and external backscatter shield protect the operator, making it extremely safe to use.
• The Dental R.A.T., a foot-operated computer mouse and keyboard for hands-free computer use. Developed by a frustrated hygienist to allow for single-person periodontal charting, the unit has become even more valuable as more patient information is recorded and stored digitally.

In short, the museum shows how dental care has evolved and available today.

At the museum, visitors can also see for themselves how dentistry has changed dramatically over time. Galleries include some of the hand-forged iron tools of the early American dentist on horseback, to the 19th-century office of G.V. Black, known as the “Father of Dentistry,” to the cutting-edge dental equipment available today.

In short, the museum shows how dental care has evolved and oral health has improved through the ages.