whole body inflammatory side effects from dental conditions," said Dr. Neil Gottehrer, a periodontist who is considered a leading dental authority on the oral-body inflammatory connection.

Gottehrer and Dr. Marvin Slepian, a cardiologist, delivered an address at the recent Academy of General Dentistry meeting in Baltimore on the subject and co-wrote a guide, Evaluation & Management of the Oral Body Inflammatory Connection. The guide was printed as a courtesy by Chase HealthAdvance financing options.

"As more physicians and dentists become fully aware of this and understand that there are treatment protocols shown to diminish or eliminate gum disease for the long term, we’re going to start seeing many more patients having healthier lives medically because of what happens in the dentist’s office," Gottehrer said. “We’re probably entering one of the most exciting phases that dentistry has ever seen.”

Slepian told Dental Tribune that many people who are at risk may not be receiving any dental or medical care at all. He said it is important when such high-risk people do enter either a dental or medical office, that they be referred to the other specialty as well.

For example, he said, a person who enters a dental office for treatment of inflamed gums may be on the brink of a “major event.”

On the other hand, Slepian said, patients being treated for heart disease can reduce their risk and improve their overall health by improving their oral health.

"Some diseases in the domain of the dental world have an impact on the medical world, and vice versa," Slepian said. “If you have a bad mouth, you may be on your way to having a bad heart.”

Gottehrer and Slepian are advocates of a new system for dentists to strengthen the referral relationship between physicians and dentists for reducing risks for systemic disease due to dental disease. For dentists, simple screening tools are available to use with their patients.

“We have to be partners in general health care,” Slepian said.

Two blood tests are available to help reveal whether oral disease is having effects beyond the mouth into the circulatory system. Treatment by the dentist and dental hygienist can directly impact substances suspected of contributing to whole body disease.

"Typically evident in most patients with dental disease who were also recorded as exhibiting the biological markers on a blood test, require some type of periodontal care and oftentimes tooth replacement with dental implants or the use of Captek periodontal crowns if they have dental crowns next to the gums," Gottehrer said.

Resources are available for dentists and doctors who are interested in incorporating these philosophies into their practices.

Big Case Marketing, a marketing and case acceptance consulting firm for dentists, has developed a referral and marketing program for general dentists, periodontists, oral surgeons and prosthodontists that helps facilitate relationships with physicians.

"For some dental specialists, this referral model will significantly enhance their relationship with physicians and their referring dentists," said Dr. James McAnally, CEO of Big Case Marketing.

The program from Big Case Marketing includes clinical protocol manuals, administrative protocols, in-office clinical forms, physician referral forms, and physician-dentist-patient referral communication letters.

ChaseHealthAdvance financing options, a division of Chase Card Services of JPMorgan Chase, is offering a complimentary copy of the Evaluation & Management of the Oral Body Inflammatory Connection guide upon enrollment to both dentists and physicians.

“Our patient financing product can help more patients accept the treatments their health care providers prescribe to them by breaking up treatment costs into more manageable monthly payments," said Barry Trexler, senior vice president of sales and marketing for ChaseHealthAdvance.

“We give all approved patients a credit line of at least $5,000.”

Information about the referral and marketing system is available from Big Case Marketing at www.BigCaseMarketing.com.

For ChaseHealthAdvance financing, call (888) 588-7635 or visit www.advancewithchase.com/guide.