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Aim Higher

Dr. Hanh Bui Keating of **Bryn Mawr Periodontal Associates** offers high-quality care and multiple treatment options to patients looking to improve and preserve the health of their teeth.

by LINDSEY GETZ

photography by JODY ROBINSON

Everyone wants “the best,” particularly when it comes to health care. Patients routinely seek out the best possible provider, as demonstrated by the way patients are treated but also by the tools, technologies, and options available to them. Unfortunately, despite their high standards, patients often wind up settling for substandard care.

While it’s not often talked about, 47 percent of the adult population has some form of gum disease according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. On top of that, 70 percent of patients over the age of 70 have it. Most of the time, the disease is undiagnosed at the early stages. Here’s the worse news: There is no cure.

Periodontics is a branch of dentistry devoted to the treatment of the structures surrounding and supporting the teeth, i.e., the “gum.” Some periodontal practices may suggest they offer the highest standard of care, but in reality they lag behind in terms of the technologies and services they offer.

At Bryn Mawr Periodontal Associates, the goal has always been to not only stay current but also to stay well ahead of the curve. As a result, the practitioners can offer a patient multiple treatment options, and then guide the patient to choose the most ideal treatment, personalized to him or her.



Hanh Bui Keating, D.M.D., a board-certified periodontist at Bryn Mawr Periodontal Associates, says that a minimally invasive “No Cut, No Sew, No Fear”® laser procedure is a prime example. Dr. Keating is one of a select few in the region qualified to use the PerioLase MVP-7 Dental Laser, which is the only FDA-approved laser to treat gum disease.

Dr. Keating compares it to the “new versus old way of performing vision corrective surgery.” While there was a time when all vision corrective surgery was performed with a blade, these days a laser is considered the standard. In terms of peri-

odontal work, many practices still use a blade and argue that the work is just as effective. Dr. Keating says such approaches are more invasive than they have to be.

“We’ve invested heavily in the latest equipment because we know it adds value to patient outcomes, and we believe it is best for our patients,” she says. “While it’s true you can perform the same work with an inexpensive surgical blade, the recovery tends to be longer and more painful. The patient must deal with sutures and cuts, whereas there is none of that with a laser.”

Dr. Keating is quick to point out, however, that some patients are not good can-

didates for a laser procedure. For these cases, she would perform the procedure using a more traditional approach.

“With such a large portion of the population suffering from gum disease, we find that today’s patients want options,” Dr. Keating says. “They don’t want to be told there’s only one way to do things. If the patient is a candidate for laser surgery, we’re proud to be able to offer them that option.”

A Different Approach

Advancements such as the advent of lasers have helped to make periodontal disease more manageable. Whether a patient chooses laser surgery or the more traditional treatment approach, Bryn Mawr Periodontal Associates relies heavily on what Dr. Keating describes as a “holistic approach to fighting periodontal disease.” In addition to offering multiple treatment options, the practice believes strongly in patient education.

“This is a lifelong condition,” she adds. “The procedure will provide pain relief and help slow the progress. That’s why we believe it’s so important to educate the patient and help them manage the disease. In the same way that a doctor wouldn’t just send a diabetic home with medication and not coach them on making lifestyle changes, we believe in providing a realistic approach to managing periodontal disease.”

Besides being able to offer the latest technology, Dr. Keating says that she believes Bryn Mawr Periodontal Associates differs from other practices in terms of its approach to care. Founded by Edward L. Woehling, D.D.S., the practice places a strong emphasis on putting in the time and effort to save teeth rather than simply removing teeth and replacing them with dental implants. Her approach, she believes, is a gentler and more compassionate approach.

“Our main objective is to save our patients’ teeth in the most minimally invasive way possible,” says Dr. Keating, adding that the practice tends to attract patients who have had less than pleasant treatment experiences at other periodontal practices. “We work in collaboration with a lot of great dentists in the area. While we handle the surgical aspect, we rely heavily on them in being our trusted counterparts in the whole treatment plan. We truly believe in holistic care.”

With some background in general dentistry herself, Dr. Keating is able to help facilitate a continuum of care by working closely with patients’ other dental care providers.

“We believe patients’ ongoing care is important, and we recognize that we’re not the only professional that they see,” she adds. “We don’t work in isolation from the other providers our patients are seeing. Just like a construction engineer and an architect ultimately need to work together, as the surgeon, I believe that working with my patients’ dentists and physicians is a key to their overall success.”



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Supporting The Future

In addition to being passionate about offering her patients the best, Dr. Keating says she is committed to supporting the local community. She has a soft spot for education, based in part on her own experience.

Born and raised in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Dr. Keating came to the United States on her own at the young age of 17 to pursue higher education. She met her husband, Dr. Brendan Keating, an Irish expat, in Philadelphia, and has recently settled down in Radnor Township. They have an 8-year-old daughter, Ella, who loves to write stories and play music. Whenever her husband can take a break from his work as a faculty in Department of Surgery at the University of Pennsylvania, the Keatings like to travel and learn about other cultures around the world.

Making history in her early 20s as the first female fellow of the Vietnam Education Foundation, an organization spearheaded by Sen. John Kerry and the late Sen. John McCain, Dr. Keating received a full scholarship to dental school. She says she will be forever grateful for the opportunity; in the years since, she has been giving back to youth in pursuit of education both personally and professionally.

“Regardless of politics, I think that we would all agree that children are our future,” she says. “I am a big believer in supporting



Founded by Dr. Edward L. Woehling (left), Bryn Mawr Periodontal Associates offers a holistic approach to fighting periodontal disease.

local education as well as organizations like the Global Girls Alliance, which allow youth—in particular, disadvantaged girls—to have a future that they otherwise wouldn’t be able to have. That obviously hits home for me. I wouldn’t have been able to be where I am today were it not for the help I received. I’m incredibly thankful for that.” ■

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