



June 1, 2022

Dear Expressions Dental & Better Sleep Iowa family,

As you know, this past year has been a challenge for me personally, as well as our dental practice in general. I want to take a few minutes to update you on what has happened this past year, and what our plans are moving forward.

On April 11, 2021, I suddenly went into septic shock. Septic shock is a very serious bacterial blood infection that progresses very rapidly and has a very high mortality rate. Due to the fast actions and excellent care of the physicians at MGMC and Mercy One medical in Des Moines, they pulled me through, though I was unconscious for a little over a month. Unfortunately, along with this, I developed Guillain-Barre syndrome, that is an autoimmune condition that disrupts the myelin sheath that covers the nerves, resulting in paralysis of the infected body parts. In my case, it started at my feet and worked up to my waist. Heck, I didn't know what Guillain-Barre was, I read about it back in dental school, but didn't know anyone who actually had it. Fortunately, most people recover, but the process is very slow and can extend from months to years, and involves extensive physical therapy. To complicate matters, during the period I was unconscious and laying on my back, I developed a severe pressure lesion over my tailbone that resulted in direct exposure of the tailbone itself.

Unfortunately, all of these diseases/problems have extremely long recovery periods. So, as you are aware, I have been out of commission for awhile! That doesn't mean, however, that you have been out of my thoughts and mind. I have been following all of you and your dental condition on a regular basis thanks to Bri. I have reviewed your x-rays, chart entries, and personal updates for each of you. I have wanted to continue the level of care that I have strived to provide over the years. During this period, I was absolutely amazed and humbled at the outpouring of concern and love that I received from our patient family. The cards, books, letters of encouragement, and even a handmade Hawkeye blanket (thank you, Donna!), that I have received were greatly appreciated!! I cannot begin to express my gratitude! "THANK YOU" doesn't seem to suffice!

For those of you who have stuck with our practice during this challenging time, I appreciate it beyond description! For those of you who have elected to move on, I understand. I wish all of you the best and want you to know our door is always open to you (once you have realized the mistake you have made!).

This brings us to our plans for moving forward. For approximately 2 years prior to my septic shock episode, I was in the process of focusing my part of the practice on sleep medicine (i.e. sleep apnea), as well as TMJ/facial pain cases. To do this, I was gradually transferring the more routine dental procedures and general duties of the practice to an associate. While some patients expressed some concern about having to see a "new" dentist, I assured them that I was not "sailing off into the sunset". I would still be involved in their specific cases, and would closely mentor and train any new dentist who joined the practice. I would also be available to answer any questions the patient might have. My goal is the best of both worlds for our patient family – youthful hands and eyes of a younger dentist, supported by the extensive experience, training and wisdom of a more "seasoned" dentist.

The technology of dentistry is changing at warp speed, which can be good news and tremendous potential for improved technical outcomes. The digital revolution is no doubt improving many aspects of dentistry, however, it also comes with significant challenges. Successful dentistry has been, and should always be, based on strong personal relationships between the dental team and the patient. These positive relationships are based upon mutual honesty, trust, confidence, knowledge, respect, values, and many other positive human attributes. These are all attributes that cannot be achieved simply by increased non-human technology. That is why, at Expressions Dental/Better Sleep Iowa, we have been devoted to selectively integrating technology with a personal touch.

To that end, and to provide for long-term continuity of care for our patient family, we have decided to merge our practice with a practice that was originally started by me in Slater years ago. I eventually sold the practice to my associate at the time, Dr. Bob Davis, who continued to operate the practice in Slater for a number of years before moving it to Huxley.

Dr. Davis has continued to develop a very successful practice in Huxley, and currently has two associates. Dr. Davis has developed an excellent practice that reflects the ideals, principles, relationship, and excellence that I have long advocated in my 43 years of practice.

To that end, the Ames practice will be merging with Dr. Davis' Huxley practice (Ballard Dental Associates) effective July 1, 2022.

Bri will be there to help ensure smooth transition to the combined practice. I will be there to continue overseeing the specific cases of our Ames patients. This will allow me to continue to focus my efforts on sleep medicine and facial pain/TMJ. In addition, I will be there to also consult on, and help treatment plan, the more complex cases that present to our combined office in the future.

We will also be expanding the telemedicine services in our practice. This will allow patients to have easier access to dental information, evaluation, monitoring, and treatment recommendations--often without having to physically drive to the office. In this continuing time of covid challenges and high gas prices, minimizing physical travel and personal contact is desirable for many patients, especially for those who travel for long distances. Your dental records will remain on the Expressions Dental computer system that will be moved to the Huxley office. That ensures that all of your records of previous dental care at Expressions Dental will be readily available and current.

We are all very excited about this new practice structure. We see it as a tremendous opportunity to expand services to our patient family. In addition to Dr. Davis and I, Dr. Chris Alley and Dr. Andy Kirsis are here to continue to provide the excellent care that you have become accustomed to and deserve. This will allow us to expand services and meet patient demands more easily.

For all of our patients that have appointments already scheduled for July 1st or later, we will be contacting you directly to schedule you in the new office. We will be able to accommodate you all so that there will not be a wait to being scheduled – your new appointment will be able to closely coincide to your original appointment date and time. We want this transition to be as seamless as possible for our patient family. Please note that Ballard Dental Associates does have in-network Delta providers for those who are concerned about that transition aspect.

You are also welcome to call Ballard Dental Associates directly to schedule any needed appointments – simply let them know you are a patient of Expressions Dental, and they will be able to get you scheduled in the time that works best for you. Their phone number is 515-597-5300.

Lastly, we will be hosting an open house/welcoming party at the new practice in the very near future to allow our wonderful patients to see their new dental home, meet the team, and see all of the greatness that this merger will provide! The new office is also in the planning stages of expansion, so come check out the plans and take a tour.

PLUS, it will give me an opportunity to see all of our wonderful patients again---you heard it right, I will be there to welcome you all with open arms!

I look forward to seeing you all at our new office very soon --- it's been way too long!

Sincerely,

Dr. Clary

P.S. Here is the contact information for Ballard Dental Associates – see you soon!

Ballard Dental Associates
408 Campus Drive, Huxley, IA 50124
515-597-5300