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As practitioners of complete health dentistry, the team led by **Dr. Robert Lantzy** offers innovative solutions to treat or prevent serious issues involving a patient's jaw alignment and airway.

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THE STARS ALIGN

AS PRACTITIONERS OF COMPLETE HEALTH DENTISTRY, THE TEAM LED BY **DR. ROBERT LANTZY** OFFERS INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO TREAT OR PREVENT SERIOUS ISSUES INVOLVING A PATIENT'S JAW ALIGNMENT AND AIRWAY.

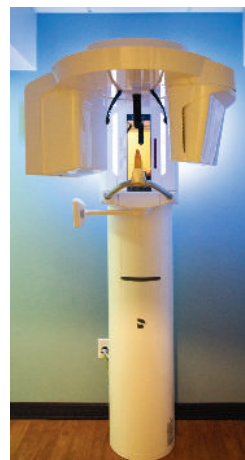
by **Bill Donahue**
photos by **Alison Dunlap**

"Dentistry is not just about the teeth and gums anymore," says Robert A. Lantzy, D.M.D., the leader of his Newtown-based dental practice for nearly 40 years. "Everything is interconnected."

As practitioners of "complete health dentistry," Dr. Lantzy and his clinical team provide care that considers all aspects of a patient's health. They pay particular attention to the link between oral health and systemic health; this includes the growth and development of the facial structures, which affect the airway and, in turn, every other aspect of a person's well-being.

Dr. Lantzy and his team use advanced training and a comprehensive dental exam incorporating cone beam computed tomography to identify the manifestations of oral dysfunction. An underdeveloped jaw can cause conditions such as crowding, gum disease, and scalloped tongue, as well as breathing disorders such as mouth breathing and obstructive sleep apnea (OSA).

OSA can be particularly problematic, because it is when one's breathing stops and restarts many times during sleep. OSA prevents the body from getting the rest it needs to achieve optimal performance. Countless medical problems can stem from untreated OSA, ranging from chronic fatigue and ADHD to depression and sexual dysfunction, to potentially



Advanced technology to help treat problems associated with the under-development of the jaws and bones of the midface include specialized visualization software, an unobtrusive "sleep ring," and 3D CBCT.



Dr. Lantzy can use nonsurgical options such as guides, myofunctional therapy, and custom CARE appliances to treat airway disorders.

lethal ailments such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and some forms of cancer.

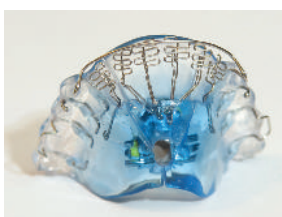
"There are children who are getting medicated for ADHD," Dr. Lantzy says, "but in reality, they may have a sleep disorder caused by a developmental problem." He adds that a sleep study can be an early step to diagnose sleep disorders.

The most common prescription for the treatment of OSA is a CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine, which opens the airway during sleep. CPAP, while effective, is intolerable to some. OSA can also be treated surgically, though Dr. Lantzy recommends a more conservative approach. He cites oral appliance therapy, which keeps the airway open during sleep by advancing the lower jaw forward and preventing the tongue from blocking the throat. Still, another option: complete airway repositioning and/or expansion (CARE) through VIVOS providers.

"A CARE appliance is a little bigger than a mouthguard," Dr. Lantzy says. "An adult would wear it 12 to 16 hours a day. After about a year [of use], it will have effectively created more space. You may need clear aligners [such as Invisalign] to finish the case, but the airway is more developed as a result."

Dr. Lantzy's "Guided Growth and Development" program is focused on the growth and development of a child's airway. Using a series of guides that progress at different stages of a child's development, the guide system essentially lays the framework for a healthier airway. In the process Dr. Lantzy can help steer the teeth into the correct position, developing a straight smile with healthy occlusion, often precluding the need for orthodontics later in a child's life.

Regardless of a patient's age, the practice takes an integrative approach and may involve the expertise of other medical specialists.



had previous orthodontic treatment only to see the teeth relapse. (See sidebar.) Dr. Lantzy says it can help reduce OSA by 50 percent in adults, with an even higher success rate among children.

One of Dr. Lantzy's patients, Melissa Mayer, became aware of myofunctional therapy when it was suggested for her son, Declan, to help with a variety of alignment issues. Even though it wasn't covered by insurance, Mayer decided to proceed with the therapy for her son. She described it as "worth every penny."

"We've gone through six treatments total, and I have seen such improvement with how wide Declan can open his mouth, and he doesn't seem to be as picky with eating either," she said recently. "He's currently using a mouth guide to help correct his bite, and I don't think he would have tolerated the appliance anywhere near as easily if we hadn't gone through the six sessions. His last visit for a dental cleaning and X-rays went much more smoothly as he was able to open his mouth wide enough throughout the entire appointment."

Even after almost 40 years of practicing dentistry, Dr. Lantzy still treasures the op-

"For example, the otolaryngologists (ENT doctors) can help with a septal deviation or if polyps are discovered to ensure the airway is structurally sound for you to breathe in the first place," Dr. Lantzy says. "Some people may need to see a myofunctional therapist for oral and facial muscle therapy to help with proper breathing or after a frenectomy for patients who were tongue tied. Others may need the attention of chiropractors or nutritionists, among others. We can be your coach through all of this."

Myofunctional therapy can be performed in Dr. Lantzy's office by Marcie Lear, a hygienist who completed advanced training and received certification as an orofacial myofunctional therapist. She uses exercises and behavior-modification techniques to essentially "retrain" the tongue, lips, and cheek muscles. Myofunctional therapy can be helpful for individuals who

portunity to help others, both in his office and in the community. He also loves to learn, which is why he's continually attending educational seminars, delving into the latest research, and looking for new and more effective ways to safeguard his patients' health.

"People want to live longer, and we're here to help them make sure their health span matches their lifespan," he adds. "We want them to be happy about living longer because they're in good health. It's why I went to school, and it's why I continue to add to my knowledge base through continuing education. I enjoy learning, especially when new things can improve the health of our community and the people who live in it." ■

Myofunctional Therapy for Orthodontic Relapse

Marg Lantzy, who is the practice manager for Robert A. Lantzy, DMD, LLC (as well as Dr. Lantzy's wife), has firsthand experience of the benefits of myofunctional therapy. She recently shared her story about being introduced to the therapy by Marcie Lear, a dental hygienist and certified orofacial myofunctional therapist with the practice.

"I had a bonded, retaining wire placed after three years of traditional orthodontics. I wore the retainer for well over 20 years and when I had it removed, I noticed my lower teeth beginning to shift within several months. I thought by that point my bone support was mature enough to keep my teeth locked in place. Even so, during a routine dental health visit, Marcie noticed some patterns that likely contributed to my orthodontic relapse. My tongue liked to touch my lower teeth, which likely pushed and made them shift. I wasn't aware of the habit until then, and I needed it to stop.

"Myofunctional therapy is helping me to retrain and correct my function so that, when I realign the shifted teeth, they will stay in place; my tongue won't fight and push. After completing an initial assessment, Marcie set me on a path to gain greater tone and awareness of my habits. This, in turn, will also help prevent issues like obstructive sleep apnea. My first session included 'active' and 'passive' exercises. Without creating stress and compensating functions, I am tasking myself to isolate certain facial muscles. I practice at home twice a day and check in with Marcie about every two weeks to keep my progress going."

Myofunctional therapy also facilitates healthier gums and teeth. When a person can breathe through their nose and properly seal their lips, the oral tissues remain moist, which makes plaque easier to remove. They stay healthier as a result. For anyone who is prone to ear infections, has speech difficulties, or struggles with digestive and seasonal allergy problems, consider being evaluated to see if myofunctional therapy can help.

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