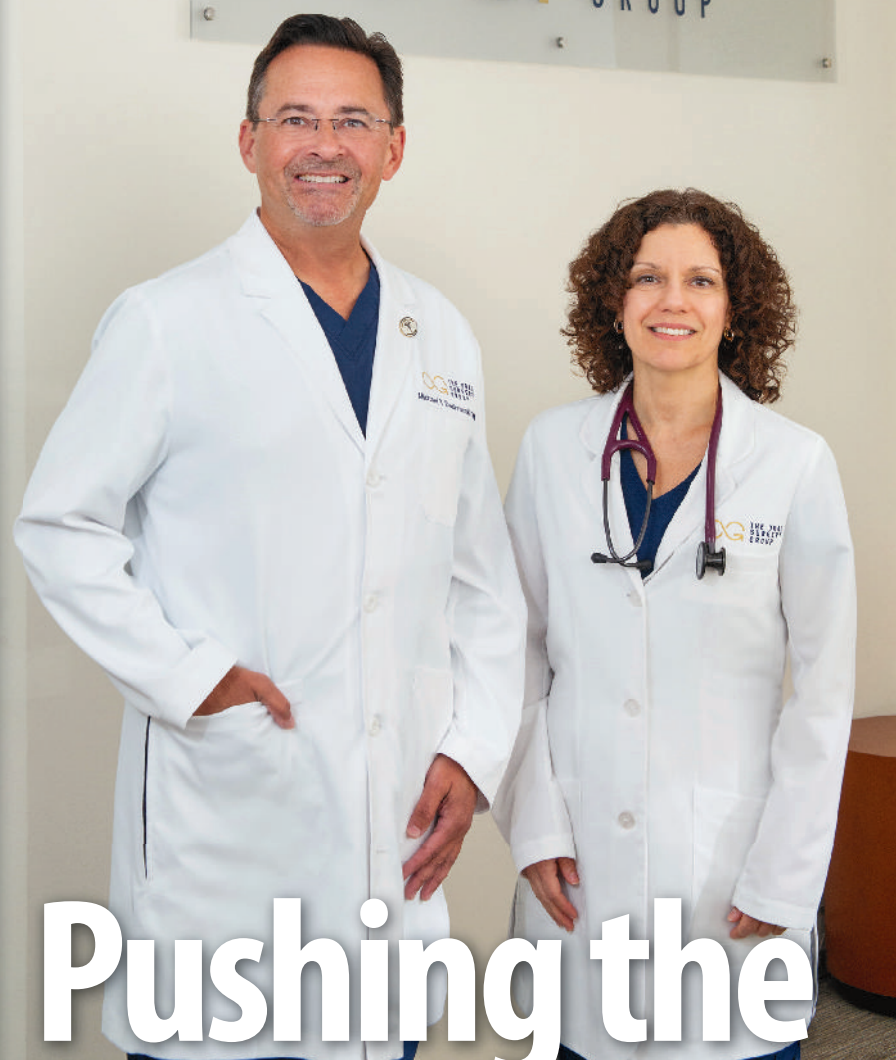


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Dr. Michael Dachowski, who sets a standard for excellence at **The Oral Surgery Group**, strengthens his team with the addition of nurse practitioner Renee Updegrave. page 16



Pushing the Envelope

by **MATT COSENTINO** | photos by **ALISON DUNLAP**

Dr. Michael Dachowski, who sets a standard for excellence at **The Oral Surgery Group**, strengthens his team with the addition of nurse practitioner Renee Updegrave.

In his more than 30 years in private practice as an oral surgeon, Michael Dachowski, D.M.D., has always favored a patient-centered approach. His mission is simple yet profound: devote the time to listen to each person's unique concerns, and then address those concerns by developing a personalized treatment plan with which doctor and patient both feel comfortable.

Dr. Dachowski is more committed than ever to delivering on that mission with his practice, The Oral Surgery Group. Renee Updegrave, CRNP, who joined the practice approximately two years ago, is a fine example of that commitment. By having her join the practice, Dr. Dachowski became just the second dental specialist in the region to employ a nurse practitioner as a core member of the clinical team.

"There are manpower challenges today in dentistry and medicine alike," he explains. "One doctor can see only so many patients, especially when the doctor is doing surgery. The only way for that doctor to appropriately, legally, and efficiently address patients to the level that they deserve is to have a high level of support. Renee, as the nurse practitioner, is an extension of what I do. We have two excellent clinical professionals and a dedicated staff, and that makes for a great team.

"We run this practice like a family," he continues. "When patients come in, we want them to feel like they are coming into our own home. Oral surgery is generally not a fun thing to have done, and we realize that. Everyone who comes to see us has a unique story and set of circumstances, and we treat all of them with the importance and understanding they deserve."

The Oral Surgery Group specializes in procedures that can restore a patient's functionality and improve their quality of life—namely, dental implants, including bone grafting and jaw reconstruction, as well as extractions such as the removal of wisdom teeth, treating lesions in the mouth related to cancer, and corrective facial surgery. The practice, which has offices in Doylestown and Meadowbrook, is affiliated with Doylestown Health and Holy Redeemer Hospital.

Updegrave has enjoyed a distinguished career in medicine. Before joining The Oral Surgery Group, she focused most recently on senior care. She had not heard of a nurse practitioner working in the dental realm before meeting Dr. Dachowski.

"I asked several other practitioners and they were not familiar with anyone in dental or oral surgery, so I thought it was something definitely worth considering," she says. "I made the right choice. This is a smaller, private practice without time constraints. As a clinician, you have the time you need to be thorough with patient



“

Renee and I have developed a model where **we are able to see our patients and be as complete as possible.”**

—DR. MICHAEL DACHOWSKI,
THE ORAL SURGERY GROUP

care and case histories, and to make sure patients are prepared for surgery in a safe and comprehensive manner. I also appreciate the chance to spend time with patients and get to know them better.”

While Updegrave deflects any talk of her being a trailblazer or a pioneer, Dr. Dachowski does not hesitate to use the term when referring to her.

“Our practice has been known for a lot of firsts over the years,” he says. “Going back to our anesthesia practices, we were using CO2 monitors before any other practices in the area. We were one of the first oral surgery groups to offer three-dimensional scanning and CT scanning, and we’ve employed a number of other advanced diagnostic technologies. Having Renee is another first, and the beauty of her presence here is the outcome she has on the patient’s experience.

“Nobody comes into an oral surgery office like they’re going to get a haircut,” he continues. “There’s anxiety, fear, and the potential for pain. Some cases involve facial infections or trauma that we have to assess and then treat. Everyone comes in with a different set of concerns and a different medical history. It’s on us to understand that and then apply our expertise to solve the problem, restore their form and function, or otherwise help them have a

better quality of life.”

The different factors that may contribute to a patient’s case include certain medications they may be taking, medical issues related to a stroke or a cardiac event, diseases such as cancer, and on and on. As a family nurse practitioner, Updegrave has experience with patients of all age groups, backgrounds, and situations. Dr. Dachowski says her approach to patient care has established her as a leader within the practice.

“Renee and I have developed a model where we are able to see our patients and be as complete as possible,” he adds. “We’re not restricted by time, we’re not restricted by insurance. We’re not restricted by anything, really.”

The pair developed chemistry early on in their professional relationship. They genuinely seem to enjoy working with one other, as well as with other members of The Oral Surgery Group team.

“I relate very well to the entire staff here,” Updegrave says. “Everyone has their unique personalities, and we all work toward a common goal: to deliver a positive experience in which the patient’s time, comfort, and priorities always come first.”

Dr. Dachowski believes that the use of nurse practitioners will eventually become commonplace in dentistry, and oral surgery in particular; he has already seen major

health care networks in the area follow his lead. He likens it to the difference between a five-star restaurant and a three-star restaurant. The best practices, much like the best restaurants, are the ones that go above and beyond to provide a superior experience.

“My partnership with Renee is the best way that I can be better at what I do,” he says. “We were concerned that people would resent the setup we have because it’s uncommon in the world of oral surgery, but quite honestly it’s been the opposite. I have a partner who allows me to invest in each step of the process, and we can drill down collaboratively with each patient. Everyone seems to appreciate that dynamic. Our partnership enhances my ability to take care of people and provide outcomes that improve their lives. Being able to do that every day gives me genuine delight.” ■



For more information about
Dr. Michael Dachowski or
The Oral Surgery Group,
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