

# CASE STUDY

August 2015



COOLCALIFORNIA CLIMATE LEADER

## **Laura Lawson, DDS Albany, CA**

*A Holistic Dental Office Committed to Affirming Your Natural Smile*



*Natural skylight saves energy for lighting the office of Laura Lawson DDS*

Laura Lawson, DDS is a natural dental office committed to providing personalized care in an eco-friendly environment. They are a holistically-minded dental practice that focuses on restoring and enhancing the natural beauty of the patient's smile by using conservative, non-toxic, state-of-the-art procedures. Their extensive services include cosmetic dentistry, gum care, whitening, fillings, veneers, crowns, bridges, partials, implant tooth restoration, and nutrition workshops and counseling.

The office uses biocompatible materials and focuses on greatly reducing the use of toxins. For example, they do not place mercury amalgam fillings or metal alloy crowns. When a patient comes in with an existing mercury amalgam filling or crown that needs replacement, the dentists and assistants are specifically trained to remove amalgams safely and dispose of the waste safely. Additionally, since 2013, they have stopped the routine application of fluoride (a known neurotoxin).

Various actions are taken to save water and energy. They use ENERGY STAR printers, an ENERGY STAR washing machine, as well as T-5 and T-8 lighting in conjunction with skylights for illumination. They also purchased a low-flush toilet, low-flow faucet aerators, and use a steam autoclave with automatic shutoff. Signs posted in the kitchen and restrooms encourage water conservation.

The office of Laura Lawson, DDS reduces waste by recycling plastics, paper, cardboard, and glass, as well as composting food scraps, plant debris, and paper towels. Additionally, they minimize single use items by using cloth towels in the restroom, cloth lab coats, cloth head-rests for dental chairs, and ceramic mugs for tea and water.

## BUSINESS SNAPSHOT

Laura Lawson, DDS is a naturally minded dental office that provides dental cleanings, exams, and restorative procedures

### **Green Actions:**

- Purchases environmentally friendly cleaning supplies
- Selects only biocompatible dental materials
- Purchased dental chair made of refurbished materials
- Installed flooring sourced from renewable wood
- Uses low-radiation digital x-rays
- Uses duplex printing
- Composts food scraps, plant debris, and paper towels
- Communicates digitally and via phone rather than by paper mail
- Educates office staff and patients on nutritional sustainability
- Converted from primarily using paper patient charts to electronic patient charts
- Reduces single use items by using cloth towels in restroom, cloth lab coats, cloth head-rests for dental chairs, and ceramic mugs for tea and water

### **Savings:**

- 384.8 miles/month reduced from employee commutes every month by biking and using public transit
- Approximately 40% reduction in paper usage after converting to electronic patient charts
- Approximately 30% reduction in postage costs after converting to digital communication



Whenever possible, they purchase recycled content (RC) paper products such as 35% RC paper towels, 100% RC toilet paper, 30% RC printer paper, 30% RC post-its, 100% RC business cards, and 100% RC envelopes.

The office is most proud of their conversion from patient paper charts to electronic charts. The conversion not only reduced paper, but also led them to use e-mail as a primary form of communication with dental specialists and insurance companies (instead of faxes), as well as with patients (rather than postcards and letters). The greatest challenge was training a busy office with multiple hygienists, dentists, and assistants to be comfortable with the new paperless method. This conversion resulted in reducing approximately 40% of paper usage and saves approximately 30% in postage costs.



The office of Laura Lawson, DDS implements sustainable dental practices, which gained them a Bay Area Green Business Certification in June 2014. Upholding their certification is an ongoing process and during their monthly meetings they reinforce green practices within the office. They also hold events centered on sustainable nutrition and have a nutrition consultant recommend organic, locally produced, and seasonal food choices. Laura Lawson, DDS employees frequently use bikes or public transportation methods and their website encourages patients to take public transit to reach their office location.



Staff of Laura Lawson DDS with the CoolCalifornia Climate Leader Award

***"We promote our office as a naturally-minded and sustainable dental practice, using bio-compatible materials and upholding standards of our green business certification with constant improvements."***

**- Jessie Black, Projects Manager,**

**Laura Lawson, DDS**



Natural dental products with minimal additives

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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