



Provider Profile:

Dr. Spagnoli, DMD

Introduction

A leading provider of onsite dental, hearing, vision, and podiatry care to skilled nursing facilities (SNF), Aria Care Partners offers an alternative path for dentists interested in a change of practice setting. This article profiles one dentist who has taken this step. He overviews the SNF practice environment, the benefits of working for Aria, qualities that foster success, and the company's extensive support for its dentists.

Dr. Spagnoli's Journey to Aria Care Partners

Both Dr. Spagnoli's uncle and father were dentists, and he spent ten years in the family practice focused on evidence-based dentistry. While successful, he found himself interested in a change following the difficult pandemic period.

He opted for a consulting role with Delta Dental, which allowed him to influence health policy issues. When an opening at Aria emerged two years ago, he was drawn to the opportunity to practice in a different setting and utilize his clinical and administrative experience.

Onsite Care in the SNF Environment: What to Expect

Dr. Spagnoli provides mobile onsite dentistry to about 25 SNFs in the Appalachian areas of Tennessee and North Carolina. He visits each facility in rotation every 3-5 weeks. Travel rarely exceeds a 45-minute drive, with its maximum distance being two hours.

There are clear contrasts with private practice. SNFs have a shifting population unlike conventional office-based long-term patients. Dr. Spagnoli describes a diversity in which "you tend to see more highs and lows," particularly given the preponderance of older adults. The work also entails working collaboratively with facility staff, especially nurses and social workers.

This dentistry is generally more palliative than restorative. The emphasis is on exams, extractions, cleanings, and denture work. He offers further daily practice specifics:

- A wide range of routine and emergency situations is presented. "It's more akin to a hospital environment than an office."
- Only 10-15% of residents have maintained very good dental hygiene prior to admission.
- Some residents are bedridden. Facilities can deploy different types of beds to position the individual properly. "Facilities are very supportive of what we need to accomplish."
- Residents' dental conditions often affect their emotional/psychological wellbeing during their SNF stay.

Qualities That Promote Success

Dentists often ask which individual qualities make for a good fit and success with Aria Care Partners. Dr. Spagnoli highlights several:

- **Good communicator.** Aria dentists need to inform, educate, overcome resistance in some cases, and occasionally explain that they cannot do something.
- **Relationship builder.** Connection with facility staff is vital, particularly with social services which serves as the link to the resident's family and interested parties.
- **Creative and improvisational.** There is considerable variety. "You're not just performing fillings all day," says Dr. Spagnoli, "You need to be a diagnostician, bringing all your knowledge to bear."
- **Caring individual.** Residents often have multiple medical problems, restricted mobility or impaired hearing or eyesight, or emotional issues. The dental team brings sensitivity and embodies Aria's compassionate care ethic.

Benefits of Working for Aria Care Partners

Dr. Spagnoli identifies key benefits of Aria's program:

- **Flexibility and work-life balance.** Dentists can specify how many days each week they wish to practice and which days. They likewise have flexibility in structuring their onsite visits. In addition, the company's administrative support helps avoid the "crushing responsibility of a typical private practice."
- **Emphasis on quality over quantity.** Aria professionals do not have to "chase volume" as is so often the imperative in medicine today.
- **Stimulating practice.** Dr. Spagnoli has seen unique patient problems in SNF encounters. He cites an example of a routine exam that uncovered an unusual growth prompting him to order a biopsy. That led to a cancer diagnosis.

Support Provided by Aria

"Aria provides everything we need to perform onsite services," observes Dr. Spagnoli, listing major examples:

- **Equipment**
 - High-quality air-driven hand pieces and well-designed portable kits.
 - Surgical instrumentation. Aria will honor dentists' preference items.
 - Full complement of polishers, burs, and other tools for chairside denture adjustments.
 - Portable radiograph for imaging.
- **Lab**
 - Aria's vendor consistently produces high-quality dentures.
- **Staff support**
 - Staff assistants manage scheduling, billing, regulatory compliance and maintenance of face sheets, consent forms, and other data in the company's EMR.

Take the Next Step

To learn more about joining the Aria Care Partners team, please visit ariacarepartners.com/careers/dentist-jobs or contact us at (877) 674-1211.