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## Dentist Strives to Make Health Care Personable

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Dr. Jack Von Bulow of Temple City, California greets his dental patients with a smile, but he didn't hide his less-than-favorable opinion of the health care system in the United States when I asked him about it.

### Personal Experience

"I think it's disgraceful that we spend more money on health care than the rest of the world and we have a lousy system. It takes us 50 years to take a step forward. I'm embarrassed for the health care community and the way we do things."

Dr. Von Bulow was caring for his ailing mother and witnessed the challenge people face when navigating the complex tests and language of today's medical community.

"I was my mom's caregiver for about 10 years and took her through the whole process. Our health care system is too often by the numbers and it concludes with a financial transaction.

"If I wasn't there for her being an advocate I don't know what would have happened. Patients don't get reassurance or human connection."

### Affordable Care Act (ACA)

I asked him if dentists have been left out of the on-going health care debate.

"We've been a sidebar to it and yet the impact is on the Medicaid side of things. Dentists will treat young people as part of the program.

"When I wrote about it [ACA], the two are so different. Medical insurance is one thing and dental insurance is more like a financial discount plan. Whereas with dental insurance, they would pay for one thing per year. Like apples and oranges."

### A Patient-centric Business Model

Dr. Von Bulow said he's a creative person who enjoys art and writing said the person-to-person connection was a reason he chose dentistry as a career. His personal experience as a caregiver has also shaped his business model.

"We're going to look at patients as friends and family. We use models outside of medicine and we're going to do like the Ritz Carlton because we're service trained.

"A mystery caller may call in as part of our quality control to do things the way we intended. We need to be a little creative and pay attention to the people coming in. As a dentist, I think in terms of what they want and help them understand what they need to do on a preventive level."

Dr. Von Bulow says patients shouldn't think of dental care as overly expensive. "We don't use the cheapest materials and we stress on-going professional training. However, for a patient, saving the cost of half a latte a day can finance regular checkups."

His office can also provide interest-free financing for up to two years.

He has a clear goal in his practice. "I want to make dentistry fun and make a world-class difference in people's lives."

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