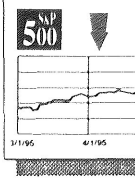
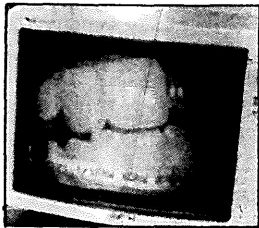


# Times Business



■ TECHNOLOGY

## Computers assisting your dentist



By JIM MOLIS  
for The Times

Imagine a cavity, a ghastly sight to begin with, magnified 28 times for your viewing pleasure.

How about a blowup of inflamed gums?

Some local dentists are beginning to use intraoral cameras to give patients their first up-close, detailed look at their teeth and gums on a computer screen. The hand-held cameras, which are about as big as a pen, are the same size as the mirrors that dentists commonly use.

At least two area dentists hope patients may be more receptive to dental advice after seeing things from a new perspective.

John DeMello, a dentist for 14 years, began using two new Reveal Intraoral Cameras by Welch Allyn in his Smithfield Avenue office several weeks ago and witnessed results almost immediately.

DeMello estimated the equipment, which he believes "bridges the language barrier" between dentist and patient, helped him sell \$4,000 worth of treatment in one of the first days alone. "By seeing the problem, more patients are accepting the treatment," he said.

The cameras can help show gum disease as well as the need for sealants, fillings,

crowns, and hygiene. The technology can also be used to record existing conditions such as fractures and tooth position.

Joseph Samra, who has been a dentist for about 30 years, has had two Acucams by New Imaging at his office on Mendon Road in Cumberland for six weeks. "It helps them (patients) better appreciate what I'm trying to do for them," he said.

He has been using the camera as "an educational tool" to show patients cavities and other common dental problems. The camera magnifies up to 28 times and prompts frequent responses such as "My god! I didn't believe that was the condition of my mouth," according to Samra.

"If a patient is better informed they're more apt to comply with what you're asking them to do," he said. "A person that understands something better is more apt to follow through on instructions."

Both Samra and DeMello offer patients photos at no extra cost. Samra explained that each patient is asked if they want to use the technology and that "99.9 percent of people will say yes and think it's wonderful."

The technology has been around for five years but improved performance and affordability are making the cameras increasingly popular. Stephen Brodeur, account representative for Patterson Dental Company, predicts that more than 50 percent of dentists will be using the technology within the next two to three years.

"It doesn't require anymore expenses on the doctor's part to change what he had in the



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HIGH-TECH — Dentist John DeMello of Lincoln and Steve Brodeur show off the intraoral camera in DeMello's Smithfield Avenue, Lincoln, office.

office," Brodeur claimed. He added that his company provides, "As much training as it takes for the office to use it successfully."

Brodeur noted "a couple of afternoons" were spent training DeMello and his staff to use the equipment. He and DeMello did not say how much the cameras cost but Brodeur estimated that some doctors pay about \$30,000 for equipment that had sub-par resolu-

tion when cameras first hit the market.

"Now the resolution is so good and the cost has come down — it's almost making it cost prohibitive not to have it," DeMello said. "The thing is they pay for themselves in three years and then you can put that money back into your fees and keep fees down."

DeMello believes he should be able to hold the line on pa-

tient fees for at least the next year. "It's made life easier, it's made things easier all around," he added.

He explained that the camera not only gives dentists a better view but it allows them to sit up straight as they work since they view things on a monitor screen.

Additional capabilities include video recording, video imaging, and record keeping.