



Flexible payments are just one of the features unique to Riverpark Dental, where Nohora Martinez is the resident dentist. She is a native of Colombia and comes from a long line of dentists in her family. The practice opened last fall in Byron and feels very much like a spa. Patients are treated in rooms reminiscent of the rain forest. But first they are greeted by one of four patient care specialists, their single point of contact then and in the future.

"I've worked in dental offices before but never one that runs like this," says patient care specialist Estelle Richer. "I get to know my patients and can answer any of their questions and help arrange appointments when they're convenient."

Martinez offers flexible email-based scheduling for professionals who can't always count on their own work schedule and may have to cancel or move appointments. She also offers a monthly preventative treatment plan: For a monthly fee, patients are able to come in for cleaning and other preventative treatment as often as they need.

"We both have an incentive to keep their teeth healthy under this plan, and a lot of people really like the idea," she says.

Martinez' husband, Matt Bladowski, is a consultant who travels across Canada helping dentists modernize their practices. He used to work for a U.S. company doing the same thing but now sticks to Canada. He helped his wife design her practice and uses it as home base for his own business.



"We talk about a dental spa, but it's a lot more than hot towels, paraffin wax [hand treatments] and music in headphones. It's a new, client-centric paradigm shift in how a dental practice is perceived," he says.

His wife's practice is set up following the principles he preaches to dentists across the country. Their goal is to educate her patients, offering a free initial consultation to answer questions about procedures, outcomes and costs.

For all the couches, TVs and modern décor, the more important change may well be the very model of dentistry Bladowski describes. It aims to give patients more autonomy, all the while pampering them beyond standards established in dental offices of previous generations.

For the most part, all this extra attention doesn't cost anything more either as the dentists bill patients according to the provincial fee guide.