

## Re: adult invisalign orthodontics in Honolulu

**Source:** <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.med.dentistry/2005-03/4280.html>

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**From:** Steven Bornfeld (*dentalwinonsense\_at\_earthlink.net*)

**Date:** 03/28/05

Date: Mon, 28 Mar 2005 09:27:59 -0500

This is just so wrong-headed on several important points I don't really know where to begin, so I'll insert my comments within the text.

Please note to those who don't know me—I am a general dentist, and I do NOT provide orthodontic care for my patients. I have been an Invisalign patient.

prospectivegeek wrote:

> *\$1500 is the typical lab fee, which can go south if your orthodontist has good contacts or has sent several orders. As a good ballpark, 12 months of these removable braces cost your orthodontist about \$2000-3000, depending on the complexity of the treatment. If the lab charges were \$3000, either the orthodontist got ripped off, or the orthodontist is not telling you the truth. If the total cost of treatment in 12 months goes beyond \$5000, you are being completely ripped off.*

This is a value judgement, but one formed through a jaundiced eye. My reason for saying this has everything with the poster's implied impression (below) that the orthodontist is selling a finished product to the patient, and is basically not adding any value of service.

I don't know what orthodontists charge for a typical Invisalign case. For a full case, my impression is that \$5000 (the benchmark used by the poster as a "ripoff") is a bit on the low side of average.

>  
> *With regular braces, the orthodontist incurs a very low cost. Check any orthodontic suppliers and add up the cost of everything. The total cost of appliances comes to well below \$1000 per patient. The rest is their profit, which they will tell you goes towards equipment, paying their employees and sprucing up their offices. With Invisalign, their total costs are higher. Hence they charge you more to maintain their profits.*

This shows a total lack of understanding of both the cost of RUNNING an office (much less "sprucing" it up) and of the actual service the orthodontist provides. Much more than for the Invisalign patient, the orthodontist is not "selling" an appliance from a box to the patient.

>

> *The Invisalign technique transforms orthodontia.*

It transforms a small segment of orthodontia—the adult patient with relatively minor orthodontic problems who otherwise wouldn't seek treatment because traditional appliances don't have "the LOOK".

In fact, the patient

> *does not really need an orthodontist. The company could send the patients the impression trays and create the braces for them.*

I defy you to take your own impressions with PVS material. My brother had to take my impressions three times to get a suitable impression. At the time he'd had maybe 29 years of experience taking impressions. Allowing that I have an oddly-shaped dental arch, do you think YOU would be able to evaluate an impression and tell that it was satisfactory?

The issue

> *that prevents direct service to the patient is legal liability.*

The issue that prevents direct service to the patient is the state dental practice act. Direct service of this kind to the patient is illegal in all 50 states. Illegal as in criminal, not liability for negligence, which would doubtless apply as well.

> *Invisalign avoids lawsuits as the orthodontist sends them the treatment plan and impressions. If anything goes wrong, the patient will sue the orthodontist, not the company. Invisalign needs the orthodontists to survive and thrive.*

Actually, although Invisalign fought it, general practitioners are now legally able to perform Invisalign treatment for their patients.

Hence they won't tell you the real costs involved.

> *The orthodontists will make your treatment sound very complicated when they speak to you, so they can charge you well beyond the cost of the treatment. The two websites that have been mentioned in this thread reveal some of the realities behind the cost of Invisalign.*

>

> *After visiting several orthodontists, I realized they were far from being truthful. While I am not qualified as an orthodontist, I can use my brains. I have researched for hours online and through texts from the dental school library. Mine was a simple bite problem and I could write my own treatment plan, perhaps execute too, if only I had the equipment.*

Luckily, we don't have correspondence schools for dentistry—at least not yet.

If you think that Invisalign is idiot-proof, that nothing can go wrong, that anyone can do it, that all the planning goes on in the lab, that the orthodontist is superfluous except as a hole into which you throw

your money, I'd advise you go google this newsgroup and read the several stories about how Invisalign can and has gone wrong.

Steve

I would ask each orthodontist for a treatment plan and I  
> realized how full of sh\*\* they were. The first thing they did was check  
> up my insurance and the place I worked. Once they figured out how much  
> I could pay, they gave me huge estimates and a complicated treatment  
> plans. After I had enough knowledge about Invisalign, I went to several  
> orthodontists who claimed to treat with Invisalign. They were bluffing  
> me too. I finally got my Invisalign braces through an orthodontist who  
> owes me. My treatment is progressing well and I am glad to share this  
> here.  
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> Joel M. Eichen wrote:  
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>>On Mon, 14 Mar 2005 23:40:06 GMT, "Dr Steve" <nospam@home.net> wrote:  
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>>>I just shared dinner last night with an orthodontist. (We were  
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> celebrating  
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>>>someone's birthday.) He told me that the last Invisalign case he  
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> got back  
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>>>had a \$3000 lab fee.  
>>  
>>WoW!  
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Cut the nonsense to reply