

# Not all cosmetic dentists are the same: How to know who is right for your smile

When you hear the words “cosmetic dentist,” what does that really mean? Most people assume that if a dentist offers cosmetic dentistry, they must be specially trained in it. And while many dentists provide cosmetic services as part of their practice, there is a significant difference between a dentist offering cosmetic dentistry and dentist who has advanced training and experience in cosmetic dentistry. And when you are trusting someone with your smile, that difference matters.

Cosmetic dentistry is not simply about making teeth whiter or putting veneers on them. Creating a beautiful smile requires an understanding of facial aesthetics, tooth proportions, symmetry, color, shape, gum position, bite, and function. All these things have to work together. So how can you know if the dentist you are considering is truly qualified to provide advanced cosmetic dentistry? There are several important things to look for.

### Look beyond the words, “Cosmetic Dentist.”

One confusing thing is that the term

“cosmetic dentist” can mean different things to different dentists. A general dentist may provide cosmetic procedures as part of a broad range of services, and that can be perfectly appropriate for some patients. But if you are considering a smile makeover or complex cosmetic treatment, you should understand the dentist’s level of education and experience in this specific area. So, make sure you ask them about their training in cosmetic dentistry.

Where did they receive their additional education? How much continuing education have they completed? How much of their practice involves cosmetic and reconstructive dentistry? You do not need to understand every credential or certification. You simply need to understand whether the dentist has made cosmetic dentistry a significant area of their advanced education and experience.

### Look at the dentist’s work

This may be one of the most important things you can do. Ask to see actual before-and-after cases of THEIR patients. Not stock photographs. Not pictures from a dental laboratory.

Look at the dentist’s own patients. Hopefully, they have numerous examples of their smile makeovers on their website. If they do, make sure you look through them and decide if this is the level of cosmetics that will make you happy. And do not just look at whether the teeth are straight and white. Look at the entire smile. Do the teeth look natural? Are they the right size and shape for the person’s face? Do they complement the lips and gums? Do they look too bulky or too uniform? Most importantly, ask yourself: “Would I want a smile like this?” Even the quality of the photographs will show you the level of expertise that an advanced cosmetic dentist has and their level of artistry in cosmetic dentistry. A beautiful cosmetic result should not look artificial. The goal is not for someone to notice that you had cosmetic dentistry. The goal is for them to notice that you have a beautiful and natural-looking smile.

### How is your smile being designed?

This is where cosmetic dentistry becomes much more than simply changing teeth. Your smile should be designed around you. Your facial proportions, lips, gums, tooth display, age, personality, and the way you naturally smile all play a role in determining what will look right.

There is no single smile that looks perfect on everyone. A smile that looks beautiful on one person may look completely wrong on another. We take everything into consideration when designing a person’s smile even including gender and facial complexion. This is why an experienced cosmetic dentist spends time evaluating the entire face and understanding what the patient wants to accomplish before deciding what treatment is appropriate.

### Do not forget about your bite



### Dentally Speaking

by Jeffrey S. Haddad D.D.S.

This is an area that is often overlooked by patients who are primarily concerned with appearance. Your teeth do not just need to look good; they need to function properly as well. When significant cosmetic dentistry is being performed, the dentist should understand

how your teeth come together, how your jaw functions, and how your new restorations will work together. This becomes especially important when someone has worn-down teeth, broken teeth, extensive previous dental work, missing teeth, or a bite that has changed over time. A beautiful smile that does not function properly is not a successful cosmetic result. The goal should be to create something that is beautiful, healthy, comfortable, and functional.



Gwen Before



Gwen After

### Experience matters

There is a tremendous difference between doing an occasional veneer and regularly treating complex smile makeovers and full-mouth restorative cases. The more complex the case, the more important experience becomes. If your smile involves worn-down teeth, multiple restorations, uneven gum levels, missing teeth, bite problems, or extensive previous dental work, you want someone who understands how all these factors fit together. The most beautiful cosmetic cases are often the ones where the dentist must look beyond the obvious problem to understand what is really happening.

Continued on page 15

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## COLUMN

## Education, Budgets, and Reality

Now that the state budget has been finalized, it's worth reflecting on what the process revealed, particularly when it comes to education funding.

Like most budget cycles, the School Aid Fund was one of the final pieces to come together. Negotiations involved hundreds of unresolved items requiring direct involvement from legislative leadership and the governor. That's almost expected in Lansing, but it also highlights how difficult our budget process has become.

Education funding is always a central issue. At the same time, Michigan's 537 local school districts are required to adopt their own budgets well before the state completes its work. The Legislature is expected to pass a budget by July 1, yet there is no practical consequence if that deadline slips. It's a process that often leaves local school officials and taxpayers wondering why it has to be so complicated.

Some concerns have been raised regarding the Michigan Education Association about school funding since 2002, and while those concerns deserve consideration, the discussion also needs context. Michigan experienced two significant recessions during that period, the dot-com downturn and the housing market collapse. Many communities saw property values fall dramatically, and Proposal A limits how quickly taxable values can recover. Those economic



**Tisdell Talk**

by State Rep.  
Mark Tisdell

realities shaped school funding in ways that cannot simply be ignored.

The broader question, however, isn't just how much we spend. It's what we're accomplishing with that investment.

The Snyder Administration's "Top 10 in 10" initiative, launched in 2015, set an ambitious goal of making Michigan a top-ten state in education by the end of 2025. During that time, inflation-adjusted education spending increased while student enrollment declined. Yet Michigan's educational performance moved in the opposite direction. That's disappointing, and it should prompt us to ask why.

Part of the answer may lie in the way we've managed the system itself. Between 2010 and 2020, Michigan implemented seven different school accountability systems. At one point, schools across the state were using hundreds of different English curricula. Frequent changes in expectations make it difficult to measure progress and even harder to sustain improvement.

Then there's the structure of the system. Michigan serves roughly 1.4 million students through 537 local school districts, supported by 56 intermediate school districts, multiple state agencies, and hundreds of charter and academy administrators. By comparison, other large states organize public

education very differently. That doesn't necessarily make Michigan's approach wrong, but it does raise the question of whether we've created more complexity than necessary.

Government naturally tends to create additional layers of process. The "Top 10 in 10" initiative included seven goals, 44 strategies, and more than 100 sub-strategies. One objective called for every classroom to implement a "highly coherent, child-centered instructional model" that would allow students to meet their "self-determined academic and personal goals." Aspirational language has its place, but it also invites a practical question: How do we measure success, and how do we hold ourselves accountable?

Michigan has outstanding teachers, dedicated administrators, and students with tremendous potential. The issue isn't commitment. The issue is whether the system we've built is producing the outcomes we expect.

The budget is now behind us, but the conversation about education shouldn't end there. If we're serious about improving student achievement, it may be time for a comprehensive review of how we fund, organize, and measure public education. The status quo simply isn't delivering the results Michigan families deserve.

*State Rep. Mark Tisdell, R-Rochester Hills, represents the 55th House District, which includes the cities of Rochester and Rochester Hills and part of Oakland Township.*

## Dr. Haddad *Continued from page 12*

Choosing a cosmetic dentist does not have to be difficult. You do not have to know everything about dentistry. You simply need to ask the right questions. What many do not realize is that exceptional cosmetic dentistry is both a science and an art. It requires the ability to understand not only teeth, but how those teeth fit into the face, the bite, and the overall function of the mouth.

Ask questions. Look at the results. Learn about the dentist's education and experience. Because when you are changing your smile, you are not just choosing someone to change your teeth. You are choosing someone to design something that becomes a part of your face, your appearance, and your confidence every single day. Your smile deserves more than someone who simply offers cosmetic dentistry. It deserves someone who is an expert in cosmetic dentistry.

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## Take a stroll down memory lane with RAHS

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society will host a community conversation entitled "Orchards & Mills" on Thursday, September 3 at 7 p.m. at the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm.

Area residents are invited to bring photos, share memories and participate in an evening of casual conver-

sations about the Greater Rochester area in autumn, the history of growing fresh fruit and the experience of going to a cider mill. The salon-style event is free for RAHS members. A \$5 donation is suggested for non-members. RSVP by email to [rahsupdates@gmail.com](mailto:rahsupdates@gmail.com) or call 248-266-5440 and leave a message.

## 100 Women Who Care *Continued from page 13*

an online membership application, and photographs and news articles. The organization hopes the new website will inspire women throughout Rochester, Rochester Hills, and surrounding communities to become part of its next chapter.

Joining is simple. Members contribute \$100 per quarter, attend four one-hour meetings each year if they are able, and

vote to determine which local nonprofit will receive the collective donation. Women unable to attend a meeting may simply submit their donation and remain active members. To learn more, read the inspiring stories of local impact, or become a member, visit: <https://100womenwhocare-greaterrochester.org>



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