

## Prioritizing Safety, In a Pandemic and Beyond.

On a Monday in March, myOrthos acquired Oakton Family Orthodontics. The Boston-based myOrthos team flew to Oakton, Virginia to meet the practitioners working day in and day out to keep patients smiling.

By that Friday, amid reports of surging COVID-19 cases across the country, myOrthos had made the difficult decision to close the Oakton office – and each of its seven orthodontic offices – for the foreseeable future.

Beginning a new professional relationship is never completely straightforward, but the COVID-19 pandemic completely upended many of the plans myOrthos had set in motion in early 2020.

Founded in 2019 to empower orthodontic independence, deliver exceptional patient care, and build a community of orthodontic excellence, myOrthos is the only exclusively orthodontist-focused dental service organization in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. The organization partners with like-minded orthodontists via an acquisition model. Acquired practices maintain clinical autonomy while benefiting from myOrthos' multifaceted support, in areas from marketing and recruitment to office management and billing. Above all, myOrthos professes to prioritize its people. The pandemic challenged the company to demonstrate that commitment immediately.

### Ensuring A Safe Environment

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, myOrthos had to make important decisions to champion patient and personnel safety. Concern for employees and patients prompted the company to close offices even before government mandates ordered them to do so.

As soon as they had decided to close their offices, though, the myOrthos team needed to devise a reopening plan. To myOrthos leadership, continuing to serve patients safely while protecting employees was mission critical.

"Orthodontic offices are safe by design, but COVID presented heightened concerns," explains myOrthos CEO Elizabeth Campbell. "Putting our people and our patients first is one of our core values, so we went above and beyond the standard guidance to enhance precautions."

One of the first steps in ensuring a safe reopening was sourcing personal protective equipment (PPE) for office employees. "Right before we came back to work, there was a shortage of PPE, and it was really difficult to get your hands on the necessary equipment," says Miguel Santos, Operations Manager at myOrthos practice CT Braces. "myOrthos was really good about finding vendors who would be able to supply us with PPE, which was a critical part of making sure that everyone felt safe."

Securing PPE was only the first step for the myOrthos team, which understood it would need a comprehensive operating plan to both reassure employees and keep them safe. "It was important to us

to offer our staff not only the equipment they needed to stay safe, but also peace of mind,” says myOrthos COO Caitlin Donovan.

To secure this peace of mind, myOrthos partnered with Heed Health, a company striving to help America get back to work by helping small businesses make data-driven, health-related decisions about reopening.

### Partnering with Heed Health

Founded in early April, Heed helps small businesses monitor the health of their employees with initial and ongoing COVID-19 screening and testing, symptom monitoring, and rapid response testing. Together with Heed, myOrthos devised a plan that combined regular COVID testing with daily symptom monitoring and tracking.

“myOrthos was one of the early adopters,” says Heed CEO Brian Stern. “They were far ahead of other companies, asking what are we going to do when we reopen? What is our protocol? How are we going to make this as safe an environment as possible for employees and patients? We started working with them in April, when this wasn’t even on the radar for many companies.”

myOrthos worked with Heed to use an advanced saliva RNA technology COVID-19 test to ensure negative results from all employees returning to offices. Upon reopening offices, myOrthos deployed Heed’s proprietary symptom monitoring and tracking software, which sends employees daily text or email messages asking about symptoms and exposure. If employees do not report any troubling symptoms or exposure, they receive a green light that clears them to report to work. If they receive a red light, a member of Heed’s medical team reaches out directly to get more information before allowing them to return to the office.

“We strongly believe that companies need to implement testing and screening procedures in this new normal in which we find ourselves,” says Stern. “myOrthos adopted both of these safety measures right away.”

### Prioritizing Peace of Mind

The safety measures myOrthos has implemented with Heed have certainly helped the company reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission within its offices. Additionally, though, they have achieved the organization’s goal of providing their employees with peace of mind. “When we were preparing to come back to work, everyone was a little anxious,” explains Lindsay Frances, an office lead at Oakton Family Orthodontics. “But the questionnaire we do every morning, combined with our regular testing, really helps calm people’s anxieties. We know we’re safe, and our patients know we’re safe. Figuring out the safest way to behave in this new normal really helps.”

Santos agrees. “The general tenor of the office is so much better now than when the pandemic started,” he says. “Everyone just feels a lot safer now than before. No one really knew what would happen when we came back, and people were nervous. But I think now, with everything we’ve implemented and all the protocols we’ve changed, I can confidently say that all of us feel safe coming back to work.”

Ultimately, that's what matters most to myOrthos. "As a mission-driven company, we find it very important that we not only promote our values, but that we execute in accordance with them," explains Donovan. "While our offices were closed, we used that time to develop and implement safety protocols that could give everyone entering our offices – patients and team members alike – the peace of mind that we were prioritizing their safety."

Those core values resonate with myOrthos' new employees. "I think this has been a good test of their commitment to what they promised regarding taking care of their employees and their team," says Santos. "And they've done just that. They prioritized our safety and our well-being. They've done their part with what they promised in terms of making us feel safe."