

# Dr. Perry Opin: Giving Kids a Smile with the American Cleft Lip & Palate Association

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Dr. Perry Opin is a very busy man. An orthodontist who practices in Milford Connecticut, he has been active in organized orthodontics and dentistry for many years. He has served as past president of the Connecticut State Society of Orthodontists, the Northeastern Society of Orthodontists and College of Diplomates of the American Board of Orthodontics, among others. He is a past speaker of the American Association of Orthodontists House of Delegates, and has served as a delegate or alternate delegate to the House of Delegates of the American Dental Association, the Connecticut State Dental Association and the American Association of Orthodontists, and a past chairman of the Connecticut State Dental Association Council on Constitution and Bylaws. Dr. Opin has received from the Northeastern Society of Orthodontists, the Joseph DiStasio Distinguished Service Award, as well as the James E. Brophy Distinguished Service Award from the American Association of Orthodontists for his dedication to organized dentistry.

Presently, Dr. Opin serves as speaker of the House of Delegates of the Connecticut State Dental Association and a member of their Board of Governors. He also serves, as a Delegate to the American Association of Orthodontists, is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Northeastern Society of Orthodontists, where he serves as its parliamentarian.

Dr. Opin earned his dental degree at New York University, where he graduated magna cum laude. After dental school, Dr. Opin served two years in the U.S. Army Dental Corps. He then attended Boston University School of Graduate Dentistry, where he earned a certificate and masters degree in orthodontics. Upon graduation Dr. Opin earned a traineeship award certificate from the United States Department of Health Education and Welfare at the Herbert H. K. Cooper Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic, the first institution of its kind established in the United States

Dr. Opin has lectured all over the world, and has developed many popular and universally used orthodontic appliances on which he holds patents.



Dr. Perry Opin and two cleft lip & palate patients at his office in Milford, CT.

Dr. Opin is a founding member of the Yale-New Haven Hospital craniofacial team, one of two craniofacial teams in the State. His son and partner, Gary, joins him on the team, as well as in his practice, who like his father, is a board-certified orthodontist.

As members of the American Cleft Palate Association, whose goal is "to optimize the interdisciplinary care of persons affected by cleft palate and other craniofacial anomalies," the Opins devote a large part of their practice treating patients with various craniofacial anomalies. Dr. Opin states, "This has always been a passion of mine. This passion has encouraged me to join craniofacial missions to third world countries".

Cleft lip and palate anomalies are the most common craniofacial birth defect. The causes vary, are often unknown, but in some cases genetics is a factor. In the United States, one in approximately 700 newborns is affected.

Cleft lip and palate anomalies can cause a variety of dental problems including missing, supernumerary, malformed teeth, and ectopic tooth eruption. With proper dental care, starting

at a young age, cleft lip and palate patients' dental problems can be ameliorated.

Working with the other members of the cleft palate team, which includes plastic surgeons, oral surgeons, dentists, speech pathologists, psychologists, geneticists, otolaryngologists, and orthodontists, each child has an individualized treatment plan formulated that is constantly monitored and updated as necessary. Intervention begins at birth and often extends through the late teen years, often including multiple surgeries and multiple stages of orthodontic intervention.

"Your face and smiles is the first thing people notice about you" says Dr. Opin. "As members of the craniofacial team, we get the opportunity to remake kids lives and give them new smiles. These children really need help to make them whole and become self-sufficient, confident and productive members of society," he added.

Dr. Opin states "Gary and I are grateful for the patients we are privileged to serve. We are truly blessed to be a part of the Yale craniofacial team, helping so many patients who need our services".