



health:latch Founder Reshapes Practice and Patients' Lives

Rhinogram's telehealth platform supports state-of-the-art infant laser frenectomy practice in Washington



James M. Thomas, DDS, MS
Founder + Changemaker
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Dr. James Thomas is a pediatric dentist by training and a puzzle master by experience. A self-proclaimed systems thinker, he's always looking at how the parts connect to the whole. Over the decade of seeing patients and listening to families sharing the same stories at his former pediatric dental practice, Everyone By One, he realized that many of the problems he was treating were oral dysfunctions related to tongue restriction.

"Form follows function," he said. "The tongue—and breastfeeding—are the architects of the airway and work together to expand the palatal arch. It can decrease dental crowding and forms our midface from 0-6 years old."

Children who have tongue tie—a condition that restricts the tongue's range of motion because the tissue connecting the tongue to the bottom of the mouth is too short—experience a host of challenges. They struggle to breastfeed and, as they get older, may have trouble chewing solid food, develop speech problems, and have airway-related problems that can lead to ear infections, snoring and restless sleep.

Seeing firsthand how stressful it can be for families, he decided to pivot his dental career and create a new specialty practice dedicated to changing the lives of these babies and their families.

Instant communication drives satisfaction and referrals

In 2017, Thomas opened health:latch, an infant laser frenectomy practice in Bellevue, Washington. The practice is the first of its kind in the state focused exclusively on releasing tongue tie and lip tie in infants age 0-3 months.

The experience of tongue tie can be as traumatic for the parent as it is for the child. Moms regularly complain about nipple pain, infections and clogged milk ducts as their child struggles to latch on to the breast. For parents, the physical pain is compounded by the stress and exhaustion of a hungry, crying baby—and not knowing what's wrong or how to fix it.

Babies with tongue tie are at risk of failing to thrive and weight loss. Knowing time is of the essence, Thomas implemented the Rhinogram telehealth platform in order to connect when the client needs him most. Rhinogram's simple technology using text messaging means his patients have better access and faster communication with him and his team. This, in turn, drives patient satisfaction and word-of-mouth referrals. Since implementing Rhinogram, health:latch has gone from three referrals to more than 1,400.

"The generation behind me wants instant gratification—especially with concerns as urgent as breastfeeding," he said. "If they can't connect within five minutes, the chance of helping that parent and their baby dramatically goes down."

GOALS



Triage families in distress



Streamline intake



Educate and grow referrals



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RESULTS



Decreased intake from 29 minutes to 3 minutes on average



Treated 5,000 families with just 2 team members



Increased from 3 referrals to 1,400+ using Rhinogram as an educational, conversation marketing tool

Radically streamlining patient intake

Not every baby that struggles to latch has tongue-tie. But when a baby isn’t feeding properly it’s important to help parents figure out the right next step as quickly as possible. For these reasons, Thomas’s staff go through a series of very detailed questions with families to determine if the child should be brought in for examination or referred to another specialist. The average intake call originally took 29 minutes, making it impossible for staff to keep up.

Since going live with Rhinogram, health:latch has been freed from the “cat & mouse” game that comes with endless phone calls. Families can complete a simple questionnaire, send it to them via text, and find out within a matter of minutes whether their child is a match for health:latch. From there, appointments are scheduled through the platform and families are provided ample educational material to help them understand their child’s condition, treatment options and the CO2 laser procedure before ever stepping foot in the clinic. Moreover, he credits the HIPAA-compliant telehealth platform with helping him save time and money, enabling him to treat over 5,000 families with just two full-time team members.

Transforming care delivery

The efficiency and effectiveness of the Rhinogram platform has transformed the practice and the way health:latch delivers care. With the time and money savings resulting from streamlined intake, scheduling and follow-up, Dr. Thomas realized that he didn’t need to book every hour of every day or rush through appointments. Today, he intentionally limits himself to seeing just five patients per day in order to provide families the highest quality care with concierge-style attention. The results speak for themselves.

“Since using Rhinogram, I’ve never had a patient miss an appointment and I’ve never had a patient be late for an appointment,” he said.



Rhinogram’s HIPAA-compliant telehealth platform enables a better patient experience by making convenient remote care possible, simplifying communication, and minimizing interruptions through text and video-based engagement.

Text or call 423.800.7644 [Rhinogram.com](https://rhinogram.com)