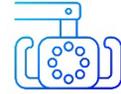




DR. CHELESA PHILLIPS WITH PINE DENTISTRY & BRACES



Dentistry called Dr. Phillips early on. As a child, she always liked going to the dentist. In third grade she received braces and thought they were the coolest thing in the world! She knew then that she would be the one applying braces one day. Many areas piqued Dr. Phillip's interest along the way: engineering, medical school, forensic science, but she always came back to dentistry.

After graduating from Washington University in St. Louis, Dr. Phillips was ready to apply to dental schools and Historic Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were on the top of her list. Howard offered Dr. Phillips the experience and mentorship she was looking for in her education. She shared, "Howard and Meharry are the bread-and-butter foundation and soul of Black dentistry. It just didn't make sense to bypass that opportunity. They are the ones who are pouring these Black dentists into this field. Without them, the number of Black dentists would probably be much less. I do feel like people are trying their best to work on some of the inequalities, but we have so much further to go. HBCUs are holding us down in ways where time has not caught up and balanced the playing field yet."



HOWARD
UNIVERSITY
College of Dentistry

When asked why she chose Benevis, Dr. Phillips shared when she graduated, she fell into a job with Benevis in New Orleans to be close to family. Seven years later, working at Benevis is now a choice. Dr. Phillips shared while there are many opportunities out there for an Orthodontist, she likes the life she has with Benevis. Being part of a Dental Services Organization (DSO) means less stress for her, and a better work-life balance.

For Dr. Phillips, one of the best parts of the job is connecting with patients beyond the clinical level. She enjoys encouraging her patients on their own journey, and seeing people grow. She shared, "It's really a theme: connecting with so many patients, encouraging them, and then they come back later with their report card or college acceptance letter, parents sending me emails with graduation pictures years later saying "Look at my baby. They did it!" with that smile that you created as a bonus. Patients sometimes become more than patients. They become family."

Benevis is proud to be a standout amongst Dental Service Organization's when it comes to being a place where Black or African-American dentists choose to practice. According to the ADA, only four percent of U.S. dentists are Black or African-American. However, 21% of Benevis Dentist team members are Black or African-American. Of those, 32% graduated from an Historically Black College and University. Our mission to embrace diversity in the patients and communities we serve is mirrored in the doctors that we hire. Building lasting relationships with HBCUs is one of the top ways that we uphold our mission.