By Robert Selleck, today Staff

Charles Braga, DMD, having just completed his fourth live-dentistry demonstration at a major U.S. dental meeting, is quick to sum up what it takes to perform onstage in front of a large group of peers with a camera projecting his every move onto huge video screens: “I have a decent facility available — and I don’t panic easily.”

But what about the patient? What does it take as a patient to schedule your next dental appointment to be onstage in front of a crowd of 150-plus spectators? Logan McClain, 33, the Bronx resident who was in the chair for Braga on Tuesday in the Live Dentistry Arena, has this take on it: “I’m down for anything — especially something that improves my health.”

And that was the outcome Tuesday, with a glowing prognosis from Braga and a beaming McClain thanking Braga for saving his gums with the laser surgery being demonstrated.

“IT’s a revolutionary laser-based definitive method of treating gum disease,” Braga said of the procedure he performed with the PerioLase MVP-7 produced by Millennium Dental Technologies, which sponsored the session. “It’s better than scaling and root planing and old-style regenerative surgery, which patients just don’t want anymore.”

That’s exactly what led McClain to the chair on center stage. After his dentists advised him that he needed surgery and mentioned laser treatment as an option if he wanted to avoid loss of gum tissue, McClain searched the Internet to learn more.

“I was willing to pay for better gums,” McClain said.

His search for the best LANAP procedure and dentist led him to Philadelphia, where the price was a bit steeper than he was immediately prepared for. That dentist connected McClain with Millennium. The company is always looking for surgery candidates for its training program because hands-on training is required before a dentist can take possession of the laser. Patients are treated at no charge and monitored for a full year of followup.

McClain had his first two quadrants addressed in a training class 10 days before the live-dentistry session, with three dentists and the instructor working on him. That took about four hours. “This was a lot quicker,” McClain said of Braga’s work on the final two quadrants Tuesday. “It was amazing.”

“A good patient means everything,” Braga said, returning McClain’s praise. “You were phenomenal.”

Braga has been training dentists on Millennium’s Nd:YAG laser since 2004, after becoming the country’s second practitioner to embrace the technology in 2002, while FDA approval of the then-experimental procedure was still pending. As a former instructor with the international program at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, where Braga also earned his DMD, he was comfortable and proficient with the role of teacher and missed it.
Greater New York Dental Meeting — Dec. 4, 2013

Precise and increasingly user-friendly, today’s CAD/CAM technology serves dentist and, in turn, their patients on a large scale. On Tuesday, Manhattan dentist Simon W. Rosenberg led the CAD/CAM Pavilion Lecture Series mini-dicussion on CAD/CAM’s revolutionary technology, integration into dental practice (specifically with dentures) and its benefits to the industry.

According to Rosenberg, today’s CAD/CAM technology allows the average dentist a number of options in high-speed design and manufacturing, more significantly in regards to implant prostheses, crowns, orthodontic aligners and cosmetic digital imaging.

Referenced frequently throughout Rosenberg’s presentation, Dentca and Invisalign (denture and aligner manufacturers) founded their products through CAD/CAM technology by careful analysis and research. Both companies boast a two to three visit schedule per patient to fully complete the design and manufacturing of their products, eliminating chairside time and increasing profitability. The two to three visits incorporate impression creation, a second patient visit less than a week later and an optional patient follow-up.

In addition to the CAD/CAM series, the variety of educational opportunities Tuesday continued to reach a wide span of topics and subjects with extended sessions, including the Dental Assistant Pavilion, ICOI seminars, all-day orthodontic seminars and much more.

Here is just a sampling of the many education sessions that GNYDM attendees took part in:

- **Orthodontic seminars:** Speakers Dr. Cristina Teixeira and Dr. David R. Musich spoke in this afternoon program on topics such as “Misconceptions in Orthodontic Early Treatment” and “Early Class II Treatment: A Minimally Invasive Treatment Approach,” respectively.

- **Live Dentistry Arena:** The all-day live sessions included Dr. Jack Griffin Jr. demonstrating dependable, efficient preparations for monolithic lithium disilicate or zirconia crowns, digital impressions, cementation and finishing, featuring some of the most dependable materials available today. Dr. Aeklavya Panjali also spoke in a Live Dentistry session, as he surgically placed and restored a complex immediate placement implant case.

- **ICOI seminars:** The International Congress of Oral Implantologists’ Tuesday morning and afternoon half-days seminars featured Dr. Michael Tischler, Dr. Alvaro Ordonez, Dr. Gordon Christensen and Xana Winans. Topics ranged from “The Zirconia Screw-Retained Implant Bridge” to digital dentistry to social media marketing.

- **Dental Assistants Pavilion:** Shannon Pace Brinker, CDA, spoke on “Becoming a Whitening Specialist in Your Practice,” which focused on practical techniques for in-office and take-home whitening.

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Plus, he’s a huge believer in the benefits of the procedure. “It’s more comfortable to the patient,” Braga said. “It’s tissue-sparing, with no cutting and throwing away, which leaves the long roots that nobody likes. It’s safe, effective and proven.”

Still, McClain said he was a bit anxious Monday night and didn’t get much sleep. But it wasn’t because he was worried. “It was just the prospect of being healthy and having people watch the progression of that,” McClain said. “I would do it again.”

Braga has performed the procedure thousands of times, and today, as part of a group practice in Raymond, N.H., he performs it almost exclusively. “LANAP requires the Nd:YAG laser,” Braga said, “so is this is pretty much the only laser (the PerioLase MVP-7) for it. It’s very specifically designed to do this procedure. It’s quite unique… [The procedure] has great healing results without the old-fashioned side effects of conventional therapy.”

McClain, a group fitness instructor who has lived in the Manhattan area his entire life, would agree: “I talk to a lot of people throughout the week, and I’ll be recommending this — not the old school style,” he said.