

Dental Doings



Regulations Can Take A Bite Out Of Patient Care

(NAPSA)—When it comes to dental care, some dentists are performing specialized procedures for which they are not licensed, while others are prohibited from providing basic services that are well within their professional skill set. In both cases, patients are the ones who lose out.

That's the opinion of an orthodontist who is also the owner of the largest individually owned orthodontic practice in North America and founder of the first Smile for a Lifetime chapter—a charitable nonprofit organization that provides orthodontic care to individuals who may not have the opportunity to acquire assistance.

In a recent op-ed piece, Dr. Ben Burris argued that regulations can forbid a specialist, such as a licensed orthodontist, from providing a service outside his or her specialty—even though he or she is trained to deliver that service.

At the same time, he says that there are many cases when dentists, working in what he characterizes as “one-stop shops,” often perform dental specialties for which they are neither trained nor licensed.

In his article, Burris makes the case that his formal training in dental school and subsequent full-time accredited residency programs equipped him to provide an array of basic dental services and supervise the performance of dental hygienists—something now prevented by state regulations.

He also argues that the current



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system is unfair to working parents since it can require them to schedule two appointments—one for a cleaning and one for a more specialized service—where one might suffice if the regulations allowed a specialist such as himself to provide both services.

At the same time, he contends that the current system exposes patients to potentially substandard care by making it legal for those who do not have training in dental specialties to provide such care.

Burris urges consumers to speak to their elected officials at the state level and demand a system that puts the welfare of clients—not the convenience of practitioners—first.

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