Public Comment from
Dr. Robert Talley
NDA
Public comment for the January 17, 2020 NSBDE Meeting

Greetings from the Nevada Dental Association.

My name is Dr. Robert Talley and I am the Executive Director of the Nevada Dental Association. We represent over 50% of the licensed dentists in the State of Nevada. We are part of the American Dental Association and have three local component societies in the state. They are The Southern Nevada Dental Society, The Northern Nevada Dental Society and the Northeast Nevada Dental Society. The Nevada Dental Association is the legislative arm of organized dentistry in the State of Nevada. Any other group claiming to represent organized dentistry is an imposter.

Also, it should be noted on the record that the Nevada Dental Association House of Delegates met this last Saturday and changed our bylaws so that no officer of the State Association or one of its Local Dental Societies may hold a position on the Board of Dental Examiners while in office.

Thank you to the new members of the board for stepping up and answering the call of the Governor. You have a difficult immediate task, getting the board’s operations up to date.

We look forward to working with the Board of Dental Examiners through your Committee on Public Health which is on your agenda for approval at this meeting.
Public Comment from
Dr. Nam Pham
Chairman of the Nevada Board of Dental Examiners

Now that the Board has a full complement of appointed members, I would like the Board to consider referring the Dental Board Complaint filed by Cerri Cowen, in September 2016, to a new Disciplinary Screening Officer who is a specialist in performing implants or places implants on a regular basis, rather than the original Disciplinary Screening Officer who was neither a specialist in performing implants or places implants on a regular basis. After the investigation, the findings could then be submitted to a new review panel to evaluate and confirm the findings.

I believe that by having a non-expert in the field of implants investigate the complaint is unfair and has prejudiced the outcome.

I think that it would be fair and equitable if this case were just dropped. I do not give an admission of guilt, but please note that since this case was filed 4 years ago, I have had approximately 100 hours of continuing education and have successfully performed over 300 implants without 1 single complaint.

On Fri, Jan 17, 2020 at 3:07 PM nam phan <namphan@domain.com> wrote:
Chairman of the Nevada Board of Dental Examiners

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Public Comment submitted by
Smile Restore
Dear Nevada State Board of Dental Examiners,

Please see the attached.

Dr. Georgene Chase
SmileRestore
775-800-1051
September 19, 2018

To Whom It May Concern;

My name has been brought up as a patient implicating Doctor Chase for “treatment rendered without consent forms signed”, which means without permission given. I have signed as many consent forms as visits I have made. The staff in the office at the time of Nichole Blankenship had a regular intent to cause mistakes of records and finances that brought problems onto Dr. Chase. I emphatically disagree with any punitive actions against Dr. Chase by the Nevada State Board of Licensing as a result of my care and my relationship with Dr. Chase, which by the way is still intact and healthy.

If you have any further questions my number is:

Doug Jones

[Signature]

State of Nevada
County of Washoe
This instrument was acknowledged by Doug B. Jones on Dec 19, 2019

[Notary Public Seal]
To Whom It May Concern;

My name is Eric Swanson. I did not make a complaint against Dr. Georigene Chase, MPH. She is a friend of mine and she has "given" dental services to me in the past, back to 2011. My latest visit to the SmilesRestore office, a private non-profit, was with my son and his video crew to film my procedure for a documentary about aged people who can't get dental services. The debilitating condition many of us are left with is something this organization was trying to do something about.

During this visit, Dr. Chase gave me a sample of a product called Pure O3. It was ordered off the internet, and I was given a sample to take home for my personal use. No promises of any kind were made to me by Dr. Chase. I was treated with great kindness and respect for my choices. Also, I was instructed and cared for without this product as a part of my prescribed healing methods.

I asked for the sample, she gave it to me. I am uncertain how this "extra" kindness is a violation? Please tell me what motivates people to find reasons to interfere with my relationship with my friend and my Dentist.

I am a constitutionally minded citizen, and I take my freedoms very seriously. Who and why is this situation being used to blast a conscientious dentist with more education than most? I am not a disinterested person that can be used to admonish someone who has my best interest in mind.

Sincerely,

Eric Swanson

Photo of product attached!
Public Comment from
Melanie Chapman, Esquire
My name is Melanie Chapman and I have been the General Counsel for the Nevada State Board of Dental Examiners since September 25, 2017. Over the past two-plus years, I have been witness to, and the recipient of, a plethora of unfounded and unsubstantiated allegations, misinformation and outright lies, many of which border on, if not cross over into, defamatory statements. Much of this information has been disseminated by the press and a small group of individuals whose mission is, based their own statements, to wreak havoc with the Board, and anyone associated with it. You must ask yourselves whether it is rational to believe that every single person affiliated with the Board, none of whom have ever had any questions or allegations levied against them before they, individually, became associated with the Board, can all of a sudden all be corrupt, biased, rogue and guilty of crimes or unethical behavior. It is simply not a logical conclusion to draw.

While I wish that there was time to discuss the multitude of inaccuracies, this would take more time than we have today. Further, those interested in the truth, or at least in hearing all of the facts and information, have already asked for additional explanation. I have, however, even been advised by some that “whether or true or not” the allegations are serious. Of course they are serious, but as anyone with any knowledge of the law knows, anyone can allege anything against anybody at any time, but allegations are not facts, even if they are made repeatedly, in court papers or in the newspaper. Simply alleging something does not make it true and if you do not care about whether the allegations are true or not, then you cannot claim to have the best interests of the citizens of Nevada in mind. As stated, however, due to time restraints and confidentiality requirements, I cannot address all of the allegations at this time.

However, there are a few allegations that have directly impacted the reputations of a few people whose names have been dragged through the mud with an air of legitimacy that is simply unconscionable. Allegations of ethical violations have been made that were attributed to former Board Chair, hygienist Yvonne Bethea and former DSO Coordinator Dr. Rick Thiriot. Those allegations were thoroughly investigated by the Nevada Commission on Ethics. Following a complete investigation, the allegations were found to be without merit. The commission found that no ethical violations had been committed and published an opinion to this effect which has been available to the public and any ‘investigative reporter’ that cared to find or publish the truth. To my knowledge, no one has issued a retraction of these allegations despite the Ethics opinion published in November.

Other allegations against former Board members and Executive Director Debra Shaffer-Kugel are also without merit, and were based upon false allegations, conjecture, erroneous assumptions, false and uninformed statements and a complete disregard for the fact that neither these dentists, nor any organizations for which they were directly involved in management or financial expenditures, have not profited by even one penny. It is unbelievable that anyone could turn charitable contributions that directly helped scores of disabled Nevada veterans receive much needed dental care into something ugly, especially based upon false, misleading and, frankly, made up information.

I would like to enter the Ethics Commission opinions into the public record at this time.
STATE OF NEVADA
BEFORE THE NEVADA COMMISSION ON ETHICS

In re Rick B. Thiriot, DDS, Disciplinary Screening Officer (DSO) Coordinator, Board of Dental Examiners, State of Nevada,

Ethics Complaint Case No. 19-075C

Subject /

REVIEW PANEL DETERMINATION
NRS 281A.725; NAC 281A.440

The Nevada Commission on Ethics ("Commission") initiated this Ethics Complaint No. 19-075C ("Complaint") regarding the alleged conduct of Rick B. Thiriot, DDS ("Thiriot"), the Disciplinary Screening Officer ("DSO") Coordinator and former Board Member of the Nevada State Board of Dental Examiners ("Board"), in violation of the Ethics in Government Law set forth in NRS Chapter 281A ("Ethics Law"). The Complaint reviewed an Audit Report prepared by the Division of Internal Audits of the Governor's Office of Finance, which alleged that Thiriot misused his position and authority as a Board member to obtain a position as a DSO upon conclusion of his Board term and later misused his position as the DSO Coordinator to investigate and/or dismiss complaints affecting his employer, the UNLV Dental School. The Commission issued its Order Initiating an Ethics Complaint, Accepting Jurisdiction and Directing an Investigation on August 21, 2019, instructing the Executive Director to conduct an investigation regarding alleged violations of NRS 281A.400(1), (2), (3) and (10) and NRS 281A.420(1) and (3).

In his former position as a Board Member, Thiriot is a public officer as defined in NRS 281A.160 and 281A.180. In his public position as the DSO Coordinator, Thiriot is a public employee as defined in NRS 281A.150. The Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to NRS 281A.280 because the allegations contained in the Complaint relate to Thiriot's conduct as a public officer and public employee and have associated implications under the Ethics Law.

On November 13, 2019, a Review Panel ("Panel") consisting of Chair Cheryl A. Lau, Esq. (Presiding Officer) and Commissioners Barbara Gruenewald, Esq. and Kim Wallin, CPA, reviewed the following: 1) Ethics Complaint No. 19-075C and accompanying evidence; 2) Order Initiating Complaint, Accepting Jurisdiction and Directing an Investigation; 3) Subject's Response to the Complaint; 4) Investigator's Report and exhibits; and 5) Executive Director's Recommendation to the Review Panel.¹

Under NAC 281A.430, the Panel unanimously finds and concludes that there is NOT sufficient credible evidence to support a determination that just and sufficient cause exists for the Commission to render an opinion in the matter regarding the allegations pertaining to NRS 281A.400(1), (2), (3) and (10) and NRS 281A.420(1) and (3).

¹ All materials provided to the Panel, except the Ethics Complaint, represent portions of the investigatory file and remain confidential pursuant to NRS 281A.725.
A. NRS 281A.400(1), (2), (3) and (10) – With regard to the allegations that Thiriot misused his position as a former Board member to secure his appointment as a DSO, the panel determines that Thiriot’s tenure as a Board member expired in 2007, outside of the Commission’s statute of limitations. Even if it could be argued that the allegation was not reasonably discoverable until the Audit Report, no evidence has been discovered from the 2007 timeframe that indicates Thiriot misused his public position or Board resources to seek or accept economic opportunities that would improperly influence his public duties or secure unwarranted benefits. Likewise, there was no evidence discovered that he served as an agent of the Dental Board to negotiate a contract to serve as a DSO after his tenure as a Board member or to otherwise seek the DSO position through the use of his position as a Board member.

Instead, the evidence reflected that the Board typically appoints any applicant to serve as a DSO who is qualified under the statute, and the Board historically has had difficulty recruiting licensees to serve as DSOs because the pay of $50/hour is significantly less than what a practitioner can earn in private practice. As a final consideration, the Panel accepts that the Board had a practice of appointing former Board members to serve as DSOs when their terms expired as a continuation of public service and no evidence supports that the Board members misused their positions to acquire these positions or had any competitive advantage over other qualified licensees who applied to serve as a DSO. Appointment as a DSO does not secure a specified number of hours, and any assignment to investigate a complaint is dependent on the area of practice and geographical location of the licensee and patient.

Further, although Thiriot has a commitment in a private capacity to the interests of his employer, the UNLV Dental School, and his employer’s interests may be reasonably affected by disciplinary action against its employees and/or practitioners in the clinics, Thiriot did not act on any Dental Board complaint involving the UNLV Dental School. In fact, Thiriot recused himself from reviewing any complaint that involved the UNLV Dental School. Thiriot’s duties as the DSO Coordinator did not include conducting investigations of complaints, but were limited to conducting jurisdictional reviews, including whether the complaint was verified and involved a licensee of the Board. If jurisdiction was confirmed, he would refer the case the Dental Board’s Executive Director who would assign the case for investigation by a DSO. However, if the complaint involved the UNLV Dental School, Thiriot did not review the cases for jurisdictional determinations, and instead would refer all such matters to the Executive Director who made those decisions.

B. NRS 281A.420(1) and (3) – The Panel determined that there was sufficient evidence that the interests of Thiriot’s employer, the UNLV Dental School, were reasonably affected by complaints alleging misconduct by employees/licensees of the UNLV Dental School. However, in his capacity as the DSO Coordinator, Thiriot recognized these conflicts when he was tasked with reviewing a complaint related to or affecting the UNLV Dental School and disclosed these conflicts to the Dental Board’s Executive Director. He also recused himself from acting in any capacity as the DSO Coordinator on such complaints. Instead, the Executive Director would review the complaints and appropriately dismiss or assign them for investigations.

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This matter is hereby dismissed; however, the Panel determines that it is appropriate to issue a confidential letter of instruction with suggestions to ensure a public record of Thriot's disclosures is maintained.

Dated this 14th day of November, 2019.

NEVADA COMMISSION ON ETHICS – REVIEW PANEL

By: /s/ Cheryl A. Lau
    Cheryl A. Lau, Esq.
    Chair/Presiding Officer

By: /s/ Kim Wallin
    Kim Wallin, CPA
    Commissioner

By: /s/ Barbara Gruenewald
    Barbara Gruenewald, Esq.
    Commissioner
CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I certify that I am an employee of the Nevada Commission on Ethics and that on this day in Carson City, Nevada, I transmitted a true and correct copy of the REVIEW PANEL DETERMINATION regarding Ethics Complaint No. 19-075C via U.S. Certified Mail and electronic mail addressed as follows:

Rick B. Thiriot, DDS
c/o Lisa M. Szyc, Esq.
John V. Spilotro, Esq.
626 South Third Street
Las Vegas, NV 89101

Certified Mail No.: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

Dated: 11/14/19

Employee, Nevada Commission on Ethics
STATE OF NEVADA
BEFORE THE NEVADA COMMISSION ON ETHICS

In re Yvonne Bethea, President, Board of Dental Examiners, State of Nevada,

Ethics Complaint Case No. 19-074C

Subject /

REVIEW PANEL DETERMINATION
NRS 281A.725; NAC 281A.440

The Nevada Commission on Ethics ("Commission") initiated Ethics Complaint No. 19-074C ("Complaint") regarding the alleged conduct of Yvonne Bethea ("Bethea"), the President of the Nevada State Board of Dental Examiners ("Board"), asserted to be in violation of the Ethics in Government Law set forth in NRS Chapter 281A ("Ethics Law"). The Complaint alleges that Bethea acted in her public capacity on matters that affected her private pecuniary interests or persons to whom she has a commitment in a private capacity. The Commission issued its Order Initiating an Ethics Complaint, Accepting Jurisdiction and Directing an Investigation on August 21, 2019, instructing the Executive Director to conduct an investigation regarding alleged violations of NRS 281A.400(1), (2), (3) and (10) and NRS 281A.420(1) and (3).

Bethea is a public officer as defined in NRS 281A.160. The Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to NRS 281A.280 because the allegations contained in the Complaint relate to Bethea’s conduct as a public officer and have associated implications under the Ethics Law.

On November 13, 2019, a Review Panel ("Panel") consisting of Chair Cheryl A. Lau, Esq. (Presiding Officer) and Commissioners Barbara Gruenewald, Esq., and Kim Wallin, CPA, reviewed the following: 1) Ethics Complaint No. 19-074C and accompanying evidence; 2) Order Initiating Complaint, Accepting Jurisdiction and Directing an Investigation; 3) Subject’s Response to the Complaint; 4) Investigator’s Report and exhibits; and 5) Executive Director’s Recommendation to the Review Panel.

Under NAC 281A.430, the Panel unanimously finds and concludes that there is NOT sufficient credible evidence to support a determination that just and sufficient cause exists for the Commission to render an opinion in the matter regarding the allegations pertaining to NRS 281A.400(1), (2), (3) and (10) and NRS 281A.420(1) and (3).

A. NRS 281A.400(1), (2), (3) and (10) – The Panel determines there is not sufficient evidence to support a determination that the Dental Board’s appointment of the Disciplinary Screening Officer ("DSO") applicants, who worked for the UNLV Dental School, or the reappointment of Rick B. Thiriot, DDS ("Thiriot"), who also worked for the UNLV Dental School, as DSO Coordinator affected Bethea’s pecuniary interests or the

1 All materials provided to the Panel, except the Ethics Complaint, represent portions of the investigatory file and remain confidential pursuant to NRS 281A.725.
interests of her spouse. Without an effect on a private interest, the Ethics Law does not apply.

Bethea has a per se commitment in a private capacity to the interests her spouse. Bethea also has a pecuniary interest in her husband’s employment.

NRS 281A.065(1) provides:

"Commitment in a private capacity," with respect to the interests of another person, means a commitment, interest or relationship of a public officer or employee to a person:

1. Who is the spouse or domestic partner of the public officer or employee;

NRS 281A.139 provides

"Pecuniary interest" defined. "Pecuniary interest" means any beneficial or detrimental interest in a matter that consists of or is measured in money or is otherwise related to money, including, without limitation:

1. Anything of economic value; and
2. Payments or other money which a person is owed or otherwise entitled to by virtue of any statute, regulation, code, ordinance or contract or other agreement.

The Complaint reviewed an Audit Report prepared by the Division of Internal Audits of the Governor’s Office of Finance, which alleged that Bethea had a commitment in a private capacity to the interests of certain DSO applicants who were employed by the UNLV Dental School, because Bethea’s spouse, Lorenzo Bethea ("Mr. Bethea"), is employed by the UNLV Dental School. While the Commission appreciates the Audit Report’s identification of potential conflicts, a public officer does not have a commitment in a private capacity to the interests of a spouse’s co-workers. Instead, a public officer has a commitment to the interests of a spouse, and a spouse’s interests could create conflicts with a public duty.

Mr. Bethea’s interests include his employment interests and the interests of his employer, the UNLV Dental School. Mr. Bethea’s employment interests include issues and decisions that affect his employment, such as pay, benefits, discipline, or the operations of facilities within the scope of his job duties. His interests may also be construed more broadly to include the general interests of his employer unrelated to his specific employment. See In re Public Officer, Comm’n Op. No. 15-74A (2018).

Mr. Bethea’s employment interests:

In reviewing whether Mr. Bethea’s employment interests (pay, benefits, discipline, etc.) with the UNLV Dental School could be affected by the Dental Board’s appointment of DSOs who also work for the UNLV Dental School, the Panel looked to the employment relationships, if any, between the DSO applicants and Mr. Bethea. Mr. Bethea worked as the Director of Clinical Operations, overseeing facility management, fixing equipment, staffing the clinic, etc. None of the DSO applicants supervised Mr. Bethea or vice-versa. Mr. Bethea and the DSO applicants are best described as co-workers and casual acquaintances. The Ethics Law does not extend conflicts of interest to include the interests of a spouse’s co-worker where there is no evidence that the co-worker has any influence or direction over the employment interests of the spouse. See NRS 281A.065, which statute does not identify a co-worker as the type of relationship constituting a
commitment in a private capacity for application of the Ethics Law. The Commission has found that co-workers do not establish commitments in a private capacity, and in this case the relationships are even more remote in that the alleged commitment is to the public officer's spouse's coworkers. See *In re Romero*, Comm'n Op. No. 19-059A (2019). In summary, there is no evidence that the Dental Board's appointment of DSOs who were employed by the UNLV Dental School could have affected any of Mr. Bethea's employment interests, as he worked in a completely separate area of the UNLV Dental School, reported directly to the Dean and had no supervisory/subordinate relationship with any of the DSO applicants.

*Mr. Bethea's employer's interests:*

The Dental Board has no regulatory authority over the UNLV Dental School. It does not accredit, license, regulate, or otherwise oversee the operations of the UNLV Dental School. Certain faculty and employees of the UNLV Dental School are licensed by the Dental Board and are therefore subject to the regulation of the Dental Board in their individual capacities as licensees, which may include their conduct as clinical practitioners for the Dental School. However, any disciplinary action against a licensee that is employed by the UNLV Dental School is personal to the licensee, and the Dental Board does not impose discipline against the UNLV Dental School. Accordingly, there is no evidence that the Dental Board's appointment of a DSO could affect the interests of the UNLV Dental School.

*Bethea/Thirot:*

The Panel also looked at Bethea's votes to reappoint Thirot as the DSO Coordinator. First, as set forth above, Bethea does not have a private commitment to her spouse's co-workers. Instead, she has a commitment to her spouse and the appropriate analysis is whether her spouse's employment and therefore her spouse's interests were affected by Bethea's role in reappointing Thirot as the DSO Coordinator. As established herein, Thirot had no supervisory authority or influence regarding Mr. Bethea's employment and vice versa. Therefore, Bethea's spouse's interests were not reasonably affected by the reappointment of Thirot as the DSO Coordinator. Second, while Bethea listed Thirot as a reference for a personal/professional matter on or about March 2019, the use of Thirot as a reference occurred after the alleged votes at issue took place. Moreover, using Thirot as a personal/professional reference for a private matter is not sufficient evidence to establish a commitment in a private capacity to the interests of the person who provides the reference and cannot reasonably be said to establish a business relationship or substantially similar relationship between the two under NRS 281A.065(5) or (6).

**B. NRS 281A.420(1) and (3)** – Given that there is no evidence that the interests of Bethea's spouse could have reasonably or materially been affected by the Dental Board's appointment of DSOs who work at the UNLV Dental School, the Panel determined there was not sufficient evidence establishing that Bethea had a duty to disclose these relationships or abstain from voting on the aforementioned appointments.

NRS 281A.420 prohibits a public officer or employee from voting or acting on a matter which would reasonably be affected by the public officer’s or employee’s pecuniary interests or the interests of a person to whom he/she has commitment in a private capacity without first disclosing the nature and extent of the interest. A public officer or employee must also abstain from voting or acting on the matter if the interests are materially affected by the matter under consideration. As described above, the interests of Mr. Bethea are not reasonably or materially affected by the Dental Board's appointment of DSOs who
also work for the same employer. The DSOs have no supervisory authority over Mr. Bethea and do not affect his employment interests. Likewise, the determination of whether an employee of the UNLV Dental School will serve as a DSO does not affect the interests of Mr. Bethea's employer.

Furthermore, although Bethea has a pecuniary interest in her spouse's employment income, her spouse's income was not reasonably or materially affected or influenced by the appointment of his co-workers as DSOs. Again, these DSOs had no supervisory authority regarding Mr. Bethea's employment.

Finally, there is insufficient credible evidence to support a finding that Bethea had a commitment in a private capacity to Thiriot. Mr. Bethea's employment interests could not be affected by Thiriot's reappointment as the DSO Coordinator as Thiriot had no supervisory role over Mr. Bethea. Likewise, Thiriot's appointment as DSO Coordinator had no discernable impact on the UNLV Dental School.

Under these circumstances, NRS 281A.420 does not impose a duty on Bethea to disclose these relationships or abstain from voting. Nevertheless, a public disclosure of her spouse's employment with the UNLV Dental School regarding applicants before the Board who also work for the Dental School would have been a good practice to inform the public of the reasons why a conflict of interest did not exist. See NRS 281A.020.

This matter is hereby dismissed; however, the Panel determines that it is appropriate to issue a confidential letter of instruction with suggestions to avoid potential allegations of conflicts in the future to advise Bethea that disclosing her spouse's known employment with the UNLV Dental School may prevent the appearance of impropriety in the future.

Dated this 14th day of November, 2019.

NEVADA COMMISSION ON ETHICS – REVIEW PANEL

By: /s/ Cheryl A. Lau
    Cheryl A. Lau, Esq.
    Chair/Presiding Officer

By: /s/ Kim Wallin
    Kim Wallin, CPA
    Commissioner

By: /s/ Barbara Gruenewald
    Barbara Gruenewald, Esq.
    Commissioner
CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I certify that I am an employee of the Nevada Commission on Ethics and that on this day in Carson City, Nevada, I transmitted a true and correct copy of the REVIEW PANEL DETERMINATION regarding Ethics Complaint No. 19-074C via U.S. Certified Mail and electronic mail addressed as follows:

Yvonne Bethea
C/o Lisa M. Szyc, Esq.
John V. Spilotro, Esq.
626 South Third Street
Las Vegas, NV 89101

Dated: 11/14/19

Certified Mail No.: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

Employee, Nevada Commission on Ethics

Review Panel Determination
Complaint No. 19-074C
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