Article for Public Comment from William Pappas, DDS regarding Dr. Craig S. Morris
Nevada disciplined dentist for deaths, but it didn’t matter in Texas

- 1. The traveler
  - 2. The professor
  - 3. The official

Updated on 12/17: Revised to say three states use a service to monitor dentists’ disciplinary records.

LAS VEGAS — Two casino workers suffocated after Dr. Craig Morris sedated them. Nevada dental enforcers began investigating, and the oral surgeon gave up his right to sedate anyone else in 2012. But what happened in Vegas stayed in Vegas. Morris simply told Texas his record was clean and practiced freely near Austin and Houston, according to records obtained by The Dallas Morning News.

Dangerous dentists are crossing state lines and starting over around the country, we found, despite a federal information-sharing system that’s intended to limit their mobility.

States must report health care disciplinary actions to the U.S. government’s National Practitioner Data Bank. However, they sometimes avoid disclosure by calling an action nondisciplinary.

And they aren’t required to ever check the Data Bank. Texas, for example, has been granting dental licenses without using it, although that’s about to change.

Kelly Parker, recently hired as executive director of the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners, said that “once I was alerted to this issue, I immediately implemented the requirement.”

You as an ordinary citizen, meanwhile, can see only anonymous records in the federal database.
States can sign up for constant, automatic checking at $3 a year per health care provider. But federal officials told us that only three states use this service to monitor any dentists. And only one of those states, Oregon, says it monitors all of its dentists this way.

“It is something we may explore in the future,” said Texas dental board spokeswoman Lara Anton.

For now, a board employee is assigned to study lists of dentists who’ve been disciplined each month around the nation. The lists don’t identify all states in which the dentists hold licenses, so the employee must manually check each name for a possible Texas connection.

The American Association of Dental Boards compiles the lists and tells recipients to keep them confidential, even though they summarize public records. We obtained copies of the lists — and found that they failed to include actions that some states had taken.
Morris lost his right to sedate patients in Nevada because of the deaths. But he faced no restrictions for years in Texas, where he has worked for the Carus Dental chain in Killeen (shown here) and the Houston area. He denies wrongdoing. (Andy Jacobsohn/Staff Photographer)

‘Doesn’t make sense’

In interviews, Morris said he felt terrible about the Las Vegas deaths but wasn’t at fault.

“Trust me, you still second-guess yourself,” he told us. “It’s a devastating occurrence that I hope no one ever, ever has to experience.”

Morris also denied responsibility for injuries suffered by several other patients. All told, the harm has led to confidential legal settlements and one court judgment totaling over $2 million.

If he had correctly filled out an online form when renewing his Texas license last year, the state might have made specific inquiries about him to the National Practitioner Data Bank or elsewhere. But Morris clicked “no” when asked whether he’d been disciplined elsewhere.

“It was inadvertent,” he told us. “I don’t have anything to hide.”

Morris said a Texas dental board official alerted him to the misstatement in the latter part of 2015. “I addressed the issue,” he said, “and I don’t think it is an issue any more.”

He said the official was a board member — in other words, a gubernatorial appointee, not an agency employee. He would not identify the person.

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Nycia Deal, the agency’s top lawyer, said Morris’ account “doesn’t make sense.” The agency’s ethics policy prohibits board members, in most situations, from communicating privately with someone whose conduct is a “matter before the board.”

Deal said that if Morris’ account were true, “that’s a big problem.”

Morris and other dentists whose cases we reviewed obtained licenses in multiple states before getting in trouble. Once they came under investigation, they moved.

We also identified dentists who secured a license in one state after another state found them unfit.

Take the case of Dr. Thomas Teich, who served prison time for bilking insurers and was long barred from practice in Arizona. Regulators there said he endangered patients with the fraud and had “a history of cocaine dependence.”

Then, in 2002, California licensed Teich even though he disclosed his past. State officials called their decision a “mistake” — after learning that patients had been illegally sedated at his suburban Los Angeles office, leading to one death.

Teich surrendered his license in 2014. We could not locate him or his lawyer for comment.

Missouri has granted licenses to at least two dental castoffs in recent years, while publishing limited summaries of their past misdeeds.

One had been shut out of three other states, for reasons ranging from personal drug abuse to oversedating patients. The other’s history included alcohol abuse, arson, attacking police and failing to aid a patient he’d injured.

Broken jaws

Morris obtained his Texas license in 1997, after a decade of basic and advanced training at Meharry
School of Dentistry, in Nashville, Tenn. He went to work near Fort Hood, the massive Army post in Central Texas, and got a Nevada license in 2000.

Then he moved to Las Vegas, where malpractice allegations soon dogged him.

The legal trail started in 2002, when a patient suffered a broken jaw and severed nerve while Morris extracted teeth. A lawsuit accused him of botching repair of the injuries, leading to severe long-term pain and more surgeries.

Later that year, Morris' boss accused him of safety breaches and fired him. One issue was failure to protect a patient's airway with a gauze "throat pack," Dr. Eric Skinner wrote in a termination letter.

"What if, because there was no throat pack, the patient should aspirate a tooth?" said the letter, which was disclosed in the lawsuit. "There would be no defense."

The letter said Morris also verbally abused assistants, let one of them remove teeth, and failed to document patients' vital signs.

He started his own Las Vegas-based practice. Soon, according to another lawsuit, he failed to diagnose a post-surgical infection, leading to "dead bone," a broken jaw and "lengthy intravenous antibiotic therapy."

Morris denied wrongdoing in both broken-jaw cases. They resulted in out-of-court financial settlements. He told us that insurers often believe it's cheaper to settle than fight and can act without a client's permission.

Insurers must report malpractice payments to the National Practitioner Data Bank, and Nevada regulators could see information about the two jawbreak cases. But the State Board of Dental Examiners took no public action against Morris.

The board should not have allowed him to keep treating patients, Skinner told us.

He was "a bomb waiting to go off," the now-retired dentist said. "I wouldn't let him work on my dog."

Advertisement
Kaila Foster suffered a facial burn when Morris treated her in California before the Las Vegas deaths. (Family photo)

Burned face

Morris’ earning opportunities grew over the years. He sometimes flew back to Texas to perform surgeries. He became a part-time instructor at the University of Nevada’s dental school in Las Vegas.

In 2008, he obtained a dental license in California and began taking jobs there, too. Kaila Foster was one of his patients, in the Sacramento suburb of Folsom.

She was supposed to have her four wisdom teeth pulled in July 2008, before starting her senior year in high school.

Foster’s mom, Tamara Kurtovich, said she met Morris for the only time as he prepared to administer sedation. Soon, an aide came to the waiting room and told her to park by the back door.

A dental assistant brought out Foster in a wheelchair. Only one tooth had been extracted.

“She was so doped up she couldn’t walk,” Kurtovich told us. “She was crying.”

They settled the teen into the car. Then; she recalled, the assistant said, “‘Oh, by the way, she accidentally was burned a little on the face.’”
Kurtovich said she got behind the wheel and “looked over at her and was like, ‘Oh my God.’”

Morris had “allowed a hand-piece to become overheated,” according to records in a lawsuit she filed. “This drill contacted plaintiff’s lip, gums and chin causing a severe facial burn with permanent scarring.”

In a court filing, Morris denied wrongdoing. He told us the burn was small and “not malpractice.”

The dentist said he lacked insurance in California and personally paid to settle the case, according to Kurtovich’s lawyer, Todd Osborne. Morris told us that he did have insurance but chose to pay a small settlement himself.

Forster said she endured teasing “about being the Joker’s cousin” — a reference to the Batman character’s scarred face. The cruelty faded with time, as did the burn mark.

But, she added, “I’ll always have it.”

Suba, a casino maintenance worker, had a fatal heart attack after Morris sedated him. (Family photo)

First death

Rene Suba was a 57-year-old casino maintenance man whose quick smile had fallen victim to oral disease. He was in pain. And one morning in March 2011, relatives told us, he suddenly decided to have his 12 remaining natural teeth pulled.
Come on in, said a Las Vegas dental office where he’d been treated before. There’s an oral surgeon contractor available this afternoon.

Dental records say Morris initially gave Suba an intravenous injection of five milligrams of Versed, a potent sedative. That’s twice the recommended maximum initial dose for a healthy adult receiving no other sedatives, according to a drug package warning.

Suba was getting another sedative, nitrous oxide gas. Also, he told Morris he had asthma and high blood pressure that medication controlled, the dental records note.

Trust me, you still second-guess yourself. It’s a devastating occurrence that I hope no one ever, ever has to experience.”

Dr. Craig Morris on how he felt after the Las Vegas deaths

Excessive doses of Versed “may result in respiratory depression, airway obstruction and/or arrest,” the warning says. Dental patients and others undergoing upper-airway procedures “are particularly vulnerable.”

Suba vomited a clear liquid after the first extraction, according to dental records. It’s unclear why, although both sedatives are known to nauseate a small percentage of patients. Morris suctioned the fluid, but Suba began struggling to breathe.

Morris injected a drug to counteract the Versed, provided artificial respirations and gave Suba puffs from an inhaler, the records say. Yet his oxygen levels kept falling. Morris called 911 after about 16 minutes, concluding that the patient was having a severe asthma attack.

Suba died after nine days in a coma, surrounded by his wife and three daughters. Two autopsies concluded that he had suffered a heart attack, but they disagreed about why.

First, a doctor associated with the Subas’ funeral home performed an autopsy without seeing the dental records. She concluded that Suba had died naturally, with clogged arteries causing the heart attack.

Then the county medical examiner ruled the death an accident. His report said asthma, potentially exacerbated by the sedatives, led to oxygen deprivation. That, in turn, caused the heart attack.

Eventually, Nevada’s dental board described a third scenario: that Suba had struggled to breathe because he’d inhaled vomit — and didn’t receive appropriate emergency treatment.

His relatives said that, given the divergent explanations, they couldn’t find a lawyer to represent them. They received no compensation from the dentist.

Morris told us that he injected “a very small amount of anesthesia.” Death, he said, stemmed from heart and lung problems “that I was not aware of.”

Advertisement
Kimberly Ortiz, a casino security guard; choked to death on gauze after Morris sedated her. (Family photo)

Second death

In May 2011, two months after Suba’s death, Nevada’s dental board told Morris it was investigating. Meanwhile, another of his patients had been injured: a boy at a Dallas-area office from whom four teeth were mistakenly pulled.

Morris unquestioningly followed faulty instructions from a referring dental office, said the patient’s lawyer, Rodney Gappelberg. He should have asked about “removing healthy and descended molars in a teen undergoing orthodontic treatment and leaving untouched the wisdom teeth-molars that are routinely extracted.”

The dentist told us: “I did only what they asked me to do.” The dental offices paid an undisclosed amount to settle a resulting lawsuit, while he paid nothing.

As the Nevada investigation continued, two more patients were harmed in the first half of 2012.

First, a Las Vegas man’s jaw broke during a wisdom tooth extraction. He was left in pain for hours because the dentist lacked proper repair supplies, a lawsuit alleged. Morris didn’t file a response and was recently found liable by default.
He told us he relied on his malpractice insurer to handle that case. “If they didn’t respond,” Morris said, “I have nothing to do with that.”

Then another Las Vegas extraction led to the death of Kimberly Ortiz, a feisty 29-year-old casino security guard who lived with her young son and her grandmother.

She choked to death on gauze.

Morris blamed this death on paramedics. He said he called 911 when Ortiz began struggling to breathe because of “a reaction to a medication I gave — again, a very small amount.”
Authorities didn’t disclose the first death to Ortiz’s mother and grandmother, Deborah Dean and Irene
Evans. They received this plaque of honor from the victim’s employer. (Michael Ainsworth/Staff Photographer)

The dentist told us that he removed the only gauze he’d put in her mouth. Then, “when EMS transported the patient, they put the gauze in there because she was bleeding.”

Ortiz died at a hospital the next day.

The death certificate, signed by the medical examiner, makes no mention of paramedics’ actions. It lists the dental office as the place of injury. And Morris’ insurance company paid a settlement without a lawsuit being filed.

Nevada’s investigation expanded because of Ortiz’s death. And in July 2012, Morris gave up his sedation license.

“What the board basically said is that if you voluntarily surrender the license,” Morris told us, “it is not reportable to the National Practitioner Data Bank.” So other states couldn’t see what had happened, even if they tried.

States must report surrenders that occur after health care workers know they’re facing disciplinary investigation, database rules say.

But the Nevada dental board’s executive director, Debra Shaffer-Kugel, said no surrender occurred. She said Morris’ permit was instead “unconditionally relinquished” — a term that has no legal definition in Nevada.

“Our board is compliant,” Shaffer-Kugel told us. Data Bank officials said they would conduct an inquiry.

We found that many other states also use terms that are considered non-disciplinary, allowing them to avoid reporting to the federal database. For example, Arizona has sent dentists “letters of concern” that tell them to “only write prescriptions appropriate for dental treatment” and “be more aware of IV sedation failure.”

The only consequence for not reporting is being publicly identified as noncompliant. Nevada, like almost all other states, is currently listed as being in good standing.

It should have filed a report about Morris in 2012, said Robert Oshel, a former associate director for research at the Data Bank.

Not doing so “may have made it easier for the board to get the dentist to agree to stop practicing in Nevada,” he told us. But “it put the residents of all other states at some degree of risk.”
Suba's widow, Julieta Suba, recalled why he wanted his teeth replaced with dentures: "He said he couldn't smile" any more because of oral disease. (Michael Ainsworth/Staff Photographer)

‘We were shaking’

Morris has been working in recent years for the Carus Dental chain, which has offices in the Austin and Houston areas. Its president, Dr. M. Ray Scott, did not respond to our interview requests.

In early 2014, Nevada’s dental board signed a public disciplinary deal with Morris. It cited "substantial evidence" that he mismanaged both death cases. Alleged violations included failure to monitor or record vital signs, using inappropriate doses of rescue drugs, not inserting a breathing tube and not calling 911 promptly.

Morris agreed to wait 18 months before seeking a new anesthesia permit, to pay about $25,000 in investigative costs, and to take 10 hours of supplemental education. If practicing in Nevada, he must be on probation for four years and take emergency-management classes annually during that time.

Two of Suba’s daughters attended the meeting at which board members approved the deal. Only then did they learn of the second death, and only by poring over a 19-page legal document in a room full of strangers.

“We were in complete shock,” Justine Suba said, “to the point we were shaking.”

Relatives of Ortiz did not attend. No one told them of the first death until several months later, when we called.

Ortiz’s mother wondered how things might have turned out if the state’s initial investigation had gone faster or been public. “Maybe I could have talked her into doing something else,” Deborah Dean said.

Morris didn’t go to the meeting, either. His attorney did, though, and she answered a board member’s question about how Texas would learn of the disciplinary action.

She “indicated that Dr. Morris is required to report it to Texas” and that Nevada would notify the federal Data Bank, meeting minutes say.

Nevada suspended Morris’ dental license in early 2015, citing failure to comply with the supplemental-education requirement. He told us that he had complied, was unaware of the suspension and would seek to undo it.

This action did not appear on the monthly lists that Texas says it checks, although the underlying 2014 deal did. Morris’ record in this state remained spotless until mid-November. Then, after we began asking questions, his license here was also suspended.

Texas dental board officials accused the dentist of fraud for failing to disclose his discipline in Nevada over the deaths. Letting him continue treating patients, the suspension order says, “would constitute a clear, imminent or continuing threat.”

But three weeks later, in early December, Morris remained on the Carus Dental website. We called to inquire, and a receptionist said he was still working there.

Editor’s note: Because of incorrect information provided by federal officials, an earlier version of this story mistakenly reported that no states use the National Practitioner Data Bank’s constant, automatic service to monitor their dentists.

Author: Brooks Egerton
Editor: Dave Hiott
Producer: Jon McClure
Letters of Support

• Dr. Georgene Chase
Carolyn Easley

January 8, 2019

Nevada State Board Dental Examiners
Attention: Debra Shaffer-Kugel, dashaffer@nsbde.nv.gov
6010 South Rainbow Boulevard,
Building A, Suite 1
Las Vegas, Nevada 89118

Re: Dr. Georgene Chase, DDS
Smile Restore
5365 Mae Anne Avenue, Suite B-1
Reno, Nevada 89523

Dear Debra Shaffer-Kugel,

I implore your help to reinstate Dr. Georgene Chase as a Dentist in the great State of Nevada. I am a 74-year old woman, after moving to Nevada from California, I was able to find the very best, affordable dental care that I have ever received. Dr. Chase has helped me to avoid losing my teeth and has helped my family restore their dental health.

I want you to know that I moved to Dayton, Nevada 2-years ago for a better life. I wanted and needed the very best dentist in Nevada. Due to all of the recommendations I received, I chose Dr. Chase as my dentist.

Dr. Chase is by far the most intelligent, ethical, educated and integrous dentist that I have ever had the pleasure of working with. Not to mention that Dr. Chase is kind, considerate, and thoughtful to her patients. When you meet Dr. Chase you immediately trust her. Dr. Chase has integrity, does not overcharge her patients or try to sell you the most expensive treatment. Dr. Chase genuinely seems to want to help her patients. Dr. Chase is able the give her patients choices on the kind of care that is available to them not just the highest price available. We need more dentists and doctors in Nevada not to mention the United States like Dr. Georgene Chase.

For the first time in my life, I have found superior dental care that I can financially afford. My smile, my self-worth and my life is substantially better for having Dr. Chase as my dentist.
January 8, 2019
Nevada State Board Dental Examiners
Attention: Debra Shaffer-Kugel, dashaffer@nsbde.nv.gov
Page 2 of 2

In Nevada where dental cost is over the top and unreachable for most of us, I have been blessed to have Dr. Chase as my dentist. She is responsible for bringing down the cost of dental care and still gives us the best dental care available in the Northern Nevada region.

When you walk into Smile Restore you will notice how traditional it is, it is not a fancy office. It is my understanding, after talking with some of Dr. Chase’s patients that most of them have been under regular treatment of Dr. Chase’s for 30-years. They trust her to be honest and give them the best care available. Dr. Chase makes Northern Nevada a better place to live. Reno, Nevada needs Dr. Chase. We, her patients, need our dentist and our affordable dental health care returned to us.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Easley

CC: Jacky Rosen, Nevada State Senator (D-NV 3rd District)
27 Independence Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20003

Jacky Rosen, Nevada State Senator (D-NV 3rd District)
8872 South Eastern Avenue, Suite 210/220
Las Vegas, NV 89123

Dr. Georgene Chase, DDS
Smile Restore
5365 Mae Anne Avenue, Suite B
Reno, Nevada 89523
Nevada State Board of Dental Examiners  
6010 S. Rainbow Blvd. Ste. A-1  
Las Vegas, NV 89118

March 19, 2019

Re: Georgene Chase D.D.S.  
    Smile Restore

Dear Nevada State Board of Dental Examiners,

I have volunteered to write this statement in support of Georgene Chase D.D.S. and her Dental Clinic, Smile Restore. I do not know the specifics as to why Dr. Chase must come before the Board but I feel compelled to speak up on her behalf.

I work as a Family Physician in a rural Nevada Acute Care Clinic where the poorest of the poor in our area come for medical and dental care. When I see patients with dental issues, I have Dr. Chase’s telephone number memorized to give to them. Most of them already know the cash price to have a tooth pulled locally – that is the only option they think possible - if they can get the money together. I tell them to get gas money together or to get a ride to Reno because there is a good chance through Dr. Chase at Smile Restore that their tooth can be fixed and maybe for free or on a sliding scale. What an incredible resource! Especially for the young people having early dental issues, facing the prospective trauma (on multiple levels) of having a permanent tooth pulled – plunging them deeper into their already difficult life. I have seen the tears as they tell me of what they thought was their only option. Dr Chase and Smile Restore give hope and healing!

Every time my family and I go in to Smile Restore I see these patients, like my patients, appreciating and benefiting from the care. I suspect that many of the people who work for Smile Restore have been patients there first and Dr. Chase has given them “a leg up”. Once last year a veteran came in as I was leaving at 5 p.m., obviously in pain. Dr Chase didn’t even ask his name, she just took him back and attended to him. What an example! Truly a good Samaritan.
I often pre-pay for the supplies Smile Restore needs for my family because otherwise the Clinic does not have them. They tell me that I help others with what is left over. Recently Dr. Chase suggested that I could rent her house because she was in danger of losing it. She was going to live in the small space above her barn so as to keep practicing her noble vocation. Are you aware that she adopted multiple small children who needed her?

In terms of dental treatment, I have found Dr. Chase to be diagnostically accurate in my case and I find her dental technical skills impeccable and her philosophy scientifically advanced. She found the small apical abscess in the adjacent tooth when I had persistent pain after I had my upper incisor (#9) removed and an implant placed (very traumatic). I consider the local dentist with whom I shared the misdiagnosis a very good dentist and still a good friend.

If the Board does find problems with Dr. Chase's practice or the management of Smile Restore, please be merciful and allow Dr. Chase to continue her valuable care for the community. Dr. Chase cares for a significant number of destitute patients (at considerable risk to herself of communicable disease), all of whom would, in her absence, need to be cared for by the general dental community.

Honestly, rather than censure Dr. Chase, help her. To you dentists on the Board, send your excess supplies. Call her and ask what she could use today. Consider sending your Office Manager half day a month to assist her – that "pearl of great price" who most likely (as has been my experience) is the reason your operation is successful and copasetic with all the requirements. If my statement does not help Dr. Chase and Smile Restore with your review, I would bet your Office Manager would come back (granted probably having found things that could be corrected) with a very positive opinion regarding what is being done there every day multiple times a day.

Thank you for considering Mercy.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Tom J. Walsh M.D. Ltd

[Stamp: Received MAR 2 1 2019 NSBDE]
August 19, 2019

To Smile Restore Board of Directors,

I was originally seen by a dentist that was filling in for Dr. Chase and had some dental work done. I received my EOB and noticed that I was being billed and my insurance was being billed for work that had not been done. I spoke with Dr. Chase about this and she immediately fixed this and brought my account to a $0 balance. This conversation took place around April of 2019 and I have not been seen by this office since before that time. I continue to get bills for work that is not been done and my insurance is paying for work that has not been done. I would like to see my account in the $0 balance due status as it was and should be. I don’t understand how when someone who genuinely is a stellar Dentist who helps people from a disadvantaged background feel good and confident about themselves once again is being put in this position. I truly hope this board of directors takes a closer look at the staff and how this could have been malice on their parts. I just hope that Dr. Chase and Dr. P are not held accountable for some dishonest practices when both of these women have done nothing but excellent and solid work on my teeth and fixed any errors in the billing. I know these women as their patient and I am sincerely saddened by this current situation that has made two good doctors have to go else where. I would like to have my account back in the positive status it was at before this company shuts its door. I am being informed that this practice is closing down due to other dishonest practices such as this and I am confident my account will be in the positive status that it has been in since April of 2019. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Any further help that I can be please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kaycee Weiss
To Whom It May Concern;

My name is Eric Swanson. I did not make a complaint against Dr. Georgene 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 SmileRestore 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 was 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!
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:

[Redacted]

Doug Jones

[Redacted]

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

[Redacted]
I understand that there is an upcoming meeting of the NSDBE which will address the Nevada dental license of Dr Georgene Chase. I would like to be involved in that meeting. I am a retired physician who has been in the practice of Dr Chase. I would like to offer my comments, and I would like to follow the ongoing issues relating to the licensure of Dr Chase. Thank you.

Steve Recchia
March 11, 2020

Francine M. Smith

Nevada Dental Board

Re: Reinstatement of License for Dr. Georgene B. Chase

To whom it may concern:

I Francine M. Smith am a native of Nevada. I was born and raised here in Reno.

I came in as a patient on August 28th 2018. Dr. Chase helped me with a cavity that she filled in for me to get me by until I could afford to have it fixed. Dr. Chase and I had a conversation as I was in the chair. I explained to her that I had just finished a job at Spectrum and was looking for a work. I was looking for a dentist that could help me get my mouth in order again as I needed a lot of work done. She asked me what line of work I was looking for. I explained that I was an office administration. She asked if I would be willing to come and work for her. They needed help. I later found out it was closed due to prior staff issues.

I started volunteering on September 4th 2018 for the office. I started answering the phones, welcoming patients in that had appointments, and scheduling. The patients that were being seen at that time were patients that the Dr. was trying to take care of due to the office being closed because of the prior staff.

I started working with Angie Daniels as she showed me the ropes. Never have I seen such a mess on the office files. I started alphabetizing charts and going through them one by one to see what was needed. It was unbelievable how many charts did not have copies of id’s or information packets or a lot of the id’s were out dated.

I have been in the office administration field long enough to know that getting copies of id’s and information is crucial to any office setting. In my opinion, and observation, the severe lack of office policy, procedure, or work ethic was obvious from the prior staff. Anything having to do with charts, scheduling, money collection, or notation is the responsibility of the front office. Angie and I went over hundreds of accounts to fix the prior staff neglect and inaccuracies. There several accounts where the insurance was billed but never followed through on.

Since November 2018, Dr. Chase has been unable to work at this office due to the suspension of her license. Not only has this been unfair or unjust, but it has affected not only me but the people that matter the most, the patients. She has been unable to complete or work on them because of this. I get calls or messages left daily asking when she will be able to practice again. It’s been well past a year and it’s now time to have an answer.

Dr. Chase has helped more than her fair share of people in this town, especially people that have very little money and can barely make ends meet. It has always been her goal and dream to help the underdog in this world and right now that opportunity is on hold.
In my opinion, this decision imposed by you has caused this office to spiral downward in huge mess of events. I am sure you are well aware of the charts having to be sold from this office under the direction of Debra Kugel Shafer. This action has been unjust to the patients to have their charts sold, patients that cannot pay for care and are most likely subjected to sales and attempts on their fears to pay more money. This nonprofit was not about that. This nonprofit had the soul interest in helping individuals. I know this because I witnessed it firsthand.

People who have dental emergencies we can refer them out. But the people that are economically challenged have no options because the one doctor that truly cared about the patient and not the almighty dollars has been put on hold. How do I know this? I am one of those people!

I can personally tell you that I have 3 pages of names and numbers of patients that have been waiting over a year to get in to see Dr. Chase. Several of those people are non-patients that have been recommended by word of mouth that wanted to be put on the waiting list.

I strongly urge you to reconsider and reinstate Dr. Chase’s license so that we can get these people in and get them taken care of.

Thank you for your time and consideration to this matter.

Sincerely,

Francine M. Smith
Francine M. Smith
SmileRestore
775-800-1051

-------- Original Message --------

Subject: From: PitbullM More
Date: Thu, March 12, 2020 10:52 am
To: info@smilerestore.org

To: Nevada state Dental Board
I, Katrina Morris started helping Smilerestore with billing and collections in 2018, Nicole took over the office as mgr. By September it was clear Nicole was not experienced. Patients were overcharged, errors were made on claims and not followed up on. Also at this time alot of insurance companies went from a typical 1 year to a 6 month time frame to bill. Alot of money went out the window Nicole was rude to our long time patients. Nicole caused alot of devastation from her inexperience and negligence.
    Sincerely, Katrina Morris
March 12, 2020

Susan Snow

To whom it may concern:

Please reinstate Dr. Georgene Chase as she provides a much need service for those of us who would otherwise not be able to afford dental care.

I’ve been a volunteer for a while now and Dr. Chase has helped me so much. I desperately needed extractions and she helped me get my partial that would have cost me a lot more than Dr. Chase charged me.

She is a caring doctor and has always been honest and up front with me.

I know there are patients out there waiting to get into see Dr. Chase and I am one of them. I had to seek a dentist elsewhere to take care of an issue I recently had and as nice and as great as that dentist was, I miss my doctor, Dr. Chase. Kindly reinstate her license so that she can get on and do what she was meant to do.....help others!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Susan Snow