

Alberta Dental Association and College Hearing Tribunal Decision

February 5, 2020

IN ACCORDANCE WITH BYLAW 20(7) OF THE ALBERTA DENTAL ASSOCIATION AND COLLEGE

On February 5, 2020, a Hearing Tribunal of the Alberta Dental Association and College found Dr. Alan Clifford guilty of unprofessional conduct and he was sanctioned. A Hearing Tribunal is an independent group of decision makers comprised of a member of the public appointed by the Government of Alberta and three dentists registered in Alberta.

Dr. Clifford had performed restorative treatment on a patient and failed to remove the wedge or wedge tip prior to continuing with the treatment and releasing the patient.

Dr. Clifford admitted he was guilty of unprofessional conduct because he did not remove a five millimeter wedge tip that broke off prior to the placement of a restoration. He had made an attempt to remove the wedge tip but was not successful and made the decision to leave the tip in place to attempt removal at a later date.

ORDERS OF HEARING TRIBUNAL

The Hearing Tribunal accepted Dr. Clifford's admission of unprofessional conduct. The Hearing Tribunal expressly set out the reprimand of Dr. Clifford and explained that he showed a complete disregard for the safety of his patient by knowingly leaving a foreign object in the mouth of the patient.

The Hearing Tribunal was of the view that knowingly leaving a foreign object in the mouth of a patient is entirely unacceptable behavior on the part of Dr. Clifford. The Hearing Tribunal noted that Dr. Clifford should have sought help if he was unable to extract the wedge tip himself. Knowingly leaving the wedge tip in the patient's mouth and indicating to the patient that he would remove it a week later showed Dr. Clifford's complete disregard for the safety of his patient, leaving the patient susceptible to infection. The length of the wedge tip also speaks to how dangerous Dr. Clifford's conduct was.

The Hearing Tribunal accepted the Joint Submission on Penalty and issued the following orders:

1. He is reprimanded as set out above;
2. He will pay a fine of \$1,000; and
3. He will pay \$5,000 in costs.