

**Alberta Dental Association and College
Hearing Tribunal Decision**

July 28, 2020

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

On June 24, 2020, a Hearing Tribunal of the Alberta Dental Association and College found Dr. Jeffrey Wakeford 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. Wakeford and/or an employee under his supervision, had posted false negative reviews about dentists at another clinic, as well as the clinic itself. Dr. Wakeford also posted false positive reviews about himself and his clinic.

Dr. Wakeford admitted he was guilty of unprofessional conduct because he failed to supervise his office manager who was responsible for the clinic's advertising at the time. Dr. Wakeford admitted that he is ultimately responsible for the actions of his employees.

ORDERS OF THE HEARING TRIBUNAL

The Hearing Tribunal accepted Dr. Wakeford's admission of unprofessional conduct. The Hearing Tribunal expressly set out the reprimand of Dr. Wakeford and explained he had failed to supervise his staff, specifically his office manager, for whom he was responsible.

The Hearing Tribunal found that the attack ads against other dentists and the creation of false positive reviews for Dr. Wakeford's practice, were contrary to several Principles and Articles in the Code of Ethics, and section 102 of the *Health Professions Act*.

The \$10,000 fine was meant to be punitive in the context of the personal affect Dr. Wakeford's actions had on the complainants, and that Dr. Wakeford took no steps to reprimand his employee, Mr. Gibson, when he was first formally asked to stop the conduct by the complainants but waited until he was notified by the ADA&C of the complaint.

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

1. Dr. Wakeford is reprimanded;
2. Dr. Wakeford will be suspended for a period of six (6) consecutive weeks;
3. Dr. Wakeford shall complete the ADA&C Ethics Course;
4. Dr. Wakeford will pay a fine of \$10,000; and
5. Dr. Wakeford will pay \$26,978.71 in costs.