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It is the purpose of the commission established in RCW [18.32.0351](#) to regulate the competency and quality of professional health care providers under its jurisdiction by establishing, monitoring, and enforcing qualifications for licensure, continuing education, consistent standards of practice, continuing competency mechanisms, and discipline.

### **Message from the Chair – Paul W. Bryan, D.M.D.**

#### **Football and Dentistry**

I was enjoying a delicious bean dip and watching a football game with Shanhon, my semi-pro playing football son-in-law. He's an offensive tackle, the guy who protects the quarterback from the attacking linemen and linebackers. I was focusing on how the tackles were blocking

their counterparts and how much grabbing went on in the scuffle. One of the players was called for "holding" the defender, which is grabbing him to prevent him from tackling the ball carrier. I didn't see any sign of holding. On the next play the tackle grabbed his opponent by the back of the pads and drug him backwards to the ground. "Great block," Shanhon yelled. Stunned, I asked him the difference between a "good block" and "holding." His answer was swift and simple. "It's only holding if they throw the flag." He then returned to the bean dip.

That's when I realized the definition of professional conduct. You don't need referees. Professionals simply don't commit the foul or if they do, they drop the flag on their own, assess the penalty and move on. They practice, learn, improve and repeat. Mistakes are made, rectified, not repeated. They never, ever, act with intent to foul their patients.

It is an honor to serve all of the citizens of Washington State, including every dentist, expanded function dental auxiliary, and dental assistant. The dental profession is well represented by ethical professionals who treat their patients with respect and a high standard of care. Thankfully, the need for dental referees to throw a penalty flag is few and far between. Keep up the good work!

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#### **Commission Members**

*Paul W. Bryan, D.M.D., Chair*

*LouAnn Mercier, D.D.S., Vice-Chair*

*Karen Homitz, D.D.S.*

*Jessica Saepoff, D.D.S.*

*Andrew A. Vorono, D.D.S.*

*Todd Cooper, D.D.S.*

*Colleen Madden, Public Member*

*Lisa Baldwin, EFDA*

*J. Patricia Norman, EFDA*

*Willis Gabel, D.D.S.*

*John Carbery, D.M.D.*

*Robert Shaw, D.M.D.*

*R. Terry Grubb, D.D.S.*

*James Henderson, Public Member*

*Hyun Jung Song, D.D.S.*

*Charles Hall, D.D.S.*

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## Based on actual cases from the Files of the Dental Quality Assurance Commission (DQAC):

*Names and minor details are changed to protect those involved.*

# The Quack Files

If you've ever received a letter from the DQAC you know how traumatizing it can be. The Quack Files are a series of actual closed cases. The cases are dramatized to improve readability and to make the process more transparent so that the innocent will feel protected, the guilty will feel justice and the quality of healthcare will improve.

The flow of a complaint follows a standard process:

1. A complaint is received at the Department of Health.
2. If there is sufficient information, a panel of commissioners reviews the complaint and decides to close the complaint or to open it for investigation.
3. If opened, an investigator is assigned to gather evidence.
4. A commissioner reviews the evidence and presents it to a larger commission panel to determine if a violation has occurred, and, if so, what level of action should be taken.
5. Staff attorneys work with the professional to an agreeable resolution.
6. If an agreed resolution cannot be reached, an administrative hearing occurs.

### **“Treatment Plan: Murder”**

Dentistry, to most, is a mundane life event to be tolerated, often ridiculed with humor and avoided. Murder, however, has a way of giving dentistry a new dimension.

It was a typical Friday morning. No patients today. It had been a long week and it was great to be thinking about the weekend. Just wrapping up a few loose ends after her morning jog and then off to the ocean in search of the elusive geoduck with Jordan and her dog Cujo. One more task to complete. Unfortunately the angst of this task would linger through the weekend and for months more.

She was asked to check in on a conference call with the Washington State Dental Quality Assurance Commission to review some complaints that had come in to decide if they were serious enough to initiate an investigation. She had served for six years and these calls were a routine part of the job. Normally she would have reviewed the complaints beforehand, but this time she was filling in for an older commissioner who had to cancel at the last minute. “I’m glad I don’t have a prostate,” she sighed.

The conference call came at noon and she was greeted by the case manager, another dentist, an oral surgeon and one of the two public members of the commission. The commission’s program manager, two staff attorneys, and the chief investigator were also on the phone. She found this odd for such a routine event. Dr. Brown, the oral surgeon, was directing the meeting.

The first issues were rather standard and addressed dental assistants applying for their credentials who had “hits” on their background check for criminal drug activity. Both of them had stumbled as teenagers and had clean records for the past five years. Their explanations were almost identical: “...My deadbeat boyfriend left a bong under my front seat and the policeman saw it when he stopped me for not stopping completely on a right turn at a red light.” We authorized issuing the credential.

“The next one” started Dr. Brown, “is a little different. “The complainant states that her dentist threatened to kill her if she didn’t comply to his wishes.”

She smirked, as no one could see her on the phone, and thought about how many times she had thought the same thing about one of her staff.

“The thing is, “said Dr. Brown, “he then went on to explain how he would do it. He told her he would go over to her house in the middle of the night and screw all her doors and windows shut and then set fire to the house with her and her family inside.”

There was a long pause.... *(To be continued)*

**In our next Issue: The Investigation.**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I receive important notices about dental professionals?

Sign up for the [dental interested parties](#) list to receive email notifications of important information:

- New laws
- New/Modified rules
- Dental Commission meetings/actions

### Is a sterilization technician required to register as a dental assistant?

Yes. Sterilization technician is considered a dental assistant. Dental assistants provide supportive services related to clinical functions in direct relationship to treating a patient.

### Is cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) required for continuing education?

CPR is acceptable continuing education. [WAC 246-817-720](#) requires all dental staff providing direct patient care in an in-office or out-patient setting must hold a current and valid health care provider basic life support (BLS) certification.

### How long must a dentist keep a record?

Five years. State law details this rule. ([WAC 246-817-310](#))

### How many hours of continuing education do I need to renew my dentist license?

Twenty-one hours annually. State law details continuing education requirements for dentists. ([WAC 246-817-440](#))

### May I count volunteer hours for continuing education?

Yes. Volunteered hours may be considered if preceded by an educational/instructional training prior to volunteering. Hours in this area may not exceed seven hours per renewal cycle. ([WAC 246-817-440](#))

### May I practice in Washington with an inactive dentist license?

No. Law indicates you may not practice dentistry in Washington State while you hold an inactive license. ([RCW 18.32.185](#))

### I am a dental assistant student. Do I have to register?

No. Dental assisting school/program students do not have to register. ([RCW 18.260.110](#)) Once you graduate, you must have an active registration before beginning work.

## Online Services

[License Renew](#)

[License Verification](#)

[Licensee Lookup](#)

[Listserv/Interested Parties – Email notifications](#)

These and other online services are available at [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)



## Dental Quality Assurance Commission - Overview

The mission of the Dental Quality Assurance Commission is to protect patients in Washington by regulating the competency and quality of professional dental health care providers under the commission's jurisdiction. The commission accomplishes this mission in collaboration with the Department of Health, Division of Health Systems Quality Assurance. The commission has oversight for dentists, dental assistants, expanded function dental auxiliary, and dental anesthesia assistants. Revised Code of Washington (RCW) [18.32](#), [18.260](#), and [18.350](#) stipulate the scope of practice for each profession and what allowable functions dentists may delegate. Unlike many other states where dental boards have authority over all dental professionals, denturists and dental hygienists have separate authority in Washington.

Patient safety is the commission's top priority. The commission works to ensure that about 6,000 dentists, 11,500 dental assistants, and 150 expanded function dental auxiliaries comply with health, safety and professional standards through licensure, investigation and disciplinary activities. The commission provides information to health care professionals and consumers to promote informed choices.

Commission's duties include:

- Establishing qualifications for minimal competency to grant or deny credential of dentists, expanded function dental auxiliaries, and dental assistants.
- Regulating the competency and quality of professional healthcare providers under its jurisdiction by establishing, monitoring, and enforcing qualifications for credentials.
- Establishing and monitoring compliance with continuing education requirements.
- Ensuring consistent standards of practice.
- Developing continuing competency mechanisms.
- Assessing, investigating and making recommendations related to complaints against dentists, expanded function dental auxiliaries, and dental assistants that may range from a notice of correction to revocation of credential.
- Serving as reviewing members on disciplinary cases and serving on disciplinary hearing panels.
- Serving as members of standing committees, when appointed.
- Developing rules, policies, and procedures that promote the delivery of quality health care to the residents of the state.

### 2013 Commission Meeting Dates

February 1, 2013  
March 15, 2013  
April 26, 2013  
June 7, 2013  
July 26, 2013  
September 13, 2013  
October 25, 2013  
December 6, 2013

### Commission Staff Contact Information

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[The commission](#) is made up of 12 dentists, two expanded function dental auxiliaries, and two public members. Members attend regular meetings, scheduled for one day on a Friday every six to eight weeks. Members are appointed by the Governor for four-year terms. If you are interested in applying to be a part of the commission, please complete an application on the Governor's website at <http://www.governor.wa.gov/boards/application/application.asp> or contact Jennifer Santiago at [Jennifer.santiago@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Jennifer.santiago@doh.wa.gov) with questions.