

Ethics Corner

Steven H. Cho, DDS
Ethics Committee Chair



Dr. Cho is active in organized dentistry with several organizations. Dr. Cho has served on the NYCDS Ethics Committee since 2010, and became chair in 2020. In addition, he served on the New York State Board for Dentistry from 2007 to 2017 and was vice chair in his last two years.

On September 26th, the New York County Dental Society hosted an engaging and informative Zoom presentation titled “Ethical Quandaries in Dentistry: Get Expert Guidance on Situations That Can or Have Occurred.” The event featured Lance Plunkett, General Counsel for the New York State Dental Association, and Paul Teplitsky, chair of the NYSDA Ethics Council. The speakers shared their extensive knowledge on navigating complex ethical and legal issues in dental practice.

Key topics included professional competence, maintaining patient trust, managing professional boundaries, and understanding legal and ethical accountability. Attendees actively participated by posing their own questions, making the session interactive and relevant. The program provided valuable insights into handling real-world ethical challenges while reinforcing best practices for patient care and professional integrity. Thank you to all who attended and contributed to this thought-provoking discussion!

Here’s a quick summary of the topics discussed:

1. **Practicing Beyond Scope:** A general dentist provides Invisalign treatment beyond their training, causing harm to a patient. This raises issues of competence, patient safety, transparency, and professional accountability.
2. **Inappropriate Behavior:** A dentist makes flirtatious comments toward a patient, violating professional boundaries and creating an unsafe environment. Key concerns include maintaining professional integrity, respecting patient trust, and managing power dynamics.
3. **Prescribing to Family or Friends:** A dentist is asked by a relative for a prescription without being a patient of record. This presents ethical conflicts involving legal compliance, patient safety, and balancing personal relationships with professional responsibilities.
4. **Substandard Work from a Referral:** A specialist encounters poor-quality dental work from a referring general dentist. This highlights dilemma related to patient advocacy, interprofessional communication, and maintaining ethical standards while preserving professional relationships.

If you would like to hear the discussion, please click the image below to access the recording. We would greatly appreciate any feedback or comments you may have - you can email info@nycdentalsociety.org.

