

Peer Review

Peer Review: A Key Member Benefit

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Chair, Peer Review and Quality Assurance Committee



Editor's Note: This is the inaugural column of the new chair of the Society's Peer Review and Quality Assurance Committee, past NYCDS President James E. Jacobs. Dr. Jacobs is taking over for the previous chair, Dr. Barry Sporer, who now heads NYSDA's Council on Peer Review and Quality Assurance.

I am honored to be your new chair of our Peer Review and Quality Assurance Program. I have been actively involved with our Manhattan component of the American Dental Association for the last 15 years and a member since 1985. Having served on so many committees and the Board and Executive Committee, I am often asked why I volunteer so much and what I gain from it. I can only tell you that the sense of purpose, camaraderie, and accomplishment make it all worthwhile at every level. Serving as an NYCDS officer, including the presidency in 2018, traveling to Albany and Washington meeting our politicians, and giving back to our young dentists are just some of the great experiences I have had over the years.

I want to thank Dr. Egidio Farone, past chair of Peer Review at NYCDS and NYSDA, and Dr. Barry Sporer, immediate past chair of Peer Review and current chair of NYSDA's Council on Peer Review and Quality Assurance, for all of their guidance, knowledge, and support. I hope to live up to their high standards.

Now it is time to begin a new chapter with our Peer Review member benefit program. I hope to demonstrate to you in this and future columns that Peer Review is one of the most important member benefits we offer. Why do I say this?

Benefits of Peer Review

- The process is confidential. There is no reporting to any outside agency, i.e., OPD (The Office of Professional Discipline), or the public.
- The process is definitive and final. Parties cannot sue subsequent to a Peer Review decision. The process has been upheld repeatedly by the courts, providing the doctor with immunity from subsequent litigation.
- Treatment is evaluated by your professional peers; there is no jury or trial.
- When treatment is found to be acceptable, the doctor

- receives the fees owed by the patient.
- The process takes approximately 6 months as opposed to 1 – 5 years in court.
- It is a fair, timely, and impartial process.
- Any refund is limited to the cost of treatment under review.

Some see Peer Review as a negative, but I contend it is one of the key benefits of membership. Not only is it a fast and confidential way to settle a patient complaint, but it also limits the financial damages to the treatment under review. At most, if a decision goes against you, is the return of fees paid by the patient (or their insurance) for the specific treatment under review. If the treatment reviewed is found to be acceptable, you would retain the fees charged.

I will be updating this column in future issues of *Dentists' Quarterly* and plan to share examples of situations to avoid and to learn documentation, communication skills and other strategies to help you in practice. Looking forward to our continued communication.

A Brief Overview of Peer Review

Peer Review is an alternative dispute resolution process that is implemented at the local level on behalf of the New York State Dental Association.

New York State Dental Association members demonstrate their commitment to quality care through our Peer Review and Quality Assurance Program. Participation is a membership requirement. Peer Reviews are resolved by a committee of impartial professional peers.

[A Guide to Peer Review](#) provides a detailed outline of the process a Peer Review case undergoes on its way to resolution.

To be eligible for Peer Review

- Treatment must be provided by a NYSDA member dentist.
- Treatment must have been completed within 2 ½ years prior to submission of the Agreement to Submit to Peer Review.
- The dispute cannot have been submitted to or resolved by an alternative mechanism; i.e., collection action, legal proceeding, OPD, etc.

Learn more about the Peer Review process in these short videos:

- » [Arbitration](#)
- » [Mediation](#)