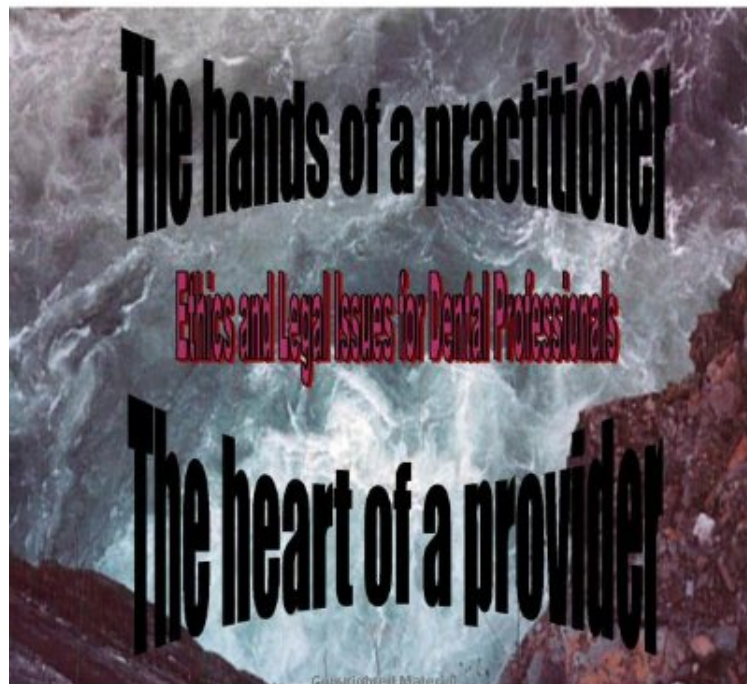


The Hands of a Practitioner, the Heart of a Provider

Officer Shawn L. Naccarato DDS
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#7515371 in Books 2006-06-30 2006-06-30 Original language: English 10.00 x .51 x 8.001, 1.00 #File Name: 1412011051226 pages | File size: 43.Mb

Officer Shawn L. Naccarato DDS : The Hands of a Practitioner, the Heart of a Provider before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Hands of a Practitioner, the Heart of a Provider:

A comprehensive study of professional ethical concepts relating to modern business entities with particular attention to the ethical, legal, and risk management issues faced by today's dental professionals.

About the Author Dr. Shawn Naccarato is a full-time police officer with the Boise Airport Police Department in Boise, Idaho. He attended Gonzaga University from 1980-1984, and he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology in 1984. He attended the University of Washington School of Dentistry from 1985-1989. He graduated with Doctor of Dental Surgery degree in 1989. Dr. Naccarato spent the next 11 years working as a general dentist primarily

in the south-central part of Idaho. He became interested in law enforcement after a discussion with one of his patients (the sheriff of a nearby county), and he became a Level 1 Reserve Officer in 1992. For the next few years he operated his dental practice during the week and patrolled the streets on weekends. In July, 2000 Dr. Naccarato decided to pursue a full-time career in law enforcement. He attended the Idaho POST Academy as a self-sponsored student, and he graduated from the academy in December, 2000. Dr. Naccarato is a certified Field Training Officer, and he teaches ethics as part of his department's field training program. In addition to his law enforcement duties, Dr. Naccarato currently teaches both ethics and radiology classes at the American Institute of Health Technology School of Dental Hygiene in Boise, Idaho. He is a member of the American Dental Association, Idaho State Dental Association, National Reserve Law Officers Association, Fraternal Order of Police, and the Idaho Peace Officers Association. During his off-duty time, Dr. Naccarato enjoys spending time with his family (wife and 4 children) and studying both Kenpo Karate and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

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Preface A professional is a person possessing great skill or experience in a particular occupation. This definition implies that a requisite level of knowledge or skill has been obtained in a particular field of endeavor. However, the term "professional" has at its core a deeper meaning. Professionals are people who declare or "profess" something about themselves relative to their chosen vocations. In order to declare oneself a professional, an individual must (to some extent) set aside his own interests in order to commit himself and his particular skills for the betterment of the community. A professional accepts the duty to both obtain and maintain the skills necessary to effectively function in his chosen occupation; and he accepts an obligation to perform his duties in a manner which benefits those he serves, others in his profession, and the community at large. Our world is not in a static state, therefore, the definition of a professional also suggests that the mere possession of a particular skill is not enough, and that some level of growth, adaptation, or maturation is necessary in order for a professional to change as the needs of those he serves dictate. As dental professionals, we accept a duty to obtain and maintain the skills that have been deemed necessary for us to properly serve and protect our patients. In general, we are relentless in our efforts to maintain and improve our skills in areas such as endodontics, cosmetic dentistry, and periodontics; but we may be somewhat remiss in other areas. Professional ethics is one of the areas that tend to be overlooked by dental professionals in favor of courses that appear to be more relevant to their daily activities. Ethical principles are "instruments". They do not fit on an operatory table or in a lab drawer, but they are "instruments" nonetheless. Ethical "instruments" are not obtained through osmosis, divine intervention, or coincidence. They must be properly presented, cultivated by experience, and periodically reevaluated in order to function properly. Ethical dilemmas are part of our human situation. They are present in both our personal and professional lives, and how we deal with them defines who we are as human beings. Ethical dilemmas can be as innocent as a simple misunderstanding about the cost of a particular treatment option or as complicated as insurance fraud. Once dental professionals begin to succumb to minor ethical dilemmas, they may find themselves on pathways to more serious ethical violations later in their careers. Dental professionals are vested with the responsibility to be positive role models within their communities both in the office and out of the office. As a result, they are expected to behave in an ethical manner at all times. Although The American Dental Association, local dental societies, and individual state dental boards have been established to both guide and regulate the actions of dental professionals, individual dentists and hygienists must determine for themselves how they will act under certain conditions. Individual practitioners should establish firm sets of ethical standards early in their careers so that they can ensure careers characterized by honesty and integrity. Otherwise, dire consequences such as loss of respect, loss of employment, monetary losses, and/or incarceration can occur. The application of ethical principles in modern dentistry could be paralleled with the Biblical parable of the mustard seed. Specifically, practitioners should plant the seeds of ethical standards early in their careers. The pursuit (cultivation) of ethical tenets will result in standards that will reach others (branches of the mustard plant), and these standards will assist others as they face their own ethical dilemmas (the ability to support many bird nests). This text represents my understanding of the evolution of ethical principles from the early Greek society to today's society with particular emphasis on the theories/postulates of Aristotle and Aquinas. The specific questions that this text will address are listed as follows: * What is ethics? * Where and how did ethics begin? * How are ethics, religion, and the law related as guides for our actions? * Are the concepts of Aristotle, Aquinas, and others valid for modern-day professional applications? * How do ethical principles relate to the dental profession? * What are some of the consequences for violations of ethical principles? * What are some of the more common ethical dilemmas in the dental office, and how can they be resolved? * What happens when ethical dilemmas become civil and/or criminal issues? * How can practitioners minimize their risk relative to ethical, civil, or criminal situations in the dental office?