



# PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF DENTISTRY



Secretary Carol Aichele

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## The Voluntary Recovery Program: Protecting the Public, Rehabilitating Professionals

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The State Board of Dentistry is responsible for assuring that dentists, dental hygienists, and expanded function dental assistants practice according to the standards of professional conduct at all times, and that they meet all the requirements of licensure in the Commonwealth, including continuing education requirements. To carry out this responsibility, the SBOD is authorized to order investigations and prosecutions through the Bureau of Professional Affairs and to discipline those found guilty of violations. Discipline against a licensee is a matter of public record (except as described below) and can take the form of a public reprimand, a period of probation, the suspension or revocation of a license, and/or fines, or any combination of those sanctions. (The Dental Law, 63 P.S. Section 120 et seq.)

If there is evidence that a dental professional is unsafe to practice by reason of chemical impairment and/or mental illness, the Board is authorized to compel the licensee to submit to a mental and/or physical examination by a

Board-approved practitioner. Since substance abuse or dependence and mental health disorders are treatable conditions, when deemed appropriate, the Board may offer a licensee the option of a non-disciplinary, non-public method to address impairment issues.

Through the Voluntary Recovery Program (VRP) of the Professional Health Monitoring Program (PHMP), a program of the PA Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs (BPOA), those dental professionals suffering from a mental or physical impairment, such as chemical dependency, can receive both appropriate treatment and the monitoring necessary to assure the safety of the general public.

When the Board directs a licensee to the VRP the individual must be assessed by a VRP-approved treatment provider. Only those found to meet the criteria for a diagnosis under the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders are eligible for enrollment in the Program. At that point, a licensee is asked to enter into a Consent Agreement with the SBOD for a period of no less than three years stipulating that disciplinary action, including suspension or revocation of the license, will be deferred as long as the licensee adheres to the terms and conditions of the Agreement and

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State Board of Dentistry

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maintains satisfactory progress in the program. Only licensees who are willing to enter such an agreement are accepted into the VRP. In order to assure that there is no public record of a licensee's participation in the VRP, those Consent Agreements are presented for the Board's approval with all identifying information redacted.

While in the VRP, licensees must submit to random drug testing, abstain from use of prohibited substances, comply with recommendations made by the VRP-approved treatment provider, submit to monitoring of their practices by a workplace monitor, and attend 12-step mutual help fellowship programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, or other community-based support groups approved by the VRP.

The VRP is strictly voluntarily and all participants choose to determine if they wish to cooperate throughout the process. Should an individual choose not to cooperate with the VRP at any point, that decision is reported to the PA Department of State Legal Office for review regarding the possible initiation of formal, public disciplinary procedures by the SBOD, and in some situations including immediate action to protect the public by removing the licensee from practice.

### **Reporting an Impaired Dental Professional**

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, any hospital or health care facility, peer or colleague who has substantial evidence that a licensed or certified dental professional has an active addictive disease for which the professional is not receiving treatment, is diverting a controlled substance, or is mentally or physically incompetent to carry out the duties of his or her license, is obligated to report

the matter to the State Board of Dentistry. (The Dental Law, 63 P.S. Section 11.6(f)).

To report a licensed practitioner suspected of being impaired and/or diverting controlled substances, you may choose one of the following options:

- Obtain a Statement of Complaint form by contacting the Professional Compliance Office at (800) 822-2113 or 717-783-4849, or by downloading the form from the PA Department of State website: <https://www.dos.state.pa.us>
- Completing the online Statement of Complaint form via the PA Department of State website.
- Sending a written narrative to the Professional Health Monitoring Program, P.O. Box 10569, Harrisburg, PA 17105. The written complaint must include the following: name of the licensee suspected of being impaired, licensee's license number, social security number, or home address, and an overview of the event(s) precipitating the report.

Individuals may contact the VRP on their own behalf, and are encouraged to do so.

For further information regarding the VRP, please call (800) 554-3428 (PA residents only) or 717-783-4857.

## **New Members of the State Board of Dentistry**

### **Ronald E. Plesco, D.M.D.**

Dr. Plesco is a 1964 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh and graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Dentistry in 1968. He became a member of the U.S. Army shortly after graduation that year, and was appointed to the rank of Captain, serving until 1970. During his final year in the military, Dr. Plesco was appointed Dental Surgeon of the Base Clinic. He also served as an instructor at the University of Pittsburgh while on loan from the Army in 1970.

Dr. Plesco began his private practice of dentistry upon his return to civilian status and continues his practice in Pittsburgh to this date.

### **David J. Datillo, D.D.S.**

Dr. Datillo, a native of Pittsburgh, attended Fordham University and obtained his dental degree from the Medical College of Virginia in 1978. He completed a five-year residency in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in 1984. Dr. Dattilo served as the Chief of Dental Service at Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh until 2004, when he was appointed Training Program Director and Division Director of Allegheny General Hospital.

Beginning in 1991, Dr. Dattilo's interests expanded to include dental health care in third world nations, and he participated in surgical missions to West Africa, Peru and Nepal, providing surgical treatment to children and adults suffering from a wide variety of oral and facial deformities.

Dr. Dattilo has published and lectured on a wide variety of his professional interests, including obstructive sleep apnea and facial reconstruction.