



MICHIGAN'S OFFICIAL SOURCE FOR ORAL HEALTH CARE

Joanne Dawley, DDS  
*President*

June 3, 2008

The Honorable Stanley J. Latreille  
204 South Highlander Way, Suite 5  
Howell, MI 48843

Re: Case #05-016836-FH  
Douglas Sowkin

Dear Judge Latreille:

On behalf of the Michigan Dental Association I wish to comment on the seriousness of Mr. Sowkin's conduct and to point out why it is important that he not be allowed to continue illegally practicing dentistry. The Michigan Dental Association is a private state-wide association of Michigan dentists. Its membership represents 78% of all Michigan's licensed dentists. Several members live and/or reside in Livingston County.

Providing dentures directly to a patient requires diagnosis, treatment planning, delivery and aftercare. These services are within the practice of dentistry and cannot be legally provided without a license. Mr. Sowkin has never been licensed as a dentist. However, he has illegally provided dentures directly to patients since the 1980s. He only stopped when his bond was revoked and he was jailed. The Michigan Dental Association has information that as recently as last week Mr. Sowkin saw a patient and illegally diagnosed and began treatment for dentures.

The public health is at risk when unlicensed people, like Mr. Sowkin, are allowed to break the law by providing dental services for which a license is required. Mr. Sowkin and others illegally practicing dentistry are:

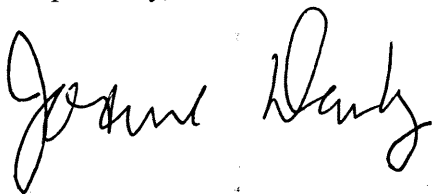
- Unqualified to complete an oral and radiographic examination of the oral cavity and proper fitting of the teeth are not competent to diagnose cancers or other diseases within the mouth, to screen for underlying disease, or to recognize when structural problems of the mouth (such as unseen broken-off roots of teeth) can lead to injury if not corrected before the installation of dentures.
- Unable to recognize adverse intra-oral anatomical factors (e.g. atrophic mucosa).
- Lacking a professional level of competency in clinical factors (e.g. poor denture stability).

- Lacking a professional level of competency in technical factors (e.g. failure to preserve the peripheral roll on a master cast).
- Lacking a professional level of competency in recognizing, diagnosing and treating oral infections which may or may not be indicators of serious systemic conditions, such as diabetes, which may require referral to a physician.
- Unqualified to treat the exacerbated or created temporo-mandibular joint dysfunction in patients should the denture be ill-fitting, proper aftercare not provided and/or improper diagnosis provided.
- Lacking a professional education on patient adaptional factors (i.e. denture adjustments, which almost all dentures need, must be performed by a licensed dentist who has the knowledge of human anatomy to insure a positive outcome in terms of patient comfort, safety and use).

A dentist takes into consideration anatomical, physiological, pathological and emotional factors prior to planning and delivering a denture. Once delivery is made and in the event a problem erupts, the dentist obtains a history, carefully examines the mouth and makes a diagnosis so that a proper treatment plan can be crafted. These skills, learned only in dental school, preserve the safety and health of the public.

The plea agreement reached in this case resulted in the dismissal of the unauthorized practice of dentistry count. I certainly hope this was done only in the spirit of compromise to avoid the expense of trial. The Michigan Dental Association urges you to order Mr. Sowkin to discontinue providing dentures directly to patients or engaging in the practice of dentistry as one term of his sentence. The public safety is at risk if you allow Mr. Sowkin to continue to illegally provide dental services.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joanne Dawley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joanne Dawley, D.D.S.

President