

This is an amendment to 16.5.16 NMAC, Section 10, effective 4/21/2026.

16.5.16.10 GUIDELINES: The board shall use the following as guidelines for disciplinary action.

A. “Gross incompetence” or “gross negligence” means, but shall not be limited to, a significant departure from the prevailing standard of care in treating patients.

B. “Unprofessional conduct” means, but is not limited to because of enumeration:

(1) performing, or holding oneself out as able to perform, professional services beyond the scope of one’s license and field or fields of competence as established by education, experience, training, or any combination thereof; this includes, but is not limited to, the use of any instrument or device in a manner that is not in accordance with the customary standards and practices of the dental profession;

(2) failure to refer a patient, after emergency treatment, to his/her regular dentist and inform the latter of the conditions found and treated;

(3) failure to release to a patient copy of that patient’s records and x-rays within 15 business days regardless whether patient has an outstanding balance;

(4) failure to seek consultation whenever the welfare of the patient would be safeguarded or advanced by referral to individuals with special skills, knowledge, and experience, including but not limited to:

(a) an owner dentist or supervisor causing an employee dentist to make a referral for dental treatment based on contractual obligations when, in the judgment of the treating dentist, the welfare of the patient would be safeguarded or advanced by referral to another practitioner, and failure to notify the patient of such contractual obligations for referrals;

(b) an owner dentist or supervisor causing an employee dentist to use a dental laboratory due to contractual obligations when, in the judgment of the treating dentist, the welfare of the patient would be safeguarded or advanced by the use of another dental laboratory.

(5) failure to advise the patient in simple understandable terms of the proposed treatment, the anticipated fee, the expectations of success, and any reasonable alternatives;

(6) failure of a dentist to comply with advertising and specialty recognition rules as defined in 16.5.1.29 NMAC.

(7) failure to use appropriate infection control techniques and sterilization procedures;

(8) deliberate and willful failure to reveal, at the request of the board, the incompetent, dishonest, or corrupt practices of another dentist licensed or applying for licensure by the board;

(9) accept rebates, or split fees or commissions from any source associated with the service rendered to a patient; provided, however, the sharing of profits in a dental partnership, association, HMO or DMO, or similar association shall not be construed as fee-splitting, nor shall compensating dental hygienists or dental assistants on a basis of percentage of the fee received for the overall service rendered be deemed accepting a commission;

(10) prescribe, dispense or administer drugs outside the scope of dental practice;

(11) charge a patient a fee which is not commensurate with the skill and nature of services rendered, such as to be unconscionable;

(12) sexual misconduct;

(13) ~~[breach of ethical standards, an inquiry into which the board will begin by reference to the most current code of ethics of the American dental association;]~~ breach of ethical standards, an inquiry into which the board will begin by reference to the most current principles of ethics and code of professional conduct of the American dental association;

(14) the use of a false, fraudulent or deceptive statement in any document connected with the practice of dentistry;

(15) employing abusive billing practices;

(16) fraud, deceit or misrepresentation in any application;

(17) violation of any order of the board, including any probation order;

(18) injudicious prescribing, administration, or dispensing of any drug or medicine;

(19) failure to report to the board any adverse action taken by any licensing board, compact commission; peer review body, malpractice insurance carrier or any other entity as defined by the board or committee; the surrender of a license to practice in another state, surrender of membership on any medical staff or in

any dental or professional association or society, in lieu of, and while under disciplinary investigation by any authority;

(20) ~~[negligent supervision of a dental hygienist or dental assistant;]~~ negligent supervision of a dental hygienist, dental assistant, dental therapist, community dental health coordinator, expanded function dental auxiliary, or dental student;

(21) cheating on an examination for licensure; or

(22) failure to comply with the terms of a signed collaborative practice agreement;

(23) failure of a dentist of record, or consulting dentist, to communicate with a collaborative practice dental hygienist in an effective professional manner in regard to a shared patient's care as defined in Section 16.5.17 NMAC;

(24) assisting a health professional, or being assisted by a health professional that is not licensed to practice by a New Mexico board, agency or commission;

(25) failure to make available to current patients of record a reasonable method of contacting the treating dentist or on-call service for dental emergencies; dental practices may refer patients to an alternate urgent care or emergency facility if no other option is available at the time, or if the contacted dentist deems it necessary for the patient's well-being;

(26) conviction of either a misdemeanor or a felony punishable by incarceration;

(27) ~~[aiding and abetting a dental assistant, expanded function dental auxiliary or community dental health coordinator who is not properly certified;]~~ aiding and abetting a dental hygienist, dental assistant, dental therapist, expanded function dental auxiliary or community dental health coordinator who is not properly certified;

(28) patient abandonment;

(29) habitually addicted as defined in Section 61.5A-21 4 & 6 or Subsection C and D of Section 61.5B-3 NMSA 1978 habitual or excessive use or abuse of drugs, as defined in the Controlled Substances Act, Section (30-31-1 NMSA 1978) or habitual or excessive use or abuse of alcohol;

(30) failure of the licensee to furnish the board within 10 business days of request, its investigators or representatives with information requested by the board;

(31) failure to appear before the board when requested by the board in any disciplinary proceeding;

(32) failure to be in compliance with the Parental Responsibility Act Section 40-5A-3 NMSA 1978 seq.;

(33) ~~[fraudulent record keeping;]~~ fraudulent or incomplete record keeping;

(34) failure to properly install amalgam separator as defined in Section 16.5.58 NMAC;

(35) failure to properly operate and maintain amalgam separator as defined in 16.5.58 NMAC;

and

(36) failure to properly dispose of amalgam waste as defined in Section 16.5.58 NMAC. [16.5.16.10 NMAC - Rp, 16.5.16.10, 12/14/2019; A, 4/21/2026]