

October 20, 2024

Dear NH Board of Dental Examiners,

I am writing to express concerns regarding the elimination of moderate sedation by pediatric dentists for patients under 9 years of age.

As a general dentist, I see patients of all ages, including the pediatric dental setting. For some pediatric patients, dental treatment is impossible to conduct in a safe, quality manner with nitrous oxide alone. Sometimes IV deep sedation is needed, but there are many situations where it is not necessary. The treatment needed may be a single tooth or an extraction that can be accomplished with moderate sedation.

My decision on referring a patient for moderate sedation versus deep sedation depends on many factors. Sometimes I would prefer that a patient have IV deep sedation but the parent is resistant to doing so. I have encountered this multiple times over the years. Pediatric dentistry can be the first time a parent has ever had to approve their child going under IV sedation. It can be incredibly scary for a parent. As much as you can educate the need for treatment and the safety of IV deep sedation, skeptical or concerned parents wait. For those cases, I hear back from them when the child starts to have pain or signs of infection. By then, the child needs immediate treatment when there is no immediate opening with a CRNA for an IV day. But there could be a next day opening for moderate sedation.

Finances of the family play a huge role in how a child is scheduled. IV deep sedation costs \$1000 an hour for private insurance patients. It is difficult for parents to justify \$1000 should their child need one extraction that takes 30 seconds to accomplish. Moderate sedation costs less than \$400. There is also the issue of anesthesia provider availability. There are only so many available CRNA groups available in our area. Even less accept NH Medicaid.

I am familiar with Caleb's Law. According to the family's website, he was given propofol, ketamine, fentanyl and versed. It was a very unfortunate outcome. However, this case did not involve moderate sedation. Moderate sedation by a board certified pediatric dentist is a safe and reliable practice.

The primary benefit of moderate sedation is that the child does not remember the visit afterwards. I see adults on a weekly basis who have lived with dental anxiety their entire lives. I always ask them if there was an event in their past that caused this. Their answers are from their childhood dentistry days. No local anesthesia or ineffective anesthesia, no autonomy to ask the dentist to stop working, even scolding by the dentist. It is unfortunate those now adults

did not have better pediatric care. Dental anxiety lasts a lifetime. I'm concerned with what solutions would be available to assist with the problem eliminating moderate sedation would create.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christina McCann". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Christina McCann, DMD