

Peer Review as a Member Benefit

Peer Review is a member benefit, not a punishment. Although dentists may sometimes assume the process is disciplinary, it is actually a confidential and fair way to resolve disputes and address concerns through evaluation by dental colleagues who understand clinical practice and standards of care.

It also reflects one of organized dentistry's strongest examples of professional self-regulation.

The Role of Mediation

The most successful Peer Review cases often begin with mediation. Many disputes arise from misunderstandings, communication issues, or unmet expectations rather than the quality of treatment itself.

Mediation gives patients and dentists a constructive opportunity to discuss concerns with the help of a mediator, clarify issues, and work toward a mutually acceptable resolution before a formal hearing becomes necessary.

Benefits of Mediation

- Patients feel heard.
- Dentists have an opportunity to explain their care.
- Disputes can often be resolved quickly and professionally.
- The process reduces stress, preserves relationships, and reinforces public trust in the profession.

When a Hearing Is Needed

If mediation does not resolve the matter, the case moves to a hearing led by the component chair and a panel of three member dentists. After reviewing the records and conducting independent clinical examinations, the volunteer committee members decide on an appropriate resolution.

Closing Perspective

Overall, Peer Review supports members, safeguards the integrity of the profession, and promotes quality patient care. It is a valuable resource for resolving disputes fairly and confidentially.

