



**American Society of
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February 2, 2016

Mr. James M. Moroney, III
Publisher & CEO
Dallas Morning News Media
508 Young St.
Dallas, Texas 75202

Dear Mr. Moroney:

In the wake of the *Dallas Morning News* "Deadly Dentistry" series (published December 2015), the American Society of Dentist Anesthesiologists (ASDA) offers our deepest condolences to the families of those who have lost loved ones to anesthesia complications unveiled in the series, and to all those lives the tragedies have affected.

While none of the dentists involved with bad outcomes in the series are ASDA members, we feel compelled to comment on this tragic and vitally important story. The ASDA consists of dentists that have completed a minimum of two years in a hospital-based anesthesia residency program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). Our members are the most highly-trained anesthesia providers in dentistry and provide all levels of sedation and general anesthesia for dental and oral/maxillofacial procedures.

The great majority of anesthetics administered in dental offices each day are delivered safely by conscientious clinicians using the highest standard of care. However, the "Deadly Dentistry" series revealed some dentists that focused too heavily on the dental procedures while disregarding the imperative task of patient monitoring. The terrible outcomes that resulted from this oversight were tragic and inexcusable. The ASDA agrees that regulations and educational efforts for dentists need to be improved and clarified.

Patient safety is, and must remain, the cornerstone of office-based anesthesia. Dentists should adhere to state dental board rules which regulate the provision of sedation and anesthesia in the dental office. Dental boards must also do their part to protect the public as well as maintain the public's confidence. While progress is being made through the National Practitioner Data Bank allowing states to do background checks on clinicians, communication between states is still lacking. The ASDA supports efforts to improve transparency between the state dental boards.

Improving Access to Care for Dental Patients and Their Dentists

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In closing, our deepest heart -felt sympathies go out to all families affected by the illustrated in “Deadly Dentistry” by the *Dallas Morning News*. Please be assured that the safety and well-being of children and other vulnerable populations that require anesthesia for dental treatment remains the top priority of the ASDA, and we will be ready to assist in any way. Feel free to contact me directly with questions, or you can visit our website at www.asdahq.org for more information on anesthesia in dentistry.

Sincerely,



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