

May 26, 2021

Elisabeth Rosenthal
Daryl Austin
Kaiser Health News
1330 G. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005-3004

Dear Ms. Rosenthal and Mr. Austin,

On behalf of the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD), I want to express our disappointment in reading about the alleged and unnecessary provision of dental procedures and fraudulent billing practices described in your recent story, "[Why Your Dentist May Seem Pushy](#)." As an organization of general dentists, we place the health of patients first and foremost and work hard to establish trusting relationships with our patients to maintain their oral health. The practices described in your story do not represent the excellent and caring service that is provided each day to our patients and does a disservice to both the dental profession and the patients that we serve.

We want to emphasize that the mouth is the gateway to the body, and, consequently, the first sign of systemic disease often occurs in the mouth. As general dentists, we are attuned to the overall medical condition and total wellbeing of our patients. Every day, dentists save lives when we identify and treat maladies of the mouth, such as gum disease, as well as when we screen to discover pre-cancerous or cancerous lesions and refer affected patients to oral surgeons. We help to prevent cardiovascular problems when we perform routine blood pressure evaluations to screen patients for hypertension and refer them immediately to their physicians.

General dentists partner with a full range of health professionals to ensure our patients' overall health, and we strive to be productive members, advocates and employers in our communities. AGD members have spent the past year during the COVID-19 pandemic working to ensure safe environments to provide care to their patients and safe workplaces for their employees. We are proud of our contributions during this very difficult time.

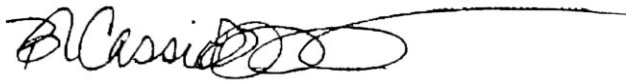
We want your readers to know that they should be informed decision-makers about their oral care, and they should not be afraid to raise questions or concerns with their dentists as they do with their medical providers. It is important that they fully understand diagnosis and treatment options along with payment and other options. Communication between dentists and patients is paramount in providing care that is excellent and understood.

I would like to invite you to join me or any member of AGD in our practices to see firsthand the standards of care we use to ensure quality and ethical patient care is provided to those we serve. It would be my honor to demonstrate how we work diligently through partnerships to bridge the gap between the dental and medical communities. I can also share the processes and procedures we use to help our patients access care.

As a general dentist, I face daily challenges running my business while providing both routine and urgent dental care. I talk to my patients about diagnoses, treatment options and why oral healthcare is so important. Our team works to get patients the care they need and put smiles on their faces while keeping up with the changes facing our industry. This is not an easy job, but it is one I truly treasure.

I hope you will reach out to me so I can share with you some of my experiences and give you a greater awareness about the dental profession and some of the challenges we face. I can be reached at news@agd.org.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce L. Cassis", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bruce L. Cassis, DDS, MAGD
President, Academy of General Dentistry