

The following statement is from Dr. Ronald Griffin, DDS, owner of Ronald A. Griffin, D.D.S., L.L.C., dba Chillicothe Pediatric Dentistry:

I was extremely disappointed and saddened by a recent television news story that has relayed inaccurate and incomplete facts from a few dissatisfied families, regarding their treatment in my dental office.

I have been a pediatric dentist in Chillicothe for 20 years, having provided care in a full-time capacity in that span. I have taken on 10's of thousands of referrals from well over 200 referring dentists in a 10-12 county (and woefully underserved) region of Southcentral Ohio, and have performed much-needed dental work for those children, and others in my practice, as honestly and openly as I've been able. It has been a rare occurrence to turn away referrals from any of those dentists, and for that service, I have a great amount of pride, both for myself and my staff.

In the case of these allegations, my pediatric dental practice, the good people who work here with me, and I were chastised in a social media post that was summarily shared and sensationalized. Unfortunately, as this social media villainization grew, it garnered the attention of 10TV, who have made the unfortunate decision to "legitimize" these stories as truths. As such, despite my excellent treatment record, I have been bashed on social media, starting with an inaccurate portrayal of how children have been treated here, and backed up by no real facts. It's very disheartening, and disappointing.

Medical and dental providers are frequently at a disadvantage in these unusual situations because federal law, specifically the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), prohibits them from commenting on the details of specific cases, complaints, and patients.

Those privacy guarantees are important, and I fully believe in them. But the scales weigh heavily against someone like me when a reporter asks for responses to general and unsubstantiated allegations – many of which are without merit, and even years old. Effectively, my hands are tied, and I simply can't address the specifics of any complaints, or even to respond in my defense. And I certainly can't stem the tide of the growing social media-driven storm. I can only brace for the fall-out...

I serve, and interact with, 6,000-8,000 children a year and their families– which accounts for over 120,000 patient interactions in 20 years of practice – and my record remains unblemished.

I think it's very important to note, that in my 20 years in private practice, I have NEVER had any formal action taken against me by any governing agency. No reprimands, no limitations, no legal or disciplinary actions have ever been taken, regarding my dental practice or behavior from any official authority: the police, the State's dental licensing board, or any regulatory agency.

"10TV Investigates," its reporter, and the phenomenon of viral social media are not (in any official capacity) qualified to render judgment of what is appropriate or ethical care in the dental office, but they have attempted to do so. As such, my practice (where 99% of kids receive care without issue or complaint, with the vast majority of their parents present during treatment) will be defined by this story of alleged misconduct.

I have always prided myself on being an honest and friendly caregiver to the children I serve, putting their health, comfort and safety first, no matter their circumstances. I do not force patients or "push through" uncooperative behavior in my office. And for many years, parents are involved and present

during the treatment of their children. On a daily basis, 75-80% of parents are physically present (and involved) in the direct care and supervision on their children's treatment. This is by design, and has been our standard of care for many years.

With respect to the specific allegations in the news story, I can state unequivocally:

- I do not, and have not ever, used active restraint on my patients, nor have I employed any aggressive or subduing behavior management techniques, as have been described in this news story.
- During the vast majority of our appointments, parents are accommodated in the treatment room, and oversee the care I provide EVERY DAY.
- If I am aware of a child's disability, I use alternative methods appropriate for the situation to calm and reassure the child. Most often, the parents are my guide in performing treatment for their child.
- I have worked to introduce and employ various aids for calming a child during their treatment, like providing FREE "laughing gas" to patients, movies playing above the chair, noise-reducing earphones, and other distraction techniques. Again (without exaggeration,) 99% of patients receive care in my office without incident or complaint.
- And last. if conventional in-office dental care is not appropriate or possible (despite employing the above techniques and aids,) sedation can certainly be a safe alternative for children under my care. (By example, this year I expect to treat 2-3 times MORE children under sedation, than in any previous year. That is certainly a "sign of the times!")

In the rare instance a patient or family is not satisfied with me or my treatment, I will (and have) offered to answer any questions or concerns they may have about their experience and/or complaint. If it remains unresolved, I would likely make other recommendations, among them: offering a referral to another qualified provider, or encouraging them to make a formal complaint to the appropriate regulatory agencies.

At the end of the day, I am extremely proud of the work my staff and I do every day, and I stand on my untarnished record of providing excellent care to all my patients. Regardless, I am extremely saddened and disheartened by this news story, borne out of social media, and legitimized by the 10TV Investigates staff. It is an unfair representation.