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Practice Management Information for Implant Dentists

Legal Bite Question of the Issue Patient Termination By Frank Recker, JD, DDS

Q: My hygienist is very attractive and 'busty.' Several male patients behave in an aggressive manner and make ongoing sexual innuendos to her during their cleaning appointments. She has complained to me on several occasions but I don't want to antagonize good patients. Should I ask her to just ignore their behavior, stay professional, and do her job?

A: You certainly could tell her that, but it would be an unwise decision! Essentially you are knowingly permitting a 'hostile work environment' by allowing her to be subjected to sexual harassment on the job. You need to speak privately with each patient involved and give them an option: be respectful of your staff or be discharged from your practice. If they don't change their behavior, send the potential liability somewhere else!