

Dr Joseph Clifford (Cliff) Beirne (Registration number 30/03)

Dr Joseph Clifford (Cliff) Beirne of Northbrook Clinic, Northbrook Road, Ranelagh, Dublin 6 was found guilty of professional misconduct at an inquiry into his fitness to practise dentistry held in November 2019 in relation to the following allegation(s). Dr Beirne admitted the allegations and that they amounted to professional misconduct.

1. *That in the course of treating a patient of yours, including but not limited to in the period between 1 December 2015 and 15 December 2015 both dates inclusive, or thereafter, you failed to maintain an appropriate standard of record-keeping in connection with your treatment of the said [patient], and that in so failing your conduct amounted to a serious falling short in the standards expected of you as a dentist specialising in Oral Surgery.*

2. *That in the course of treating [a patient] of yours, including but not limited to in the period between 1 December 2015 and 15 December 2015 both dates inclusive, or thereafter, you failed to adequately address the request made in regard to the said [patient] by his dentist, who referred the said [patient] to you for treatment, dated 19 November 2015, that you carry out a biopsy of a lesion in the floor of the said patient's mouth, and that in so failing your conduct amounted to a serious falling short in the standards expected of you as a dentist and /or a dentist specialising in Oral Surgery.*

3. *That in the course of treating [a patient] of yours, including but not limited to in the period between 1 December 2015 and 15 December 2015, both dates inclusive, or thereafter, you failed to appropriately manage a lesion in the floor of the said patient's mouth including but not limited to by*
 - (a) Failing to read and properly consider the referral email sent by the [patient's dentist] to you dated 19 November 2015 regarding the said patient; and/or*
 - (b) failing to carry out a biopsy of the said lesion or to arrange for a biopsy of the said lesion to be carried out; and/or*
 - (c) failing to carry out a scan of the said lesion or to arrange for a scan of the said lesion to be carried out; and/or*
 - (d) failing to make a differential diagnosis when examining the lesion; and/or*
 - (e) failing to note and/or record any such differential diagnosis; and/or*
 - (f) carrying out such further tests as were appropriate so as to form a definitive diagnosis; and/or*
 - (g) failing to advise the said [patient] and [his dentist] in writing about any diagnosis made by you, and/or*
 - (h) failing to arrange for the said lesion to be reviewed at a future date,*

and that in so failing in respect of any one or more of these allegations your conduct amounted to a serious falling short in the standards expected of you as a dentist and/or a dentist specialising in Oral Surgery.

The Dental Council at its meeting on 26 February 2020 was satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the allegation(s) were proven against Dr Beirne and that he is guilty of professional misconduct. The Dental Council decided to censure Dr Beirne and attach the following conditions to the retention of his name on the register of Dentists.

- A. That you permit a person of appropriate qualification and experience, such person to be approved in advance by the Council to carry out inspections/assessments and/or audits of your practice from 1 December 2015 to date and to report and verify same to the Council, which inspections, assessments and audits will continue until they are no longer necessary on the basis of reports of the approved person and that such inspections, assessments and reports be at your expense. In particular, the approved person should examine your current record-keeping and the systems and practices being operated by you and in particular your system for receiving and responding to referrals and replies to referrers in any centres in which you practice.
- B. That you attend at, and engage on an ongoing basis and for a minimum of 9 clinic sessions over the next twelve months, with a special clinic to be approved in advance by the Council for the purpose of addressing any deficiencies in your management of oral dysplasia and malignancy and that you procure and submit to the Council a letter from the supervising consultant of the said clinic confirming your attendance and engagement with the clinic and that such attendance and engagement, and the said letter, occur and/or be procured and presented at your expense.

The Council also decided to publish this decision.

The decision to attach these conditions to the retention of Dr Beirne's name on the register of Dentists was confirmed by the President of the High Court, Ms Justice Irvine, on 29 June 2019 and with effect from that date.