

[Call Kurtis Investigates: Couple Calls Out Pricey Dental Work After Crowns Fall Out](#)

CBS News 13 Sacramento

ROSEVILLE CBS13) — Retired and on a fixed income, Victor Reyes needed work done on his teeth. Victor had dental insurance, but it didn't cover the crowns he needed, so when the dental office gave him the option to pay cash up front for a discount, Victor jumped at the offer.

He says the crowns fell out four days after the dentist put them in.

"I was thinking something's got to be wrong here," he said.

Victor's wife Mona couldn't believe it either.

"Why would they be falling off?"

They said that the dental office offered a 10 percent discount if they paid cash up front for a series of dental treatments. The couple says the office insisted it would be cheaper than processing the claim through insurance.

Mona recalls her interaction with the office manager.

"She really pressured me into paying in full right then before the treatment even started," she said.

"They were paid, boom just like that.

The Reyes's paid up \$11,585 up front to get the discount.

But even after 14 trips to the same dentist, the couple says the work was shoddy and refused to return for the rest of the treatment.

Mona regrets paying out the money up front for the work: "I'm shaking right now with anger."

The couple reached out to their insurance company who had a consultant dentist review the work on the crowns. That consultant found the work to be unsatisfactory.

Consumer advocate Amy Bach with United Policyholders thinks dental and medical offices should not demand full payment up front or offer discounts to for paying cash before treatment begins.

Bach says, "Just the fact they've got the DDS after their name or even the MD after their name doesn't mean that they are above ripping you off."

She says if you don't have insurance, it's okay to put down a deposit and pay as you go, but never

recommends paying the full amount up front.

The Reyes's want a refund, especially for the work, never performed by the dentist.

We reached out to the California Dental Association which says, "Its code of ethics prohibits dentists billing for services not rendered, and if a payment has been received for a service that is ultimately never rendered, the dentist shall arrange to refund any overpayment immediately."

We contacted the dental office which claimed the law requires payment up front if a patient is going to be sedated.

The California Dental Association says, "There is no law requiring that practice," and Victor says the dental office did not sedate him.

We asked the dental office about their payment practices; they told us they could not talk about the case until the patient filled out a privacy release form. Victor filled out the form, but we never heard back from the office or received a response to our questions.

The Reyes family says it will now have to pay out even more money to have a different dentist finish the job. The couple has filed a complaint with the California Dental Board, which is now investigating.

To File a Complaint with Dental Board of California

<http://www.dbc.ca.gov/consumers/index.shtml>

California Dental Association

Public Resources

<https://www.cda.org/public-resources>

FROM THE CALIFORNIA DENTAL ASSOCIATION:

CDA recommends dentists collect their fees from patients at the time treatment is rendered. According to CDA's ethical principles, dentists are prohibited from billing for services not rendered and if a payment has been received for a service that is ultimately never rendered, the dentist shall arrange to refund any overpayment immediately.

Dentists are encouraged to present and review the treatment plan and their dental practice financial policies with patients prior to starting a treatment plan. In the event that there are questions or concerns regarding treatment or payment issues, the dentist and patient are encouraged to work together to reach an acceptable resolution. Should those attempts fail, patients may file a Peer Review complaint with the local dental society and a complaint with the Dental Board of California.

7.A.3. Billing For Services Not Rendered: A dentist shall avoid billing for services not rendered. If payment has been received for a service that is ultimately never rendered, the dentist shall arrange to refund any overpayment immediately.