

# HIV test urged for 7,000 US dental patients

28 March 2013, by Justin Juozapavicius

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(AP)—Health officials on Thursday urged an Oklahoma oral surgeon's patients to undergo hepatitis and HIV testing, saying filthy conditions behind his office's tidy facade posed a threat to his 7,000 clients and made him a "menace to the public health."

The Oklahoma Board of Dentistry said Thursday that state and county health inspectors went to Dr. W. Scott Harrington's practice after a patient with no other known risk factors tested positive for both hepatitis C and the virus that causes AIDS. Inspectors found multiple sterilization issues at Harrington's offices, including cross-contamination of needles and other instruments and the use of a separate, rusty, set of instruments for patients who were known to carry infectious diseases, according to a complaint.

Harrington voluntarily closed his offices in Tulsa and suburban Owasso and is cooperating with investigators, said Kaitlin Snider, a spokeswoman for the Tulsa Health Department. He faces a hearing April 19 and could lose his license.

Snider said letters would be sent Friday to 7,000 patients recommending testing for [hepatitis B](#), [hepatitis C](#) and HIV. The agencies say it is rare for blood-borne infections to spread in occupational settings but that tests are important.

Rogers said that as an [oral surgeon](#), Harrington routinely does invasive procedures that involve "pulling teeth, open wounds, open blood vessels."

The Dentistry Board complaint says Harrington and his staff told investigators that a "high population of known infectious disease carrier patients" received dental care from him.

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APA citation: HIV test urged for 7,000 US dental patients (2013, March 28) retrieved 13 November 2019 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-03-hiv-urged-dental-patients.html>

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