

# NBC5.com

## Dentist Of 5-Year-Old Girl Has License Suspended

### *Medical Examiner: Anesthesia Killed Girl*

POSTED: 7:40 pm CDT September 24, 2006  
 UPDATED: 11:43 am CDT September 30, 2006

**CHICAGO --** A Chicago dentist whose 5-year-old patient died in his office has had his license suspended on Friday.

State records show dentist Hicham Riba was licensed in the state in 1997. Dr. Riba's license will remain suspended pending a hearing later this month.

The Cook County Medical Examiner's office said Thursday that lack of oxygen to the brain caused by anesthesia during a dental procedure caused the death of a five-year-old girl.

The autopsy was conducted on the body of Diamond Brownridge, who died Wednesday at Children's Memorial Hospital.

**Previous Content: [Video](#) | [Images](#)**

Riba's counsel confirmed that the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation Division of Professional Regulation has issued a summary suspension and a hearing has been set for Oct. 13.

"Diamond's loss is tragic," Riba said in a statement. "As we have stated before, we have fully cooperated with the investigation and will continue to do so."

NBC5's Phil Rogers reported that although the cause of death was ruled an accident, the medical examiner's office said that was due to the anesthesia procedure. The pathologist who did the autopsy said either Brownridge's airway was not kept clear during the procedure while she was under anesthesia or the girl received too much anesthesia.

The pathologist said he has asked Children's Memorial Hospital for any blood that they might have left over from when Brownridge first was admitted, so he can conduct toxicology reports, Rogers reported.

More



#### EMBATTLED DENTIST

- [Another Family Comes Forward](#)
- [Video: Witness: Girl Kicked, Screamed Before Sedation](#)
- [Survey: Should Dentist Get License Back?](#)
- [Video: Medical Examiner Determines Cause Of Death](#)
- [COMPLETE INTERVIEW: Girl's Mother Speaks On WGCI](#)
- [Video: Diamond Dies](#)
- [Video: Parents: Pulling Plug Not An Option](#)
- [Video: Girl Remains In Coma](#)
- [Previous Video: Child Hospitalized After Trip To Dentist](#)
- [Previous Images](#)
- [Click here to share your sympathies, thoughts.](#)

#### Links

- [Fund Set Up To Benefit Family](#)
- [AAPD Brochure On Sedation Pediatric Dentistry](#)
- [AAPD Guidelines on Sedation Dentistry](#)
- [AAPD Guidelines For Monitoring Sedated Children](#)
- [AAPD Guidelines On Anesthesia Providers](#)
- [AAPD: Find A Pediatric Dentist](#)

Brownridge's mother said she is not mad at the man who performed the procedure.

"My heart goes out to this dentist," Ommettress Travis said in a radio interview Thursday morning. "I'm not angry (at him). I'm praying for his family. I think we're both going through the same thing right now."

Riba was in contact with family several times to see how Diamond was doing, Travis said. Riba said he is praying for Brownridge's family, and he considers himself to be a responsible dentist.

"The day this incident happened, he did come to the hospital and seemed very remorseful," she said.

"I really don't think the dentist or his assistant knew (Diamond) wasn't breathing," Travis told WGCI in a radio interview.

Travis was tearful as she described her daughter.

"Diamond was a people person," Travis said. "She loved church so much, she loved the Lord. She was beautiful and was never unhappy. Diamond was an angel and she loved life itself."

Family described the 5-year-old as a charter school student who was full of life, receiving As and a few Bs, and as a little girl who loves church.

The public was invited to a Celebration Of Life concert for Diamond at 7:30 p.m. next Tuesday at The House of Hope. The concert is free.

"I told her 'Time to come home ... and go to church. Wake up. Daddy needs you at home,'" said her father, Paris, on Monday. "She's gotta come home. Her daddy loves her (and) misses her. She's my world."

Brownridge had been in a coma and on life support since the weekend dental treatment.

Family members have said Diamond received a triple dose of sedatives -- an oral agent, an intravenous drug and nitrous oxide gas -- during Saturday's exam at Little Angel Dental, a storefront clinic in the city's Little Village neighborhood.

Diamond went to the office on West 26th Street to have two cavities filled and her front, bottom teeth capped.

The girl's mother said she was asked to leave the room during the half-hour procedure. She said when she returned, her daughter was lying in the dental chair, not breathing.

Brownridge's family said they never planned to take her off life support, on which she remained for three days.

"I just want to know, what did they give my baby to make her just lose her life?" Travis asked.

NBC5's Amy Jacobson reported that the girl's family had been told that their daughter is brain dead and her vital organs are severely damaged.

"It's a wait-and-see type of game," said Travis earlier in the week. "They haven't offered us any hope, but we have that in ourselves -- we're a prayin' family."

Travis, who is a medical assistant at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, said she doesn't understand why she immediately noticed that her daughter was in distress and the dentist in charge of the procedure did not.

Travis said she was asked to leave the room while the dental work was done. When she returned, her daughter had no pulse and wasn't breathing.

"They did not monitor my daughter when she was having the work done," said the mother on Tuesday. "They also asked me to leave the room ... I didn't know why because I was going to sit there, but they said, 'You have to get out of the room.' ... At least if they weren't going to monitor her, I could have watched her."

NBC5's Kim Vatis reported Monday that the office had no heart monitor or blood pressure cuff -- instruments that are required by Illinois law when sedation is involved. NBC 5 has not been told if there was a dental anesthesiologist or if there was an anesthesiologist nurse in the room.

Last April, Diamond was sedated without incident at Children's Memorial when she had a broken arm. The family doesn't know what went wrong on Saturday and they want the health department to shut down Little Angel Dental.

The Chicago Health Department learned of the incident Sunday and is investigating.

In a statement released Wednesday night, the family said they wanted to thank everyone "for the outpouring of support and prayers that have come from all over the country."

**Previous Stories:**

- September 26, 2006: Lawyers To Possibly Sue 'Little Angel' Dentist

*Copyright 2006 by NBC5.com The Associated Press contributed to this report. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.*