

Report of the Meeting of the Dental Board of California

May 5-6, 2010

Prepared for the California Society of Pediatric Dentistry

The Dental Board of California met May 5-6, 2010, in South San Francisco. The following summarizes actions and issues coming before the Board pertinent to pediatric oral health

Registered Dental Assistant Written Examination Statistics

Last July 1, with the dissolution of the Committee on Dental Auxiliaries (COMDA), responsibility for the licensing of Registered Dental Assistants (RDA) passed to the Dental Board of California. Dental Board members in November expressed concern that the 2009 pass rate for the RDA written examination barely exceeded 50%. Utilizing a new written examination this year, the pass rate through April 23 was still only 52%, although the number of applicants taking the new written test as yet is too small for meaningful comparison. The Board directed staff to compile statistical information on the educational backgrounds and previous examination history of those taking the examination and will revisit the issue at its July meeting.

***Comment:** The low pass rate for the written examination discourages interest in registered dental assisting as a career choice and limits the number of those entering the field. Pediatric dentists and those general practitioners treating significant numbers of children are particularly affected. Presently, there are approximately 35,000 active RDAs to serve the needs of California's approximately 37,000 actively licensed dentists.*

Retroactive Fingerprinting Regulations

Currently the Dental Board of California along with other boards and bureaus of the Department of Consumer Affairs requires applicants for licensure to provide electronic fingerprint records for a criminal background check prior to issuance of the license. Although required since 1999, this licensure prerequisite was not until now retroactive. Licensees who obtained their licenses prior to 1999 have no electronic fingerprint records on file with the Department of Justice. As a result the Board has no access to the criminal history or automatic reporting of arrest records of any dentist or registered dental assistant category licensed prior to 1999.

To remedy this situation, the Board approved regulatory language in February to require the submission of electronic fingerprint records to the Department of Justice as a condition of license renewal for any licensee without such records on file. The licensee will pay the costs of furnishing the fingerprints and the Department of Justice search, estimated at \$50 to \$60. As another condition of license renewal, the licensee will be required to self-disclose whether, in the prior renewal cycle, he or she has been convicted of any violation of law in California or any other state or country, omitting traffic infractions under \$1,000.00, so long as the infraction does not involve alcohol, dangerous drugs, or controlled substances.

***Comment:** To facilitate compliance with the new requirement, CDA anticipates offering electronic fingerprinting and registration with the Department of Justice at their statewide meetings, beginning in San Francisco in the fall of this year. Dentists and registered dental assistants will be able to access DBC records to determine if they must comply with this requirement on their next licensure renewal, and if so, meet the requirement on the spot.*

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