

Report of the Meeting of the Dental Board of California

November 4-5, 2010

Prepared for the California Society of Pediatric Dentistry

The Dental Board of California met November 4-5, 2010, in Los Angeles. The following summarizes actions and issues coming before the Board pertinent to pediatric oral health

Foreign Trained Dentist Eligibility Requirements to Obtain a California Dental License

In May, a subcommittee of the Examination Committee was appointed to assess the eligibility requirements of foreign trained dentists completing ADA-recognized specialty training wishing to sit for a California licensing examination. Currently, California does not have a provision to allow dentists who graduate from a non-CODA accredited dental program to take a clinical examination for licensure unless they first complete a two-year pre-doctoral study known as the *International Dental Program (IDP)* at a CODA-accredited dental school. The subcommittee report recommended a convening of the of the specialty community and other stakeholders to evaluate various pathways to general or specialty licensure for graduates of non-CODA approved dental schools who have completed a CODA-approved post-doctoral program in an ADA-recognized specialty. The Examination Committee will take up this recommendation at their next meeting in February 2011.

Comment: California does not have a specialty license or permit and grants only the general dental license. If a mechanism were adopted to allow a foreign-trained dentist completing specialty training to sit for the California licensure examination, there would be no restriction on the scope of practice of that license. If the Board were to decide, instead, that the scope of practice of that license or permit should be restricted to the area of qualifying specialty training, then the Board would have to seek statutory change from the legislature establishing a specialty dental license or permit. CSPD will monitor this activity closely, opposing any effort to establish a dental specialty permit or license.

Conscious Sedation and Oral Conscious Sedation Review

In October of 2007 the American Dental Association House of Delegates adopted revised “Guidelines for the Use of Sedation and General Anesthesia by Dentists.” The Dental Board of California governs conscious sedation and oral conscious sedation through provisions of statute and regulation embodied in the Business and Professions Code. In July, a two-person subcommittee of the Board was charged with reviewing and reporting back to the Board on consistency of the new ADA Guidelines with current California statutes and regulations. That report, presented to the Board, found that “The scope of practice for dentists who provide sedation and anesthesia in California are generally consistent with the ADA educational guidelines, with some differences. The Subcommittee does not recommend any changes to scope of practice as defined by the present Dental Practice Act permit categories.”

The report went on to recommend “revision of the Dental Practice Act sections related to general anesthesia and conscious sedation to improve clarity and where possible consistency with nationally recognized guidelines, such as the ADA Guidelines. This will require both statutory and regulatory amendments [which should be] clearly stated and agreed to by all communities of interest.”

In this regard, the California Dental Association volunteered to assemble a stakeholder workgroup, attended by Dental Board-appointed representatives, which would evaluate current regulation and present proposed changes for consideration and possible action by the Board.

Comment: CSPD has proposed that Dr. David Rothman represent Pediatric Dentistry on that CDA work group.

Regulation of Mobile or Portable Dental Service Providers

At the request of the California Dental Association, and with the support of CSPD, the Board agreed to establish a two-member subcommittee to review California's current regulations governing mobile and portable dental service providers. The subcommittee will report back to the Board in February 2011 as to the necessity of proposing regulatory reform to ensure accountability and public safety.

Comment: Current regulation is lax. CSPD supports measures to assure emergency and follow-up care, supply culturally and linguistically appropriate information to patients and parents on the providers and services rendered, afford access to dental records, and supply information on how and where to file a complaint or inquiry should that be necessary.

Review and Update of the Material Safety Data Sheets

The Dental Restorative Materials Fact Sheet (DMFS) was last revised in 2004. At its November meeting, the Board appointed a two-member subcommittee to determine and report back to the Board in February 2011 if revision of the current DMFS is necessary and warranted.

Comment: At the meeting, the Consumers for Dental Choice testified that the current DMFS "massively understates the 'risks' [of amalgam's mercury content]" and that " numerous changes have occurred [since the last revision] that require the Board to strengthen the warnings about mercury in the fact sheet."

Registered Dental Assistant Written Examination Statistics

In July of 2009, 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. The 2009 pass rate for the RDA written examination barely exceeded 50%. Utilizing this year a new written examination administered by the Board, the pass rate has increased to 61%.

Comment: While an improvement, the still low pass rate for the written examination discourages interest in registered dental assisting as a career choice and limits the number of persons entering the field. Pediatric dentists and those general practitioners treating significant numbers of children are particularly affected. Approximately 2,000 candidates take the RDA examination annually. The pass rate for the practical examination approaches 80%.

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