



**Dental Assisting Committee  
Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, August 11, 2011**

1625 North Market Blvd., 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Hearing Room, S-102  
Sacramento, CA 95834

**Members Present:**

Judith Forsythe, RDA, Chair  
Bruce Whitcher, DDS, Vice Chair  
Fran Burton, Public Member  
Luis Dominicis, DDS  
Huong Le, DDS  
Thomas Olinger, DDS

**Members Absent:**

**Staff Present:**

Richard DeCuir, Executive Officer  
Kim A. Trefry, Enforcement Chief  
Karen Fischer, Administrative Analyst  
Sarah Wallace, Legislative/Regulatory Analyst  
Linda Byers, Executive Assistant  
Kristy Shellans, DCA Senior Staff Counsel  
Greg Salute, Deputy Attorney General  
Dawn Dill, Dental Assisting Program Manager  
Tanya Webber, Dental Assisting Program Analyst  
Georgetta Coleman-Griffith, Special Consultant

**ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM**

Ms. Judith Forsythe, Chair, called the committee meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. and established a quorum.

**DA 1 - Approval of the May 19, 2011 Dental Assisting Committee Meeting Minutes**

M/S/C (Whitcher/Olinger) to approve the May 19, 2011, Dental Assisting Committee meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**DA 2 – Update Regarding Status of Dental Assisting Programs and Courses**

Tanya Webber, Dental Assisting Program Analyst, reported that the Board has not had the authority to approve or deny applications for registered dental assistant programs, registered dental assistant in extended functions programs, infection control courses, orthodontic assisting permit courses, or dental sedation assistant permit courses since January 1, 2011 when the authorizing statutes were repealed. Ms. Webber reported that there are currently eighteen applications being reviewed, including eight registered dental assistant program applications pending review with a consultant, as well as six infection control course applications and four orthodontic assistant permit course applications that have been reviewed and are in the process of being notified of deficiencies. These applications cannot be approved

until the Board's new regulations relating the Dental Assisting Educational Programs and Courses become effective.

Ms. Webber noted that there are a total of thirty-three applications currently under review including the eighteen applications pending regulatory authority, and fifteen applications for radiation safety courses, coronal polishing courses, pit and fissure sealant courses, and ultrasonic scaling courses that are pending responses from the course providers to address deficiencies identified during application review. Ms. Webber reported that the average turnaround time for application review is approximately thirty to forty-five days. Richard DeCuir, Executive Officer, stated that this is a great improvement from when the dental assisting program first came under the Board and the average turnaround time was seven to eight months and there were eighty-six applications pending review, some of which had been pending in excess of one-and-a-half to two years. Ms. Georgetta Coleman-Griffith, Special Consultant, clarified that in most cases the typical turnaround time for application review has been approximately two weeks, while a thirty to forty day turnaround time is typical for an application in which deficiencies have been identified.

Sarah Wallace, Legislative and Regulatory Analyst, reported that the Board's Dental Assisting Educational Program and Course proposed regulations had been submitted to the Department of Consumer Affairs on May 26<sup>th</sup> and had been granted a ninety day extension of time to submit the final rulemaking to the Office of Administrative Law. She reported that the file had been approved by the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Secretary of the State and Consumer Services Agency and was currently pending review at the Department of Finance. The regulatory file is due to the Office of Administrative Law by August 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **DA 3 – Update on Examination Dates and Sites for the Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) Practical Exam**

Ms. Forsythe reported that this item was previously discussed during the Examination Committee meeting.

Dawn Dill, Dental Assisting Program Manager, added that while looking for examination sites it is important to take into consideration the number of candidates in the examination area and the time of year that the site is being utilized. She stated that August is a time of year when all programs have students graduating. Ms. Dill stated that after the August examination, she will run geographical reports based on where the candidates are from to get a better idea of how many candidates travel from different areas in California to assist in determining what other examination sites the Board should consider utilizing to minimize traveling costs for examination candidates.

### **DA 4 – Update on Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) Written Examination. Presentation by Tracy Montez, PhD, Applied Measurement Services**

Dr. Tracy Montez reported that the new contract for another round in the registered dental assistant written examination development began in March. She is currently working on moving test items into an item banking software that is used by most boards and bureaus within Department of Consumer Affairs so that the items and historical information can be maintained in a secure manner. Dr. Montez reported that the first examination development workshop was held in July and a second workshop had been scheduled for September.

Dr. Montez provided the Board with a handout regarding some examination topics that had been discussed in the past. She reported that the examination content areas had been ordered

by those that are more difficult or challenging for candidates. She reminded the Board that the examination does not have pass points for each content area; rather there is a pass point for the overall examination. Those areas that are most challenging for candidates relate to infection control and restorative and aesthetic dentistry; there seems to be some basic infection control procedures with which candidates are struggling. She reported that from a statistical perspective, the reliability of the exam is high and the difficulty of the exam is consistent with the passing rate. The passing scores demonstrate continuity with the exam. The range of scores and the sample is based on 2,130 candidates that have taken the exam.

Dr. Montez explained that the Board previously expressed interest in seeing statistics regarding the correlation between passing rates and candidate exam qualification. Dr. Montez was able to obtain an ad hoc report that enabled her to crunch some numbers based on a sample of 3,830 candidates from across 2009 and 2010 examinations. She explained that the sample is a combination of candidates from before the exam was revised and after the exam was revised. Of the sample, 65% qualified for the exam through graduation from a California board-approved program (ACE), 2.2% qualified for the exam through completion of a non-approved educational program (MEO), and 32% qualified for the exam through the completion of 15 months of work experience (OJT). Of those candidates that qualified through ACE, 42% passed the examination. Of those candidates that qualified through MEO, 1 % passed the examination. Of those candidates that qualified through OJT, 15% passed the examination. Some Board members expressed confusion with the statistics as presented. Richard DeCuir, Executive Officer, requested statistics be provided that correlate the qualifications for examination to the pass rates for the first, second, and third time the examination is taken by a candidate. Dr. Witcher requested that the practical examination be included in the comparison.

Dr. Earl Johnson, member of the public, expressed concern that people taking the examination do not know how the exam is weighted and that the exam is currently a disadvantage to those candidates qualifying through on the job training. He believes there is a disadvantage because those who qualify through educational programs are taught the material on the test.

Dr. Montez reminded the Board that licensed registered dental assistants were involved in the development of the examination and it is defensible in terms of the content tested and the way it is weighted. However, Dr. Montez noted that candidates qualifying through OJT are not exposed to the same content and variety of training material as those who go through the educational process. She is looking at how to assist OJT candidates to better prepare for the examination. Some of the current issues being explored include revising the reference list located in the PSI RDA Candidate Information Bulletin to more accurately reflect primary textbooks used to educate and train future RDAs. Additionally, Dr. Montez is exploring the possibility of providing feedback reports to candidates failing the RDA written examination, and creating a comprehensive RDA candidate handbook or information bulletin. It was noted that an occupational analysis may need to be completed in the future for this exam.

#### **DA 5 – Update from Subcommittee Regarding the Survey of RDAEF Licensees for the Purpose of Analysis of Workforce and Barrier to Care Issues**

Denise Johnson, Assistant Executive Officer, reported that a survey was mailed to the Program Directors of 3 RDAEF educational programs on June 8, 2011. Only one response was received and follow-up letters were sent. Karen Wyant, Dental Assisting Alliance, asked what the purpose of the survey was and why all RDAEF licensees were not surveyed. Judy Forsythe, RDA, clarified that the purpose of the survey was to

determine where the RDAEF's are practicing and analyze the workforce. Ms. Johnson clarified that at the May 2011 meeting, during the meeting, Ms. Joan Greenfield, Program Director for J Productions and Sacramento City College, commented that she was in contact with former students and could provide statistics for Northern California. Based on Ms. Greenfield's comment, the Board felt it would be most appropriate to send the survey out to the RDAEF educational programs to gather relevant survey data.

**Public Comment:**

There was no further public comment.

**Adjournment:**

The committee adjourned at 1:32 p.m.