



**Examination Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, February 23, 2012**  
Holiday Inn on the Bay, 1355 North Harbor Drive  
San Diego, CA 92101

**Members Present**

Stephen Casagrande, DDS, Chair  
Steven Morrow, DDS, Vice Chair  
John Bettinger, DDS  
Rebecca Downing, Public Member  
Judy Forsythe, RDA  
Suzanne McCormick, DDS

**Members Absent**

**Staff Present**

Richard DeCuir, Executive Officer  
Denise Johnson, Assistant Executive Officer  
Kim Trefry, Enforcement Chief  
Teri Lane, Supervising Investigator I  
Sarah Wallace, Legislative and Regulatory Analyst  
Karen Fischer, Associate Analyst  
Linda Byers, Executive Assistant  
Kristy Shellans, DCA Senior Staff Counsel  
Greg Salute, Deputy Attorney General

**Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum:**

Dr. Casagrande, Chair, called the committee meeting to order at 2:11 p.m. Roll was called and a quorum established.

**EX 1 – Approval of the November 7, 2011 Examination Committee Meeting Minutes**

M/S/C (Morrow/Forsythe) to approve the November 7, 2011 Examination Committee meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**EX 2 – Dental Assisting Program Examination Statistics**

Denise Johnson, Assistant Executive Officer, gave an overview of the statistics and reported that the RDA written exam statistics are not yet available due to insufficient numbers to compile the data. Dr. Casagrande commented that overall the numbers are going up showing improvement. Dr. Morrow pointed out that there is a 6-8 point percentage differential between the results of exams taken in Northern California compared to Southern California. Judy Forsythe commented that it's always been that way and no explanation has been found. Dr. Casagrande stated that he is still puzzled as to why a quarter of the candidates fail the Law and Ethics exam. Ms. Forsythe stated that the Law and Ethics exam is less than 2 years old with many duty changes. The sampling of data does not contain enough candidates to give a fair, accurate assessment of the true results. Ms. Forsythe stated that there has been continued improvement. Dr. Lori Gagliardi, CADAT, commented that the Law and Ethics exam is not broken down by candidates who have gone through an approved dental assisting program and candidates who only have on the job training (OJT). Generally speaking the candidates that go through an approved training course have higher scores than those with only OJT. Dr. Gagliardi asked if there was a way to break out the statistics into those candidates that went through an approved program and those that were OJT. Ms. Johnson stated that she can look into whether or not that can be done. Dr. Casagrande stated that the test itself should be looked at to be sure it isn't more difficult than the test the

dentists take? Dr. Morrow asked if there were multiple versions of the test for re-takers. Dr. Casagrande answered yes, there are multiple versions of the test and the content is scrambled. Richard DeCuir, Executive Officer, stated that he would take a look at the exam and bring back some answers at the next Board meeting.

### **EX 3 – Update on Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) Written Examination**

Mr. DeCuir stated that at the time the Board packet was compiled, no statistics were available. The company developing the test, Applied Measurements, had done a Beta test of the first 100 examinations but they do not release the scores. They reviewed the results to determine which questions are appropriate and valid and which may need to be revised or discarded. The results of this first testing are a pass rate of 60%. Mr. DeCuir reiterated that this is the first time this test has been given and historically, the first time is the lowest pass rate. Dr. Casagrande stated that he is concerned that we are inadvertently hindering candidates from getting a license. He asked that an exit survey be done with all of the examination candidates to see how the students feel about the test. Whether it was fair, relevant, what they studied and if there is a problem with English as a Second Language (ESL) students understanding the questions. Dr. McCormick asked if we can break down the applicants into those who were trained in an approved program and those with OJT. She stated that if we are going to do an exit survey we should include this information so that we can discover what, if any, artificial barriers impede success on these examinations. Mr. DeCuir stated that it has been some time since an Occupational Analysis has been done which looks at the relevancy of what is being done in the office compared to what is being tested. Dr. Morrow pointed out that in dental education they are finding more and more students with English as a secondary language. The educational community has found that these students score much higher on oral exams than written exams because they don't always understand the question in the written form. Dr. Morrow suggested also asking if they understand the questions. Tamara McNeely, President/Director San Joaquin Valley College, stated that it is also relevant to ask not only if they graduated from an approved program but also how long it has been since these candidates graduated. Dr. Casagrande stated that he would like to ask the candidates if the material that is available for study on the web is easily accessible and current. Dr. Gagliardi stated that the Board posts the results of the RDA Written and Practical exam for the candidates from each approved school so it would be easy to discern how many candidates graduated from an approved program versus those that were OJT with these statistics.

### **EX 4 – Western Regional Examination Board (WREB) Statistics and Update**

Dr. Suzanne McCormick reported WREB statistics from their Executive Officer Barbara Cole; currently there are 17 member states with Illinois being the latest to join in January 2012. There was discussion about having WREB along with other testing agencies such as SERT come and talk to the board. The overall pass rate for the WREB exam is 81.2%. 81.9% pass on the first attempt and 3.5% never pass. A contract has been signed with OPES to perform the regularly scheduled evaluation of the WREB exam. Mr. DeCuir will report back once the evaluation is complete. The next meeting of the Exam Review Board is July 18, 2012, Dr. McCormick will attend on behalf of the Board. Dr. Casagrande asked if we are represented on the WREB Board. Dr. McCormick stated that each member state is represented on the Exam Review Board but only a few are represented on the Board of Directors. California represents 30-40% of the total number of WREB exam attempts but is not on WREB's Board of Directors. Dr. Casagrande suggested that since California represents such a large percentage of exam attempts, we should look into getting on that Board. Dr. McCormick will look into what it takes to get on WREB's Board of Directors.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dr. Earl Johnson encouraged the Board to keep its mind open because he thinks universal licensure across the United States is going to happen sooner or later so we should be looking in that direction. There was no additional public comment.

The committee adjourned at 2:33 p.m.