

**Report of the
Meeting of the Dental Board of California,
Examination Committee
December 5, 2005
San Francisco, California**

This report summarizes the activities of the Dental Board of California's Examination Committee meeting of December 5, 2005. More information may be obtained by calling Edmund Carolan in the Public Policy Division at (916) 554-4987 or sending an e-mail to edmund.carolan@cda.org.



Examination Committee:

Members Present: SooHoo (Chair), Mito, Seldin
Members Absent: Kaye

The meeting was called to order and it was established that a quorum was not present as Dr. Mito was the only member present. Drs. SooHoo and Seldin arrived after the meeting was called to order and upon their arrival a quorum was established.

Discussion of the Segmented License Examination (SLE) Concept: While the agenda for the meeting listed several agenda items related to the segmented license examination concept, the SLE discussion flowed over the entire SLE concept rather than specific agenda items related to the SLE. To date, a joint workgroup made up of representative(s) from the Dental Board, dental schools and California Dental Association (CDA) have been meeting to discuss the issue of developing an SLE. Today's meeting was called because the workgroup had reached a point where the input and advice of the Committee (and the Board) was needed, in order to move the issue forward.

Dr. Mito, who had previously served on the above mentioned workgroup before he removed himself when he was appointed to the Dental Board, asked Dr. Bertolami, workgroup member and dean of UCSF Dental School, to please provide an overview of the SLE concept and why the workgroup was trying to establish an SLE pilot.

Dr. Bertolami noted that an SLE format would allow a student, who was certified by the school to be ready for the exam, to be tested on the three procedures currently offered on the state exam, (perio, amalgam, and composite) as part the school's curriculum. Dr. Bertolami stressed that one of the driving forces behind this concept is the ethical dilemma of using live patients for examinations and the need to eliminate the "trafficking" of patients that currently takes place. Today a dental student might withhold care to a patient because the student has found an "ideal" patient for the student's licensure exam. The student will then make

arrangements to treat the patient as part of the student's exam rather than at the time when had come in for care. In addition, currently there is not a system in place to ensure that the patient who may receive sub par care during the current clinical examination process receives proper follow up care. With an SLE process, the patient would be a patient of the school's dental clinic. Therefore, the clinic would retain responsibly for ensuring that the patient receives care at an acceptable level regardless if the care is within the examination process.

Board staff made it immediately clear that without legislative authority, an SLE pilot could not be used for the purpose of qualifying for licensure in California. The key reason that an SLE pilot could not be used for the purpose of licensure is because such a process or exam would not be available to all students seeking a California dental license. Therefore, a student who fails the traditional exam could claim that he/she was not given the same opportunities to obtain licensure as his/her colleagues that took an SLE process. Dr. Bertolami noted that the workgroup realized this fact and instead was moving forward with the pilot to test the feasibility and logistics of establishing an SLE process.

Ms. Linda Cooper from the Office of Examination Review, Department of Consumer Affairs stated that the Dental Board had recently been given the completed occupational analysis for dentistry. Because the analysis does indicate that the practice of dentistry has changed since the last occupational analysis was completed, it is likely that there will need to be changes made to the current examination. Discussion ensued over whether an SLE pilot should take place before a thorough review of the occupational analysis is completed given that changes to the exam may be needed. However, it was agreed that an SLE pilot would be testing logistics, process and feasibility, not the specifics of any given dental procedure or the validity of the exam. Therefore, waiting for any changes brought about by the occupational analysis would not be necessary in order to test a SLE pilot.

An additional issue that was discussed was the legality, logistics and cost of using the Board's examiners. Several of the examiners in the room raised the issue of how and when the examiners would be calibrated and how many examiners would be used on the day of exams? The committee saw no reason why the Board's current examiners could not be used for the pilot, but it was made clear that funding for the examiners could not be provided by the Board. No decision for calibration of examiners for this test was made, but someone suggested that this pilot serve as a pilot for the calibration process.

The Committee agreed that they would recommend to the Board that the Board continuing working with CDA and UCSF on this issue and provided technical assistance to this pilot project so along as the integrity of the existing California dental examination is not jeopardized.

Discussion of Regulatory Change to 16 CCR, Section 1033 to allow dental students and Dental Hygienists as Assistants on the Dental Licensing Examination: The discussion focused in on the fact that dental students and

hygienists are allowed to assist on select parts of the Western Regional Examining Board (WREB) exam which is now recognized as a valid exam for licensure in California. However, only dental assistants are currently allowed to help students on the California exam. This issue is being raised because such a disparity in testing process could create an inequity for students. Dr. Terlet noted that when she served on the Board, the Board tried unsuccessfully to modify this regulation. However, they received a legal opinion that they had no authority for such a change. However, the Board's current legal counsel stated that she is not aware of any law that would restrict the Board from adopting such a regulation. The Committee agreed to take the issue to the full-Board for a vote.

After seeking any additional public comments, the Committee adjourned.