

Legislative Update – October 2017

RDA Practical Exam

Well, the hot topic continues to be the RDA Practical Exam. The Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES, which is a division of the Department of Consumer Affairs), hired by the Dental Board of CA to do the Occupational Analysis for the RDA and RDAEF, came to the August Dental Board/Dental Assisting Committee meeting with their report regarding the Practical Exam. Rather than bring multiple alternatives to the Board, they brought forward only one option: ***that the dentist would sign off on the skills for an RDA candidate, verifying that they have the required skill set of an RDA and those skills are enough to qualify that person as an RDA and they should be issued a license.*** Not only did they bring forward an option that was not previously noticed, they further urged the Board to take a vote on their recommendation that same day. The Dental Board considered this, but after much discussion and listening to stakeholders, the DBC and DAC voted to eliminate the Practical Exam, but appoint a subcommittee to investigate multiple alternatives to the exam and bring those recommendations back to the DBC/DAC for a decision. That subcommittee has met, though we have no further information regarding their recommendations. There was discussion by the Board about having workshops that stakeholders can attend to discuss alternatives to the practical. That feedback and input would be forwarded to the subcommittee to aid in their recommendation. We have been noticed that the workshop will be held on Friday, October 13th in Sacramento and it is our understanding that the alternatives developed by the subcommittee would be available the week prior to the meeting for stakeholders to review and provide feedback to the subcommittee at the workshop. Check the DBC website for the agenda/info.

So the question is: what happened since the original report of OPES? Their previous report stated that some type of practical exam was indicated in order to maintain patient safety. However, that position has now been reversed. The question rises: why did the OPES have a change of their opinion, and what factors contributed to their change of opinion? The practical exam was originally created to provide for and to try to ensure better consumer protection. If there is no practical exam in place, does that matter to the public and the consumer? Does that matter to practitioners? Does that matter to *US and our profession*? OR...is this the time to consider mandatory education and eliminate the unlicensed DA? Should we consider the only way to an RDA is through a state or nationally approved educational program? We need to hear from you...

Having dentists determine the competency of RDA applicants is problematic for a number of reasons and CDAA will be working with the dental community on alternatives to assure that those seeking RDA licensure have the skills needed to ensure patient safety. However, the Dental Board is feeling the pressure of time with this decision. If the Dental Board has no replacement for the Practical Exam by Jan 2020, we revert to the Practical Exam. If they are going to get something in place, it takes time, so this decision will be made 'quickly'. If you have thoughts and opinions on this, I would encourage you to attend the November DBC/DAC meeting in Sacramento November 2-3, 2017. As always, we would love to hear your thoughts, ideas and opinions – contact us at claudiapohl@cdaaweb.org.

RDA Written Exam

The OPES has also rewritten the Exam Plan for the RDA Written Exam based on the Occupational Analysis and is being combined with the Law & Ethics Exam. The Exam Plan can be found at http://www.dbc.ca.gov/formspubs/rda_law_ethics_combined.pdf