



**EXAMINATION COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, May 17, 2012**  
Embassy Suites SFO Airport Waterfront  
150 Anza Blvd., Burlingame, CA 94010

**Members Present**

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

**Members Absent**

Judy Forsythe, RDA

**Staff Present**

Richard DeCuir, Executive Officer  
Denise Johnson, Assistant Executive Officer  
Kim Trefry, Enforcement Chief  
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 3:54 p.m. Roll was called and a quorum established.

**EX 1 – Approval of the February 23, 2012 Examination Committee Meeting Minutes**

M/S/C (Bettinger/Morrow) to approve the February 23, 2012 Examination Committee Meeting Minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Dr. Casagrande reported that the RDA pass rate is still low. Dr. Morrow commented that we went over these statistics in the Dental Assisting Council meeting. Ms. Johnson stated that for this meeting only the statistics were put in both committees because this is the Council's first meeting. Dr. Casagrande stated that he thinks the Examination Committee and the Dental Assisting Council should work together on this item. Dr. Morrow commented that the Council members are the ones closest to the Assisting Community and they should be the ones to evaluate the statistics and report to the Board their opinions and recommendations. Ms. Shellans commented that sometimes when there are cross-over issues, committees will meet jointly. That way there can be interaction between the two committees. The committee's would vote separately on any issues brought forward. Dr. Casagrande stated that he would like to have a joint committee meeting with the Dental Assisting Council at the next Board meeting. Dr. Guy Atchison commented that he is more concerned about the 14% pass rate for RDAEF candidates. Dr. Casagrande stated that the main reason for that number was the small sample of only 7 candidates. Dr. Johnson feels that the RDAEF duties are a polyglot of different

things. He would like to see the duties broken up so that candidates could take classes and be licensed to perform the duties they will use in their particular office setting.

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

Dr. Casagrande reported that Tracy Montez, PhD, of Applied Measurement Services, provided a final report regarding the RDA written exam. Dr. Morrow commented that he thinks that we should look into putting a ceiling on the number of times a candidate can re-take the test before remediation is mandatory. Dr. McCormick asked what resources are available for the candidates to study for the exam. Ms. Johnson stated that when a candidate applies to take the exam, PSI sends out a candidate packet containing information regarding the areas to be tested and the resources used for developing the examination questions. Dr. McCormick commented that looking at the low pass rate for the Law and Ethics exam, she thinks that either the exam is flawed or the information resources needed to study for the exam are not readily available. Dr. Casagrande speculated that the questions on the exam may not be in sync with what is being taught and studied. Ms. Shellans stated that the tests are psychometrically formulated to the Dental Practice Act. They are testing for minimum competency for our practice license. The exams are psychometrically tested and legally defensible. Katie Dawson commented that we shouldn't be blaming the exams. The exams are created to make sure that the candidates are prepared so that the consumers are protected by only licensing individuals that are qualified to do the job. Dr. Morrow pointed out that the only pathway to become a dentist is to go to dental school as with hygienists they must go to school but RDA's can obtain a license without having any formal training through an approved school. RDA's are the only licentiates with multiple pathways to licensure and they are the only ones that have a concerning pass/fail rate. He stated that he thinks we are wasting our time looking at the exam being faulty. We need to look at the methodologies of training. Dr. Morrow asked for the statistics to be separated into on-the-job trained candidates and those that go through an approved school so that we can really compare and see if there is a significant difference. Michelle Jawad, an instructor of Law and Ethics and trainer of RDA's commented that what she has personally seen in her practice is that the biggest barrier to success on the Law and Ethics exam is comprehension for those whose first language is not English. She finds that some of the things we take for granted like common sense, professionalism, principles, and ethics are not concepts that some of these ESL students comprehend easily. Dr. Tom Baker commented that he would like to see the dental offices get more involved. The RDA's in his office said it was a daunting process. He stated that he would like to see dental offices taking a bigger role in mentoring for the Law and Ethics examination and insuring that their RDA's succeed. Dr. Baker would like the examination process reviewed as many of his Assistants have found the process challenging.

### **EX 4 – Update on the Changes to the National Board Dental Examination**

In April Dr. Morrow attended the American Association of Dental Boards Meeting in Chicago. He gave a report regarding the upcoming changes to the National Board Dental Examination including the integration of the current National Board Dental Examination (NBDE) Parts I and II. M/S/C (Casagrande/Bettinger) to have the Dental Assisting Council take over all of the RDA examinations and statistics and meet jointly with the Examination Committee at the next meeting to report their findings. The motion passed unanimously.

There was no further public comment.

The committee adjourned at 4:52 p.m.