

DENTAL HYGIENE BOARD
FINAL STATEMENT OF REASONS

Subject Matter of Proposed Regulations: Requirements for RDH Educational Programs.

Section(s) Affected: Section 1105 of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR).

Updated Information

The Informative Digest and Initial Statement of Reasons are included in the rulemaking file and incorporated as though set forth herein.

The information contained therein is updated as follows: No changes have been made to warrant a change to the initial statement of reasons as contained in the original notice for section 1105.

No public hearing was originally set for this proposal and none was requested. Board staff noticed the proposed rulemaking on August 5, 2021, with a 45-day comment period ending on September 21, 2021. The Board received one comment on August 5, 2021.

The Board reviewed the comments at its November 20, 2021, meeting. At this meeting, a member of the public offered an additional comment. The Board approved the responses to the comments without further amendments to the text, and advanced the proposed rulemaking.

Local Mandate

A mandate is not imposed on local agencies or school districts.

Objections or Recommendations/Responses

On August 5, 2021, the Board received an email from Cyndee Johnson (Comments) on the Board's proposed amendments to section 1105. Below are the Board's responses to the comments made therein.

Comment A-1

Comment Summary:

This comment questions as to why the Board has considered lowering the standards of education requirements to enter into a critically important, healthcare provider role.

Additionally, Ms. Johnson states as a business advisor to the profession and as a clinical hygienist, she has, and continues to witness, horrific liability to patient health and well-being due to substandard preventive care. Additionally, she states having worked in the educational realm of dentistry in clinical settings, she has been astonished by the lack of preparedness each year's graduate hygienists bring to the profession.

Response:

The Board acknowledges the comment, and makes no revisions to the text based thereon.

The Board is not lowering the standards of educational requirements to enter dental hygiene educational programs (DHEPs). The Board determined to allow a DHEP to accept prerequisite biomedical science coursework utilizing educational institution-approved alternative instruction methods utilized during the period of the state of emergency. Alternative coursework methods would include online tutorials, webinars, or hybrid combination of online and in-person instruction with faculty to provide an appropriate substitution for traditional “wet lab” instruction.

California secondary educational institutions are regulated by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, the Accrediting Commission for Schools Western Association of Schools and Colleges (recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the United States Department of Education), and the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education. These agencies assure that colleges and their approved coursework have clearly defined objectives appropriate to higher education and oversee established conditions under which achievement of the required goals of the coursework can reasonably be expected. Based on these agencies’ stringent oversight, the Board determined that these agencies will ensure educational institutions provide comparable and acceptable coursework during a state of emergency.

Accordingly, the Board is making no changes to the proposed regulations in response to this comment.

Comment A-2

Comment Summary:

This comment states by encouraging lower standards in an effort to remove barriers to entry, patient’s lives are at stake. Ms. Johnson states she is in dental practices several days per week where she witnesses dental hygienists who have little to no knowledge of the importance of the oral-systemic link, health ramifications of chronic infectious disease, medications and their interactions, or “big-picture” prevention.

Response:

The Board incorporates by reference its response to Comment A-1 above.

Comment A-3

Comment Summary:

This comment states to have a downgrade in educational requirements during an "emergency" is to be completely blind to the much greater emergency lowering the educational standards will promote. Additionally, Ms. Johnson provides anecdotal data regarding oral diseases.

Response:

The Board incorporates by reference its response to Comment A-1 above.

Comment A-4

Comment Summary:

This comment questions as to why the Board would promote and "dumb down" a critically important field of healthcare. Additionally, Ms. Johnson states the emergency is "what is NOT taking place in dentistry" but lowering the educational requirements "is a killer." Ms. Johnson states new graduates are beneath what was once basic-level dental hygiene and there are other professions which require fewer biological courses. She requested for the Board to act responsibly when it comes to patient health.

Response:

The Board incorporates by reference its response to Comment A-1 above

Consideration of Alternatives

No reasonable alternative which was considered or that has otherwise been identified and brought to the attention of the Bureau would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which it was proposed or would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the adopted regulations or would be more cost effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law. The Board incorporates by reference the alternatives identified in its Initial Statement of Reasons and did not receive any comments that altered its findings.