

Iowa Dental Board

The Iowa Dental Board meeting was held Friday, October 1, 2021 via Zoom. The usual attendees included representatives from the Iowa Dental Association (IDA); the Iowa Dental Hygiene Association (IDHA); a representative from the Iowa Department of Public Health; a representative from Delta Dental of Iowa; a hygiene educator; and licensees.

The former executive director, Jill Stuecker, has returned to the board and reassumed her position as executive director. The Iowa Dental Association expressed their appreciation of her return.

The dental board acknowledged the upcoming retirement of Dr. Bob Russell, the dental director at the Iowa Department of Public Health. The dental board complimented and thanked Dr. Russell for his many years of service in public health and his commitment to the oral health of Iowans.

The Commission on Dental Competency Assessments (CDCA) presented an update on the merger with Western Region Examining Board (WREB). The goal of the merged entity is "to administer a single national psychomotor performance exam to simplify the process for obtaining licensure for dental and hygiene candidates and provide maximum portability." The merged entity will administer the ADEX examination in 49 states, District of Columbia, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico. Examinations will include manikin, patient, and computer based formats to meet state board requirements.

Additional information about licensure portability and none patient based examinations was presented by Dr. Brian Howe, Director of Clinics, University of Iowa College of Dentistry. He is a member of the Coalition of Modernizing Dental Licensure (CMDL). The goal of the CMDL is licensure portability and none patient based examinations. The CMDL will share information with states about licensure through state compacts.

An update on the Iowa Practitioner Review Committee (IPRC) was given. The goal of the IPRC is to keep affected dental practitioners practicing with therapy. Dental practitioners with health problems such as substance abuse, disabilities, and mental health issues that affect their ability to provide dental care may self-report to the IPRC. The IPRC includes a former IPRC participant, psychologist,

psychiatrist, and medical providers. Dental licensees with issues that may compromise their ability to provide dental care must self-report to the IPRC to be considered for oversight. The dental board does not make referrals of licensees to the IPRC. If the dental board receives a complaint about a licensee with a health issue affecting the licensee's ability to provide dental care, the licensee is not eligible for IPRC oversight for personal therapy.

Regarding staff shortages of dental assistants and hygienists, Donnella Miller, a hygiene educator presented issues involving staff shortages. There is not one standardized educational program for the dental community college programs to follow. Each dental program at each community college is unique. The programs sometimes lack dentist adjunct faculty and lack dentist office opportunities for assisting and hygiene student in-office training. Teaching college facility expansion is needed. Funding for facility expansion is not available. The dental board will form a committee to study the problem and consider suggestions.

The dental board will continue to support the vaccination bill in the legislature. The senate and the medical profession are obstacles to vaccination by dentists. The IDA stated that there is very little interest by Iowa dentists to provide vaccinations due to the logistics of vaccination storage, record keeping, reimbursement from medical insurers, and information sharing with medical providers.

Lastly, there are numerous questions from licensees about expanded functions and orthodontics. The board will form a committee to study the issue.

The next dental board meeting is scheduled in January 27-28, 2022. Please consider attending the meeting. The meeting will be via Zoom which will make it accessible to all dentists in the state. The dental board respects and appreciates the attendance and involvement of dental licensees. Our presence and voices absolutely, positively make a difference. Please, please attend and support dentistry with you presence.

Dr. Stephen R. Thies
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