
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1130
Author: Berman (D)
Amended: 6/23/25 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE BUS., PROF. & ECON. DEV. COMMITTEE: 9-0, 6/30/25
AYES: Ashby, Choi, Archuleta, Arreguín, Menjivar, Smallwood-Cuevas,
Strickland, Umberg, Weber Pierson
NO VOTE RECORDED: Grayson, Niello

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/29/25
AYES: Caballero, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0, 5/27/25 (Consent) - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Dentistry: outreach and support program

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill requires the Dental Board of California (DBC) to partner with educators, dental schools, and community-based organizations to provide outreach and support to students from underserved communities in pursuing education and licensure in the field of dentistry.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Dental Practice Act which provides for the licensure of dentists and other dental health professionals. (Business and Professions Code (BPC) §§ 1600 et seq.)
- 2) Establishes the DBC to administer and enforce the Dental Practice Act. (BPC § 1601.1(a))

- 3) Establishes the California Dental Corps Loan Repayment Program to provide grants to qualifying dentists who agree to work for at least three years in a clinic or dental practice located in a dentally underserved area, or in which at least 50 percent of patients are from a dentally underserved population. (BPC §§ 1970 – 1976)
- 4) Requires The Board of Registered Nursing, the Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians of the State of California, the Physician Assistant Board, and the Respiratory Care Board of California to collect workforce data from their respective licensees and registrants for future workforce planning at least biennially. at the time of electronic license or registration renewal for those boards that utilize electronic renewals for licensees or registrants. Requires other health care professional licensing boards like DBC to request workforce data from their respective licensees for future workforce planning at least biennially. Requires each board, or the Department of Consumer Affairs on its behalf to provide the individual licensee and registrant data to the Department of Health Care Access and Information. (BPC § 502)

This bill:

- 1) Requires DBC to develop, implement, and maintain an outreach and support program to recruit students from underserved communities in the state to pursue education and licensure in the field of dentistry. Mandates that the program:
 - a) Coordinate with public high schools, community colleges, universities, dental schools, and community-based organizations to identify and engage students from underserved communities with an interest in oral health care professions.
 - b) Provide accessible information to interested students regarding the educational pathway to becoming a licensed dentist in California, including undergraduate requirements, dental school admissions, licensure examinations, and application procedures.
 - c) Offer guidance, directly or through partnerships, on preparing for and applying to accredited dental schools, including information on prerequisite coursework, application timelines, personal statement writing, and interview preparation.

- d) Provide assistance and information regarding the California Dental Corps Loan Repayment Program established pursuant to Section 1970 and other available financial aid or scholarship opportunities for students pursuing dental education or entering the dental workforce in underserved communities.
 - e) Conduct at least two outreach activities per year, such as webinars, in-person presentations, or resource fairs, focused on students from underserved communities.
 - f) Develop and maintain a publicly available webpage containing all of the information required under this section in a clear and comprehensible format in both English and Spanish.
- 2) Authorizes DBC to collaborate with relevant state and federal agencies, health professional organizations, and accredited educational institutions to carry out the duties of the program and requires DBC to provide a summary of actions taken pursuant to this section as part of its report to the Legislature through the sunset review process.

Background

DBC is responsible for licensing and regulating dental professionals in California. DBC licenses an estimated 112,000 dental professionals, of which approximately 43,500 are dentists; 46,000 are registered dental assistants (RDAs); and 2,300 are registered dental assistants in extended functions (RDAEFs). The DBC is also responsible for setting the duties and functions of unlicensed dental assistants. Dental hygienists are licensed and regulated by a separate and distinct regulatory body, the Dental Hygiene Board of California.

The Act requires DBC to be “organized into standing committees dealing with examinations, enforcement, and other subjects as the board deems appropriate.” DBC has nine Committees, four established in statute and one statutorily designated Council. In addition to those required by law, the DBC has elected to establish several other committees to meet identified needs, including a specofoc Access to Care Committee which, according to DBC, maintains awareness of the changes and challenges within the dental community. An ongoing objective is to identify areas where the DBC can assist with workforce development and according to DBC, bring increased diversity in the dental profession.

As reported to the Legislature during its 2024 sunset review oversight, DBC provides outreach presentations requested by dental schools, local dental societies, legislators, professional associations, and others. When the Board conducts presentations, Board staff explain the laws related to the dental profession, the Board's composition and purpose, and the various licenses and permits that the Board issues. The Board also distributes email to interested parties via Listserv. The Board also networks with professional organizations, attends events, and conducts online meetings with dentistry, dental assisting program, and stakeholder groups.

According to a June 2021 brief by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, *The Challenge of Meeting the Dental Care Needs of Low-Income California Adults With the Current Dental Workforce*, access to oral health care, particularly for low-income individuals who face financial and other barriers to access, depends in part on the availability and practice characteristics of dentists. The study measured both the need for oral health care among low-income California adults and the characteristics of practicing dentists using multiple sources, including the California Health Interview Survey and DBC data. The brief found a low supply of working dentists in several regions that had high rates of low-income adults; a small proportion of dentists who provided dental visits under Medi-Cal; a significant number of dentists nearing retirement age; and an underrepresentation of Latinx and Black dentists in comparison to the low-income communities they serve. The brief notes that “An estimated 9.8 million adults in California were low-income in 2018–2019, and an estimated 28,000 dentists were practicing in California in 2020. Most dentists practiced in the Greater Bay Area (25%), Los Angeles (26%), and other Southern California counties (29%). However, a higher proportion of low-income adults lived in some regions that had a low concentration of dentists. For example, while 47% of adults in San Joaquin Valley counties were low-income, just 7% of dentists in the state practiced there.” According to the brief, “Pipeline education programs to increase the number of dentists from communities of color are another strategy for increasing access. Combining these efforts with loan repayment programs that are tied to practicing in areas and communities with fewer dentists is likely to increase their effectiveness. It is essential to ensure availability of multilingual staff and interpretation services in all dental practices in the short term, and to provide cultural competency training in dental school curricula in the long term. Policies to boost the capacity of existing dental providers are also needed — for example, training of expanded function hygienists and dental therapists, mobile dentistry, and teledentistry services.”

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, DBC reports ongoing costs of approximately \$167,000 to develop and implement the program, which the board notes is not absorbable within existing resources. DBC also notes additional travel costs of \$13,000 to conduct at least two outreach activities per year, which is anticipated to be absorbable.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/29/25)

California Dental Association

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/29/25)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the California Dental Association, “California does not face a shortage of licensed dentists, but rather a serious maldistribution of the dental workforce. Millions of Californians, especially in rural and low-income urban areas, lack access to dental care because systemic barriers prevent providers from establishing sustainable practices in these underserved regions. These barriers include factors such as high student debt and reimbursement rates that don’t reflect the rising costs of care. This bill addresses those structural challenges by creating targeted outreach to students from underserved communities and connecting them to educational and financial resources. By cultivating a workforce that is rooted in and reflective of the communities most affected by dental shortages, this bill will help build long-term, sustainable access to oral health care where it’s needed most.”

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0, 5/27/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Bennett, Jeff Gonzalez, Nguyen

Prepared by: Sarah Mason / B., P. & E.D. /
8/30/25 15:18:23

**** **END** ****