

Date of Hearing: April 7, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS  
Marc Berman, Chair  
AB 1760 (Arambula) – As Introduced February 9, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Dentistry.

**SUMMARY:** Makes numerous minor changes and technical corrections to various provisions of the Dental Practice Act.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Enacts the Dental Practice Act. (Business and Professions Code (BPC) §§ 1600 *et seq.*)
- 2) Establishes the Dental Board of California (DBC) within the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to administer and enforce the Dental Practice Act. (BPC § 1601.1)
- 3) Declares that protection of the public shall be the highest priority for the DBC and that whenever the protection of the public is inconsistent with other interests sought to be promoted, the protection of the public shall be paramount. (BPC § 1601.2)
- 4) Defines “dentistry” as the diagnosis or treatment, by surgery or other method, of diseases and lesions and the correction of malpositions of the human teeth, alveolar process, gums, jaws, or associated structures; diagnosis or treatment may include all necessary related procedures as well as the use of drugs, anesthetic agents, and physical evaluation. (BPC § 1625)
- 5) Establishes the requirements for the Licensure by Portfolio pathway, wherein an applicant completes the written examination of the National Board Dental Examination of the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations and additional examinations after furnishing evidence of having met specified dental education requirements, along with other application requirements. (BPC § 1628)
- 6) Requires the DBC to conduct a review of the portfolio examination, a recently eliminated pathway to licensure wherein an applicant built a portfolio of completed clinical experiences and clinical competency examinations in lieu of taking a single examination to demonstrate their competence to practice dentistry. (BPC § 1632.6)
- 7) Establishes the requirements and parameters for the Licensure by Credential pathway, through which applicants who are licensed in good standing as dentists in another state meet specified clinical practice requirements to qualify for licensure in California. (BPC § 1635.5)
- 8) Requires licensed dentists who wish to perform elective facial cosmetic surgery to possess a permit to perform specified categories of elective facial cosmetic surgical procedures. (BPC § 1638.1)
- 9) Establishes various fees charged to licensees of the DBC. (BPC § 1724)
- 10) Establishes a Dental Assisting Council within the DBC to consider all matters relating to dental assistants and make appropriate recommendations to the DBC and the standing committees of the DBC. (BPC § 1742)

- 11) Declares the intention of the Legislature to permit the full utilization of dental assistants in order to meet the dental care needs of all the state's citizens and for the DBC to consider the recommendations of the Dental Assisting Council. (BPC § 1740)
- 12) Defines a "dental assistant" as an individual who, without a license, may perform basic supportive dental procedures, as defined, under the supervision of a licensed dentist; requires the employer of a dental assistant to ensure that the dental assistant has completed specified courses approved by the DBC, including courses specifically required to perform certain functions. (BPC § 1750)
- 13) Specifies that a dental assistant must complete a DBC-approved eight-hour course in infection control prior to performing any basic supportive dental procedures involving potential exposure to blood, saliva, or other potentially infectious materials. (BPC § 1750(c))
- 14) Specifies that a dental assistant must complete a DBC-approved course in radiation safety prior to performing radiographic procedures. (BPC § 1750(f)(3))
- 15) Authorizes a dental assistant to perform specified duties under the general supervision and pursuant to the order, control, and full professional responsibility of a licensed dentist. (BPC § 1750.1)
- 16) Requires applicants for a dental sedation assistant permit to successfully complete a two-hour DBC-approved course in the Dental Practice Act and an eight-hour DBC-approved course in infection control. (BPC § 1750.4)
- 17) Establishes the education and training requirements for licensure by the DBC as a registered dental assistant (RDA) through several available pathways. (BPC § 1752.1)
- 18) Establishes the requirements for licensure by the DBC as a registered dental assistant in extended functions (RDAEF). (BPC § 1753)
- 19) Authorizes an RDAEF to perform all duties and procedures that an RDA is authorized to perform and to perform specified additional procedures under direct supervision and pursuant to the order, control, and full professional responsibility of a licensed dentist. (BPC § 1753.5)
- 20) Requires RDAEFs to complete approved courses in several of the additional procedures they are authorized to perform prior to performing those procedures. (BPC § 1753.6)
- 21) Provides that a radiation safety course approved by the DBC shall have the main purpose of providing theory, laboratory, and clinical application in radiographic techniques and establishes requirements for radiation safety course providers. (BPC § 1754.5)
- 22) Provides that an infection control course approved by the DBC shall have the main purpose of providing theory and clinical application in infection control practices and principles where the protection of the public is its primary focus and requires an unlicensed dental assistant who is not enrolled in a DBC-approved program for registered dental assisting or an alternative dental assisting program to complete one of the two infection control certification course models. (BPC § 1755)

**THIS BILL:**

- 1) Repeals the requirement that applicants through the Licensure by Examination pathway furnish satisfactory evidence of financial responsibility or liability insurance for injuries sustained or claimed to be sustained by a dental patient in the course of the examination as a result of the applicant's actions.
- 2) Provides that if an applicant fails a section of a required examination after three attempts to successfully complete that section, the applicant shall retake the entire examination on subsequent attempts.
- 3) Deletes obsolete references to the prior Licensure by Portfolio pathway.
- 4) Makes changes to the requirements for the Licensure by Credential pathway.
- 5) Provides that each member of the elective facial cosmetic surgery credentialing committee shall serve at the pleasure of the DBC and allows for meetings of the credentialing committee to take place in closed session.
- 6) Revises the minimum requirements for infection control and radiation safety courses and authorizes the DBC to audit those courses.
- 7) Makes numerous additional minor changes and technical revisions to the Dental Practice Act.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown; this bill is keyed fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

**COMMENTS:**

**Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by the *Dental Board of California*. According to the author:

This legislation, sponsored by the Dental Board of California, contains various technical and substantive cleanup provisions to the Dental Practice Act approved by the Board between November 2024 and February of this year. This bill serves as a comprehensive omnibus vehicle to refine the Business and Professions Code, ensuring statutory language reflects current Board policies, corrects outdated cross-references, and removes expired pathways to licensure. The justification for pursuing this bill now, rather than waiting for the Board's next sunset review in 2028, centers on the need to protect the dental consumers of California with administrative urgency, and legislative efficiency. While "Sunset" bills are most common for traditional substantive and non-substantive changes, waiting for the Board's next Sunset cycle would leave in place several statutory impediments and inconsistencies for effective administration of the Dental Practice Act in California.

**Background.**

*Dental Board of California.* The DBC is responsible for licensing and regulating dental professionals in California. The DBC was originally created as the Board of Dental Examiners in 1885 during the twenty-sixth session of the California Legislature. Today, the DBC licenses an estimated 112,000 dental professionals, of which approximately 43,500 are licensed dentists; 46,000 are RDAs; and 2,300 are 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 Dental Assisting Council within the DBC makes recommendations regarding the DBC's regulation of dental assistants. Three categories of dental assistants are regulated by the DBC, distinguished by what duties they may perform based on their training. This includes unlicensed dental assistants, authorized to perform "basic supportive dental procedures"; RDAs, authorized to perform more complex duties; and RDAEFs, authorized to perform additional restorative procedures following diagnosis and intervention by a dentist.

*Sunset review.* In order to ensure that California's myriad professional boards and bureaus are meeting the state's public protection priorities, authorizing statutes for these regulatory bodies are subject to statutory dates of repeal, at which point the entity "sunset" unless the date is extended by the Legislature. The sunset process provides a regular forum for discussion around the successes and challenges of various programs and the consideration of proposed changes to laws governing the regulation of professionals. Currently, the sunset review process applies to approximately three dozen different boards and bureaus under the DCA, as well as the Department of Real Estate and three nongovernmental nonprofit councils.

The DBC last underwent sunset review in 2024. The background paper for the DBC's sunset review oversight hearing contained a total of 17 issues and recommendations, each of which was eligible to result in statutory changes enacted through the DBC's sunset bill. SB 1453 (Ashby) was subsequently enacted to extend the DBC's sunset and make various technical changes, statutory improvements, and policy reforms in response to issues raised during the Legislature's joint sunset review of the DBC.

*Licensure by Portfolio.* Issue #6 in the DBC's sunset background paper discussed the Licensure by Portfolio pathway. Under this pathway, instead of taking a single examination, students built a portfolio of completed clinical experiences and competency examinations in six subject areas over the course of their clinical training during dental school. The portfolio option was intended to give students an alternative to being tested on a live patient over the course of one weekend; however, concerns were raised that because California was one of the first states to establish this pathway, dentists who have obtained their license through that portfolio pathway faced difficulties when seeking reciprocal acknowledgment of qualification by other states.

Following the DBC's sunset review in 2019, the DBC requested that the DCA's Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES) review the Licensure by Portfolio examination. OPES subsequently raised several psychometric issues of concern and recommended that the DBC initiate a process to eliminate that pathway to licensure. The DBC then ultimately voted to recommend repealing Licensure by Portfolio from the Dental Practice Act. The DBC noted in its sunset report that this pathway has been utilized by a small number of applicants since it was originally established but requires a significant amount of time and effort to maintain, including updating the necessary examination for licensure through this pathway. SB 1453 subsequently eliminated the Licensure by Portfolio pathway; this bill would repeal vestigial provisions of law referencing that obsolete program.

*Licensure by Credential.* Issue #7 in the DBC's sunset background paper discussed the pathway through which applicants who are licensed in good standing as dentists in another state meet specified clinical practice requirements to qualify for licensure in California. The DBC provided language in SB 1453 to clarify clinical practice work requirements and how much credit residency programs will count towards the total hours required for licensure. This bill would make additional changes to the requirements for licensure under that pathway.

*Dental Assistant Training.* Dental assistants are one of three types of dental practitioners that assist licensed dentists, the other two being RDAs and RDAEFs. RDAs and RDAEFs are licensed by the DBC and can perform relatively complex services. Dental assistants are unlicensed and may perform “basic supportive dental procedures,” which are procedures that are elementary from a technical standpoint, are completely reversible, and are unlikely to result in hazardous conditions for the patient.

Dental assistants are not licensed, so they are indirectly regulated by the DBC through requirements on their dentist employers. Dentist employers are responsible for the services provided by their DA employees, so they must provide proper training and oversight. They must also document compliance with all relevant requirements. When there is an adverse event, the employing or supervising dentist’s license may be subject to discipline by the DBC.

In addition to any training needed to successfully incorporate a dental assistants into a dental practice, employers of dental assistants also have statutorily and regulatorily required training requirements. The Dental Practice Act specifies that dental assistant employers are responsible for dental assistants completing a DBC-approved two-hour course on the Dental Practice Act and maintaining certification in basic life support. The act also requires dental assistant employers to ensure dental assistant employees complete other DBC-approved courses prior to performing certain functions, including courses in radiation safety and infection control. This bill would make modifications to the requirements for those courses.

*Additional Technical Changes.* Issue #16 in the DBC’s background paper recognized that there are amendments to the Dental Practice Act that are technical in nature but may improve DBC operations and the enforcement of the law. SB 1453 included myriad technical changes to the Dental Practice Act suggested by committee staff or the DBC. This bill would make various additional minor changes and technical corrections to the Dental Practice Act recommended by the DBC.

**Current Related Legislation.** AB 873 (Alanis) would update requirements for an unlicensed dental assistant to complete an infection control and radiation safety courses and makes numerous other conforming changes to the Dental Practice Act. *This bill is pending in the Senate Committee on Business, Professions, and Economic Development.*

SB 1311 (Wahab) would make various conforming changes to existing requirements for unlicensed dental assistants to complete an infection control course. *This bill is pending in the Senate Committee on Appropriations.*

SB 1445 (Committee on Business, Professions, and Economic Development) would make various noncontroversial and technical changes. *This bill is pending in the Senate Committee on Business, Professions, and Economic Development.*

**Prior Related Legislation.** SB 1453 (Ashby), Chapter 483, Statutes of 2024, extended the sunset date for the DBC and made various technical changes, statutory improvements, and policy reforms in response to issues raised during the Legislature’s joint sunset review of the DBC.

AB 481 (W. Carrillo) of 2023 would have made numerous changes to the education, scope of practice, and regulation of dental auxiliaries, including dental assistants, orthodontic assistants, and RDAs. *This bill was held on suspense in the Senate Committee on Appropriations.*

AB 2276 (W. Carrillo) of 2022 would have authorized unlicensed dental assistants to polish teeth and apply dental sealants. *This bill was held on suspense in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.*

AB 1519 (Low, Chapter 865, Statutes of 2019) extended the DBC's sunset date and made various technical changes, statutory improvements, and policy reforms in response to issues raised during the Legislature's joint sunset review of the DBC.

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:**

The *Dental Board of California* (DBC) is sponsoring this bill. The DBC writes: "This bill consolidates technical, non-controversial, and substantive cleanup items approved by the Board—In public meetings between November 2024 and February 2026—to refine various provisions of the Dental Practice Act (DPA) and ensure statutory language aligns with current regulatory standards and consumer protection needs. While these items are typically addressed during the Sunset Review process, waiting for the Board's next cycle in 2028–2029 would leave in place several statutory impediments and inconsistencies for effective administration of the DPA. This bill serves as a comprehensive omnibus vehicle to optimize the Board's efficiency and protect the public."

**ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION:**

None on file.

**IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES:**

Several of the proposed changes to the Dental Practice Act contained in this bill are duplicative or in conflict with changes proposed in other legislation. For example, both AB 873 (Alanis) and SB 1311 (Wahab) would revise the requirements of a DBC-approved infection control course. These parallel efforts will need to be reconciled prior to enactment.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT:**

Dental Board of California (*Sponsor*)  
California Association of Dental Assisting Teachers  
California Dental Assistants Association  
California Extended Functions Association

**REGISTERED OPPOSITION:**

None on file.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Robert Sumner / B. & P. / (916) 319-3301