

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 1311 (Wahab) – As Amended July 1, 2026

Policy Committee: Business and Professions

Vote: 17 - 0

Urgency: Yes

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill expands the pathways for an unlicensed dental assistant (DA) to meet existing infection control coursework requirements and makes changes to the Licensed Physicians from Mexico Program, the Veterinary Medical Board of California (VMB), and the Private Investigator Act.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Allows a DA to satisfy their infection control coursework requirements by successfully completing either the Dental Assisting National Board's Infection Control examination or one of several infection control certification course options.
- 2) Revises the timeline for applicants to the Licensed Physicians from Mexico Program to allow the Medical Board of California to accept up to 15 applications between July 1, 2026 and January 1, 2028.
- 3) Adds one additional registered veterinary technician (RVT) member to the VMB.
- 4) Adds a California public school to the education that an RVT applicant may use to satisfy an education requirement.
- 5) Exempts a master agreement for frequently contracted services over a specified period from the requirements that a written agreement to provide private investigation services include approximate start and completion dates, if the agreement includes the beginning and termination dates.
- 6) Includes an urgency clause.

FISCAL EFFECT:

No state costs.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author, this bill responds to implementation concerns of existing law by streamlining the ability for unlicensed dental assistants to successfully complete important infection control coursework.

- 2) **Oppose Unless Amended.** The California Dental Hygienists' Association (CDHA) opposes this bill unless amended, explaining that the bill does not require any clinical, or hands-on, education for the unlicensed DA that physically demonstrates how to properly protect themselves from spreading pathogens when working with potentially infectious material. CDHA requests an amendment to require the dentist or another licensed member of the dental team who has infection control education and training to provide on-the-job training to the DA to ensure they are able to demonstrate how to carry out the safety protocols and duties specified in regulations (gloves, mask, sterilization) prior to working with potentially infectious materials and patients. CDHA requests the bill require the dentist to certify that the hands-on training was successfully completed and keep a record of the certification available upon request.

CDHA argues that without this amendment, members of the dental team and the public are at risk that a new employee may spread disease to patients, other members of the dental team or themselves because they had no hands-on training. CDHA further contends this bill places unlicensed DAs in situations where they are expected to safely perform infection control duties without ensuring they have received the practical education necessary to protect their own health and safety, thus shifting the burden and risk of inadequate training onto the very employees who are most vulnerable.

The California Dental Assisting Alliance (CDAA), a consortium of the California Association of Dental Assisting Teachers, the California Dental Assistants Association, and the California Expanded Functions Association writes with similar concerns. CDAA additionally objects to the removal of the DBC from the regulation of education and training of DAs. CDAA also points to inconsistency among pathway options to infection control certification, noting that one pathway to certification is through a national examination alone, while another requires extensive coursework and hands-on training. CDAA notes some certificants will have received supervised instruction, real-time feedback, and practical experience, while others may never interact with an instructor at all, yet both would receive the same certification indicating competency. CDAA supports the existing DBC regulations that require dental assistant applicants to complete a Board-approved 8-hour Infection Control course consisting of both didactic and clinical instruction prior to potential exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials.

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