



## **Dental Hygiene Educational Program Announcement: Taft College**

On June 10, 2017, the Dental Hygiene Committee of California (Committee) voted to withdraw its approval of Taft College's dental hygiene program (TCDH) due to several violations of the standards for operating a dental hygiene educational program. The Committee must now issue a notice of its reasons for the withdrawal in writing, and the effective date of the decision will be 30 days from the date of that notice, unless TCDH appeals that decision, as described below. Committee President Noel Kelsch recused herself from discussing or voting on any issue with respect to TCDH.

After receiving complaints from both students and faculty of TCDH, the Committee staff made several site visits to determine whether the complaints had merit. Staff provided the Committee with a report outlining the deficiencies found, and the Committee found to be true deficiencies in the following standards: allowing students to complete the program without completing the minimum of required performance evaluations; unclear grading standards; insufficient administrative involvement to notify the students of current licensing standards; document alteration to allow double-counting of performance evaluations; and curriculum deficiencies resulting in an insufficient patient pool to allow students to complete their clinical requirements. The complaint that TCDH allowed students to sit for the WREB exam without completing sufficient clinical competency performance evaluations was not found, and infection control issues were remedied before the matter was considered by the Committee. Consequently, if the Committee's decision to withdraw its approval of TCDH becomes effective, their dental hygiene students who complete the program after that will not be eligible to sit for licensure in California.

However, during the appeals process, TCDH remains approved and can remediate to correct the violations in the law until a final decision is rendered either by an informal conference with the Executive Officer, by a hearing, or both.

The Committee's regulations, (Title 16, C.C.R. § 1105.4) provide the following process for appeal of the Committee's decision to withdraw the approval:

- If the Committee withdraws approval of a program, the reasons for withdrawal or denial will be provided in writing within ninety (90) days. So, the Committee will issue its written notice to TCDH of its reasons within 90-days from the meeting on June 10<sup>th</sup>. The Committee voted to make its decision to withdraw effective 30-days from the date it sends TCDH that notice.
- TCDH shall be granted an informal conference before the Executive Officer prior to the effective date of its decision to withdraw, and must be given at least 10 days' notice of the time and place of such informal conference.

- TCDH may contest the withdrawal of approval by either:
  - Appearing at the informal conference. The Executive Officer must notify TCDH of his final decision within 10 days of the informal conference. Based on the outcome of the informal conference TCDH may then request a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) to contest the Executive Officer's final decision. The request for a hearing must be within 30 calendar days of the postmark date of the letter of the Executive Officer's final decision after the informal conference. Or;
  - Notifying the Committee in writing, before the date of the informal conference, that it wants to forego the informal conference and to proceed with a hearing before an ALJ.

A hearing before an ALJ would result in a Proposed Decision that would then be reviewed by the Committee, and must be adopted by the Committee before it can become final.

A link to the Committee staff report reviewed by the Committee can be found here, beginning on p. 14 of the materials:

[http://www.dhcc.ca.gov/about\\_us/meeting\\_docs/20170610\\_edusub.pdf](http://www.dhcc.ca.gov/about_us/meeting_docs/20170610_edusub.pdf)

*For more information on the Committee's authority with respect to educational programs, see Business and Professions Code Sections 1905 and 1941, and Title 16, California Code of Regulations sections 1101-1107.*

The link to the Committee's laws and regulations can be found here:

<http://www.dhcc.ca.gov/lawsregs/index.shtml>