



CALIFORNIA SOCIETY OF PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

June 16, 2008

The Honorable Mark Ridley-Thomas
Chair, Senate Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development
State Capitol, Room 2053
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2637 Position: Support

Dear Senator Ridley-Thomas:

The California Society of Pediatric Dentistry supports the passage of AB 2637 which would repeal complicated and unworkable regulatory provisions governing dental assisting and establish through the creation of an orthodontic assistant permit and dental sedation assistant permit a defined auxiliary career path that meets the workforce needs of dental providers. The bill provides for new regulation of unlicensed dental assistants which better protect the public and preserves the work experience pathway to a dental assisting career.

Existing statute which would otherwise take effect January 1, 2010, would create a confusing arrangement of registered dental assisting categories and licenses that would confuse the public and make enforcement of dental assisting scope of practice laws and regulations extremely problematic.

AB 2637 is supported by the dental profession (as reflected in its sponsorship by the California Dental Association) and by the Dental Board of California. It reflects the creative effort and consensus of a broad spectrum of stakeholders involved in dental education, dental delivery and dental assisting. It protects the license renewal process of existing Registered Dental Assistants while providing an additional career opportunity for those interested in career advancement.

California currently has slightly greater than 34,000 active licensed dentists and approximately the same number of active licensed dental assistants --- a troubling ratio for many practitioners wishing to expand access to dental services across the state. This legislation, in our opinion, will open the career pathway to licensed dental assisting and improve patient care.

For these reasons we urge the Senate Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development to pass AB 2637.

A. Jeffrey Wood, DDS
President, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry

c: Assembly Member Mike Eng
Officers and Directors, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry
Dr. Paul Reggiardo, Public Policy Advocate, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry
Dr. Ray Stewart, Executive Director California Society of Pediatric Dentistry

The California Society of Pediatric Dentistry is the professional membership organization representing California's nearly 600 pediatric dental providers, educators and researchers. Our members provide primary and specialty care to infants, children, adolescents and patients with special medical and developmental needs. The mission of the California Society of Pediatric Dentistry is to advocate for optimal oral health and general welfare of infants, children, and adolescents.