

California Department of
CONSUMER AFFAIRS

A*nnual* **R***eport*

2001 –2002

Gray Davis, Governor
State of California

Aileen Adams, Secretary
State and Consumer Services Agency

Kathleen Hamilton, Director
Department of Consumer Affairs

© 2002 California Department of Consumer Affairs

This publication may be copied if (1) the meaning of copied text is not changed or misrepresented, (2) credit is given to the California Department of Consumer Affairs, and (3) all copies are distributed free of charge. In other situations, expressed written authorization is required.

Additional copies of this publication may be obtained without charge by downloading it from www.dca.ca.gov or by writing to:

DCA Publications
401 S Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95814-6200

You can also call (916) 323-7239
or toll free (800) 952-5210.

TDD only: (916) 322-1700

Visit the Department's Web site at www.dca.ca.gov for more consumer information.

California Department of
CONSUMER AFFAIRS



Annual Report

2001 –2002

Gray Davis, Governor
State of California

Aileen Adams, Secretary
State and Consumer Services Agency

Kathleen Hamilton, Director
Department of Consumer Affairs

Introduction

The California Department of Consumer Affairs – with its 43 entities licensing approximately 2.3 million Californians in more than 230 different professions (as of June 30, 2002) – establishes minimum qualifications and levels of competency for professionals. The Department licenses, registers, or certifies practitioners, investigates consumer complaints, and disciplines violators. As a result, professionals are protected from unfair competition from unlicensed practitioners, while consumers receive the protections and services they deserve.

Additionally, the Department provides consumer advice and education through its consumer education and outreach divisions.

The Department submits to the Legislature the following reports and Annual Statistical Profiles for 43 regulatory entities. The Annual Statistical Profiles includes information about the number and nature of licenses, certificates, and permits. It also contains statistics on consumer complaints, dispute resolution assistance, and the savings and restitution obtained for California consumers.

Energy Conservation

The “Flex Your Power” energy conservation program that began in early 2001 continued its successful consumer educational efforts into the following year. The media and outreach campaign reached more than 95 percent of California consumers with tips for reducing energy use and recommendations to avoid using large appliances during peak hours. The result was an average 8.37 percent reduction in energy use during 2001, reaching a high of 14.1 percent energy use reduction in a single month. When hot weather returned in 2002, consumers again demonstrated their commitment to reducing energy usage. In June of that year, electricity savings reached a high point of 11.2 percent.

By late 2001, the messages of the campaign were evident in the minds of consumers. The percentage that correctly played back specific descriptions of the “Flex Your Power” campaign increased significantly from 35% in early 2001 to 53% for those aware of conservation messages.

The Department’s energy conservation campaign also continued to promote California’s “20/20” utility rebate offer. For the second straight year, more than 30 percent of California consumers participated in the program.

Listening to Consumers

The Department’s Consumer Information Center handled more than one million consumer calls over the past year. The calls included general inquiries about consumer issues, as well as questions about licensing. The Center also took consumer call that lodged complaints against particular licensed professionals or businesses.

Several of the Department’s entities use a customer satisfaction survey to gain feedback from consumers who

filed a complaint against a licensed professional or business. Such surveys are used to determine if the person filing the complaint was satisfied with the service provided by the Department. (For example, did the representative understand the complaint, was the representative courteous and helpful, and would the person filing the complaint recommend the services to others?)

Office of Information Services

The Department's Office of Information Services continued to expand online services for California's licensees and consumers.

The Department's eGovernment Center teamed up with the Department of General Services to pilot an online licensing project, creating better access to several boards and bureaus via the Internet. The efforts immediately benefited more than one million professionals statewide who are licensed in the following professions: Barbering and Cosmetology, Dentists, Dental Auxiliaries, Physicians and Surgeons, Psychologists, Registered Nurses and Security Guards.

The Professional Licensing and Enforcement Management System project is currently under review and, if implemented as planned, will integrate application, licensing, and enforcement data for each licensee into a single electronic system. When fully in place, this system will allow consumers to obtain more detailed information about individuals and businesses licensed by the Department.

The Department's Web site also provides consumers with the option of filing complaints online. The Department's Web site gets more than 400,000 visitors each month who view 850,000 virtual pages.

Legal Affairs Division

The Legal Affairs Division serves as counsel to the Department's boards, commissions, and programs. The Division drafted and reviewed more than 100 rulemaking packages and attended more than 200 formal meetings with client agencies.

The Legal Affairs Division assisted the Department's Communication and Education Division in the revision of numerous consumer publications. These include the Department's most requested consumer publication, *"California Tenants – A Guide to Residential Landlords' and Tenants' Rights and Responsibilities."* The Division also assisted in revising and updating the booklets, *"The DOs and DON'Ts of Using the Small Claims Court"* and *"Lemon Aid for Consumers."* The Legal Division is also revising the *"Consumer Law Sourcebook for Small Claims Court Judicial Officers,"* used by small claims judges and advisers statewide, and recently completed a new publication on consumer resources when firms they are doing business with file for bankruptcy.

The Legal Affairs Division provided training to various government programs that serve the public and consumers. Division staff trained more than 100 board members on their legal responsibilities and more than 400 attorneys who serve as small claims court judges, as well as scores of small claims advisers. The Division also provided training on federal and California debt collection law to the Department's Consumer Relations and Outreach Division, the Bureau of Automotive Repair's mediation unit, the Office of Privacy Protection, and the California Consumer Affairs Association at its annual meeting.

Communications & Education Division

Throughout the year, the Department's Communications & Education Division issued a series of Consumer Alerts on topics ranging from misleading get-out-of-debt promotions to bogus claims surrounding magnetic mattress pads.

The Division also published several new resource guides for California consumers. These include:

- *Contracting with Spanish-Speaking Customers: A Guide to Business Operators' Responsibility under California Law*
- *Memberships in Health Clubs, Spas and Studios*
- *Lemon Aid for Consumers (English & Spanish)*
- *California's Lemon Law: 20 Years of Putting the Squeeze on Lemons*
- *Professional Therapy Never Includes Sex*
- *Summer Driving Tips for Getting Your Car in Shape*
- *The DOs and DON'Ts of Using the Small Claims Court*
- *Bureau of Barbering and Cosmetology Health and Safety Guide*
- *California Tenants: A Guide to Residential Tenants' and Landlords' Rights and Responsibilities*

Task Force on Culturally and Linguistically Competent Physicians and Dentists

In 2002, the Department continued its work with the Task Force on Culturally and Linguistically Competent Physicians and Dentists. Co-chaired by the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Director of the Department of Health Services, and composed of thirty-seven subject matter experts, the Task Force is charged with making recommendations to the Legislature

in 2003 about ways to improve the cultural and linguistic competency of health care providers throughout the state and how to encourage these providers to practice in medically underserved communities.

To inform the Task Force discussions and subsequent recommendations, the Task Force convened six public hearings in 2002 to hear directly from California consumers about their health care needs. Hearings were held in San Diego, Salinas, Oxnard, Bell Gardens, San Francisco and Sacramento. At these hearings, the Task Force received testimony from over fifty consumers and eighteen providers who are currently living and working in medically underserved communities.

To achieve the goal of expanding access to linguistically and culturally competent care, the Task Force has considered changes to medical and dental school curriculum, continuing education requirements for licensed physicians and dentists, a variety of outreach mechanisms to expand the number of culturally and linguistically competent health care providers, as well as, developing a common set of key cultural elements required for competency.

The Department has been pleased to work closely with the Medical Board and the Dental Board on this project and looks forward to submitting the final Task Force report to the Legislature in early 2003.

Arbitration Certification Program

The Arbitration Certification Program sponsored the 20th anniversary celebration of enactment of California's Lemon Law, which received media coverage throughout the state. The event enabled the Program to distribute an updated *Lemon Aid for Consumers* booklet in English and Spanish, highlighting benefits of the Lemon Law to California consumers.

The Program monitored 15 arbitrator training sessions and 500 arbitration hearings throughout California. California consumers who filed for arbitration with state certified arbitration programs recovered \$41,230,028 from manufacturers during calendar year 2001.

The Program certified Toyota's Dispute Settlement Program, raising the percentage of arbitration cases it now oversees to 83 percent.

The Program participated in 20 outreach and educational events to inform consumers of their Lemon Law rights and the benefits of arbitration. It also arranged for the production of four Spanish-language public service announcements to be aired statewide on Spanish-language television stations.

Office of Privacy Protection

The Department's Office of Privacy Protection is the first of its kind in the nation dedicated to protecting individual privacy rights. California ranked first among the states for protecting personal privacy in an October 2002 listing by the Privacy Journal, the nation's leading privacy publication. In the eight months following its opening in November 2001, Office staff provided individual assistance by phone, e-mail, and letter to more than 2,000 consumers.

The Office helped implement a new law that makes it easier for identity theft victims to pursue their cases. The Office serves as the state clearinghouse for law enforcement to report non-compliance with the new law and intervenes when necessary to bring about compliance.

The Office published guidelines for businesses and other organizations on how to protect the key to identity theft – Social Security numbers. The Office’s Recommended Practices on Social Security Confidentiality is based on the widely accepted Fair Information Practice Principles, with input from an advisory group of business, consumer, and privacy advocacy representatives.

The Office stepped forward to offer assistance to state employees following a security breach that could have exposed their personal information. The Office provided information and assistance on a dedicated Web page, in a mailing to all employees, on its telephone line, in workshops, and on a video distributed to state agencies. The Office also arranged for special handling of state employee concerns with credit reporting agencies.

BUREAU HIGHLIGHTS

Bureau of Automotive Repair

Consumers can now look up the license status and some of the complaint history of any registered Automotive Repair Dealer on the Bureau of Automotive Repair’s (BAR) Web site. The site also includes the license status of Smog Check, Lamp and Brake stations and technicians, and the Smog Check history of any vehicle in the state.

In 2001/02, the Bureau implemented a pilot Auto Body Inspection Program. Of 766 vehicles inspected, BAR discovered fraud in 328 (43%). The average amount of the fraud was \$795. The final findings of the pilot will be reported to the Legislature by September 2003.

In follow-up to a trade agreement entered into in 2000, BAR worked with City of Tijuana, Mexico officials to implement a Smog Check inspection program in that

community. In February 2002, Tijuana Mayor Jesus Gonzalez-Reyes brought a delegation to Sacramento to visit BAR Headquarters and develop a plan for the emerging partnership. Bureau officials also held sessions in Tijuana to assess the size and mechanical condition of that government's vehicle fleet, as well as the knowledge and technical skills of the fleet's technicians. BAR developed vehicle inspection procedures for the project and provided training for eight of Tijuana's technicians. The Bureau donated three Smog Check machines to the project, which had been previously confiscated as a result of fraud investigations by the Bureau's Enforcement Division. Vehicle testing in Tijuana is expected to begin in 2003.

BAR performed more than 14,000 Quality Assurance inspections of stations participating in the state's enhanced Smog Check Program. BAR also completed 5,000 hands-on examinations of licensed Smog Check technicians. Of the noted deficiencies, 74% of the stations and 82% of the Smog Check technicians were brought into compliance with BAR regulations. BAR staff also conducted over 4,000 gas audits of enhanced Smog Check stations' emission analyzers. Approximately 25% of the analyzers audited required repair to bring them into compliance.

Bureau of Barbering and Cosmetology

The Bureau of Barbering and Cosmetology now offers online services for all of its licensees. These services include renewal of licenses for barber, barber instructor, cosmetologist, cosmetology instructor, electrologist, esthetician and manicurist as well as online exam applications.

A new regulation relating to cleaning and disinfectant procedures for whirlpool foot spas went into effect this past year. The regulation is a result of the Bureau's

investigation of a case involving a nail salon responsible for the transmission of mycobacterium fortuitum bacteria among more than 100 pedicure patrons.

Effective January 1, 2003, the structure of this program will shift from a Department-administered bureau to an independent Board of Barbering and Cosmetology. The new board will consist of nine members, with a public member majority. The Governor will appoint seven members; the Senate Committee on Rules and the Speaker of the Assembly shall each appoint one member.

Cemetery and Funeral Bureau

The Cemetery and Funeral Bureau continued its criminal investigation of Woodlawn Cemetery in Compton, which resulted in criminal charges brought against its owner by the Los Angeles County District Attorney. The Bureau also obtained an Interim Suspension Order against a funeral establishment in San Diego and against its owner. In addition, the Bureau revoked the licenses of two Los Angeles funeral establishments and the licenses of its owners. The Bureau worked with the Riverside County Sheriff and District Attorney to investigate a Lake Elsinore crematory, resulting in criminal charges.

Bureau of Electronic and Appliance Repair

Consumers are now able to learn more about the Bureau of Electronic and Appliance Repair (BEAR) through its new Web site. The online service provides information about the Bureau and the ways that it protects consumers. The Bureau teamed up with Goodwill Industries of San Diego to recycle personal computers and other consumer electronic products. During Fiscal Year 2001/02, BEAR launched 29 undercover operations to reduce consumer fraud in the electronic and appliance repair industries.

Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau

The Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau and its Advisory Committee is focusing on the review of bylaws and regulations identified by the Joint Legislative Sunset Review Committee, thus ensuring the competency of hearing aid dispensers. The Bureau also increased its outreach efforts to inform consumers of the services it provides.

Bureau of Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation

Recently enacted legislation (AB 603 – John Dutra, D-Fremont) mandated the Bureau of Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation develop a new open flame standard for mattresses, box springs and bedding material. The Bureau is conducting research and testing of mattress and bedding material flammability. The outcome of this research and testing will be the foundation for new consumer-protection standards that are to be in place by January 2004.

The Bureau of Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation is developing an update of the upholstered furniture flammability standard that has protected Californian's for more than 25 years. The Bureau's goal is to enhance the standard so it reflects advances in science and product technology. The updated standard's performance-based flammability specifications are intended to protect consumers, as well as to encourage industry use of effective, efficient and innovative compliance strategies.

The Bureau responded to numerous complaints from consumers about magnetic mattress pads. The expensive pads were marketed to elderly residents with claims they are effective medical devices. The Bureau partnered with the Department's Division of Investigation and several

other law enforcement agencies to investigate companies that promoted such products. The ongoing investigation has, so far, resulted in several misdemeanor arrests by local authorities, as well as the Attorney General's filing of a \$1.5 million civil lawsuit against one magnetic mattress pad company.

Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education

The Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education has actively maintained the licensing and application process for about 3,000 schools operating in California. The Bureau has served as a resource for information and guidance for students faced with school closures. More than 25,000 veterans are offered services relating to educational programs through a contract with the federal Veterans Administration.

Bureau of Security and Investigative Services

Under legislation that goes into effect on January 1, 2003, security guard applicants will no longer be able to work while their criminal background checks are being completed. Consequently, speeding up the licensing process has been crucial and the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services has made significant progress in that area. A new online application system, Live Scan electronic fingerprinting and an "interface" between the California Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Bureau that updates law enforcement clearances electronically, have cut processing to approximately ten days and, in many instances, even less time.

The Bureau's enforcement staff is now part of the "underground economy" multi-agency task force that identifies unlicensed activity. Two new manuals, *Firearms Training and Powers to Arrest*, have been

completed and are available in print and on the Bureau's Web site.

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Accountancy

In January 2003, California will have the first public member majority Board of Accountancy in the nation.

The Board examination process, enhanced by recent legislation, now allows two career "pathways" to the California CPA license, including one pathway that aids interstate mobility. The Board also enhanced security measures to discourage cheating on the CPA examination.

To address consumer concerns following the Enron bankruptcy, the Board organized an Audit Standards and Practices Review Task Force composed of Board members, members of Board committees, and representatives of both professional and consumer groups. The Board and its task force developed recommendations for reforms in accountancy practices.

Governor Davis signed a package of legislation that grew out of the task force's recommendations. This included authorization of the first public member of a major board and another bill discouraging conflict of interest by preventing those involved in an audit from immediately hiring on with a company that was audited.

Acupuncture Board

The Acupuncture Board completed an occupational analysis of the acupuncture profession, which defines the practice in terms of the actual tasks that acupuncturists must be able to perform at the time of licensure and serve

as the basis of the examination program. The Board's first consumer brochure was developed, printed and distributed. The Board redesigned its Web site, making it easier for consumers to request publications and information, and for licensees to file address changes online.

Board of Behavioral Sciences

The Board is now using Applicant Live Scan for its criminal background checking, making it easier for the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to respond quickly. The Board's Web site now includes a "Verify and Search Licenses" feature that allows consumers to check on the status of licenses.

Contractors State License Board

The Contractors State License Board (CSLB) addressed more than 25,000 consumer complaints during the year. Nearly 2,300 citations were issued with close to 1,000 cases referred to District Attorney offices. A total of 456 licenses were suspended and 736 were revoked. The Board conducted training for all administrative law judges that will hear CSLB arbitration cases.

The Board successfully sponsored legislation that expands its complaint disclosure policies, allowing public disclosure of the details of certain consumer complaints. Only the most serious cases that present a risk to the well-being of consumers will be disclosed.

The Board's Web site employs a user-friendly license status check to assist consumers, and a real-time license application status check for applicants. Also, the Board launched four public awareness campaigns, including the summer Senior Scam Stopper campaign. Additional

campaigns are planned to help consumers select reputable contractors.

Court Reporters Board of California

The Court Reporters Board of California began an occupational analysis of court reporting and launched an updated test validation program. The Board has made significant strides in helping improve the passage rates on its certification exam. It also modified and increased court reporters school teacher qualifications and standardized student school qualifier tests to ensure the solid training of future court reporters. The Board now requires these schools to make students aware of all school exam and graduation requirements.

During the past year, the Board received the authority to cite and fine court reporting schools that violate standards. The Board has taken one action so far.

Dental Board of California

This was a restructuring year for the Dental Board of California. Senate Bill 134 dissolved the previous Board, terminated the Executive Officer, and reconstituted a new board on January 1, 2002. The Board is currently developing regulations to implement a “Licensure by Credential” program. This will allow licensed dentists from other states who meet certain criteria to apply for a license without taking the California licensing examination.

The Department also implemented a Dental Board Enforcement Monitor to make sure the Board is effectively protecting California consumers.

Board for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors

The Board for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors solicited comments and input for the purpose of adopting a Code of Professional Conduct. The Board is looking to establish a system of fingerprint/criminal records checks to help maintain engineering professionalism. The Board established a “take-home” exam on its Web site, assisting those interested in getting their licenses. The Board supplied information and attended forums pertaining to the Title Act Study mandated by the Legislature.

Board for Geologists and Geophysicists

The Board for Geologists and Geophysicists teamed up with regulators in other states to facilitate “cooperative licensure.” This makes it easier for Californians to hire licensed individuals who can perform earthquake fault investigations, resource extraction (gold, oil, gas, sand, gravel, etc.), and environmental investigations. The Board increased enforcement activity, issued many citations for unlicensed and negligent practices, and accepted the surrendering of a Registered Geophysicist’s license.

State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind

The Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind continues its oversight of the physical and financial conditions at the three guide dog schools in California, for which it has licensing authority. The Board conducts regular on-site inspections of school facilities and administers comprehensive tests for new applicants seeking guide dog instructor licenses.

The Board seeks to promote and protect the interests of Californians by assuring donated funds are used

appropriately and that graduated teams have the best possible training for safety and mobility.

Medical Board of California

The Medical Board of California launched an online license renewal system, enabling physicians to renew their licenses through the Board's Web site. First-time applicants can use the system to complete a basic application and submit their initial application processing fees.

The Board has a special unit of investigators who protect consumers by seeking out unlicensed practitioners. Operation Safe Medicine investigators filed 20 unlicensed practice cases with prosecutors and served eight search warrants in the last year. The Board will be bringing on people to monitor investigations and evaluate enforcement effectiveness.

To address the Board's concern about providing healthcare to underserved populations, the Board proposed a loan payback program for physicians serving in such areas. This step was taken to also improve the healthcare of diverse populations and to eliminate health care disparities between cultures.

The Board's Committee on Public Information Disclosure developed guidelines geared at providing more information to consumers. As a result, individual physician profiles on the Board's Web site will be much easier to read and update daily. This site may also include information on reported malpractice settlements and details about pending legislation.

California Board of Occupational Therapy

The newly created Board of Occupational Therapy opened its doors January 1, 2001 and has completed its first full year of operation. The Board started quickly, adopting several licensing regulations and proposing two new regulations to enhance consumer protection. One would establish ethical standards for therapists, while the other would address the way fines are assessed. The Board is also proposing legislation that contains disciplinary provisions and advanced practice requirements.

Osteopathic Medical Board

The Osteopathic Medical Board has just completed its first year of operation under the Department of Consumer Affairs. The switch included a massive overhaul of how license enforcement information is stored and utilized. The rapidly increasing amount of license applications is being processed without additional staffing. The Board's newly enhanced Web site now allows consumers to obtain complaint forms on-line, learn more about osteopathic physicians and surgeons, look up laws and regulations and research individual license holders.

Board of Pharmacy

The Board of Pharmacy implemented regulations requiring every California pharmacy to develop quality assurance programs to prevent prescription errors. California is the first state in the nation to require such a vital consumer protection program.

The Board sponsored five legislative proposals that became law, including laws that allow pharmacies to dispense federally subsidized drugs to indigent patients of eligible clinics and another to require specialized

practice environments for those pharmacies that compound medications.

The Board expanded its authority to issue citations and fines for any violation of pharmacy law. Additionally, the Board has authority to issue a \$25,000 fine per violation to any person who dispenses prescription medications via the Internet without a valid prescription. In May 2002, the Board issued an \$88 million fine against a Los Angeles pharmacy and two pharmacists for dispensing dangerous drugs via the Internet in this manner to more than 3,500 California patients.

California is experiencing a pharmacist shortage that is projected to grow worse in future years. To assure that Californians will continue to have access to pharmacists' care and prescription services, the Board convened a 15-member task force to generate proposed solutions to the shortage and issued a final report that included recommendations on 16 proposed solutions.

Physical Therapy Board of California

The Physical Therapy Board of California expanded its online services by allowing license verification on its Web site and online registration for examinations.

Board of Podiatric Medicine

The Board is moving from an oral licensing test of clinical competence to a nationally computerized one offered in testing centers throughout the state. The Board has also endorsed a national model law developed by the Federation of Podiatric Medical Boards based on criteria recommended by the Pew Health Professions Commissions.

The Board has enhanced its consumer information distribution procedure in order to provide more details about the professional status of its licensees.

Board of Psychology

Applicants can now take the Professional Practice in Psychology and the California Jurisprudence and Professional Ethics examinations by computer-administered format. Licensed psychologists can now renew their licenses online at the Board of Psychology's Web site. Additionally through the Web site, one can apply for a license, request a duplicate license, or submit a change of address.

The Board eliminated the oral examination because it did not meet the standards established in section 139 of the Business and Professions Code. Thanks to an amendment to the Psychology Licensing Law, the Board may once again review and accept or reject degrees earned outside the United States and Canada.

Board of Registered Nursing

The Board of Nursing is taking a lead role in implementing the Governor's Nurse Workforce Initiative to increase the number of licensed nurses in the state. The Board developed a Web site to provide information on how to become a nurse, obtain financial aid, return to nursing, and recruit future nurses. The Board also approved four additional nursing education programs to create more opportunities for students.

Respiratory Care Board

The Respiratory Care Board launched its "Online License Verification" service, so consumers can easily verify the license status of a Respiratory Care Practitioner. The

license records are updated daily, making the service an excellent resource for consumers and employers. The Board's Web site allows individuals to research licenses by date, subject, or reference number. The Board also attended career fairs and education conferences to address the shortage of Respiratory Care Practitioners.

In addition, the Board assisted in the prosecution of a licensee charged with the murders of six patients. Disciplinary actions against others who allegedly aided and abetted the killings are pending.

Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board

During Fiscal Year 2001/02, the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board approved a new paraprofessional educational program for speech-language pathology assistants. It also implemented an application approval process for speech-language pathology assistant training programs. Eight new state programs were approved.

In addition, the Board supported legislation signed by Governor Davis that now enables speech-language pathologists to evaluate voice and swallowing disorders through endoscopy, a procedure that uses special viewing equipment.

The Board successfully pursued legislation streamlining the application process for issuance of a temporary license, enabling applicants to obtain the professional experience required for permanent licensure.

Veterinary Medical Board

The Veterinary Medical Board implemented requirements for registered veterinary technician candidates to undergo criminal background checks. The

Board also enhanced the delivery of veterinary services to consumers by amending its regulations to allow veterinarians to use registered veterinary technicians in off-premise settings, such as hospice care, wellness vaccinations, medication administration for ongoing illnesses such as diabetes, etc. The Board increased its health and safety monitoring by increasing the number of hospital inspections this year from 280 to 420. The Board implemented a new program requiring veterinarians to certify completion of 36 hours of approved continuing education every two years for license renewal.

Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians

During Fiscal Year 2001/02, the Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians began using Live Scan fingerprint technology, online license verification, and plastic licenses in protecting consumers. On November 2001, the Board adopted a new test plan for psychiatric technician licensure examination.

The Board advanced regulations that allow licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) who are Board-certified in intravenous therapy to administer medications in hemodialysis, pheresis, and blood bank unit. This expansion of qualified LVN capabilities serves to increase patient care in the state.

Committee on Dental Auxiliaries

The Committee on Dental Auxiliaries backed new legislation signed by Governor Davis requiring registered dental assistant applicants and licensees to complete mandatory courses, including radiation safety, fostering consumer protection. The Committee was also successful in getting the legislation to ease the experience

requirement for Registered Dental Assistants from 18 to 12 months. The issue is getting people into communities to provide dental health care.

Landscape Architects Technical Committee

The Landscape Architects Technical Committee conducted focus groups to see how it can improve its services to consumers. The result is the Market Conditions assessment report, which highlights the knowledge, skills and competencies of today's professional landscape architects. The report includes professional and marketplace issues regarding landscape architecture that will be used to develop future strategic goals and objectives.

The Committee continued its outreach to college campuses to explain licensing requirements to landscape architectural students.