

Solutions for Licensure

I now submit the letter I have been writing in my mind for a decade, and it is written from the perspective of a dentist who has just retired after 41 years of practice.

First, if one graduates from an accredited school of dentistry in the United States, he or she has done so by the recommendation of the school and the faculty, and has passed the national boards — he or she is now a dentist. Further clinical evaluation, public protection mumbo-jumbo and so-called state boards are unnecessary and an embarrassment to the profession of dentistry. Dentistry needs to come into the 21st century and shut down all seemingly good intention discussion in this arena.

Now for foreign-trained dentists. The solution is simple, and the model already

exists with our medical colleagues. Simply require the candidate to pass the written national boards and complete a dental residency of some type. A problem solved.

I suggest the mentioned solutions will place the responsibility for the quality and competency of dentist where it should be, namely, the dental schools. By the way, under this program one can now see complete reciprocity among the states. All other postdoctoral testing prior to licensure, live patients, mannequins or clinical manipulations are a remnant of yesterday's dentistry and have no place in this honorable profession. Continuing education requirements would nicely fill any perceived voids.

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