



March 19, 2025

The Honorable Marc Berman
Chair, Assembly Business and Professions Committee
1020 N Street, Room 379
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 873 (Alanis): Dental Assistant Infection Control Training -
SPONSOR**

Dear Chair Berman:

The California Dental Association, representing 27,000 members throughout the state, is proud to sponsor AB 873 (Alanis), which would ensure that unlicensed dental assistants can receive timely infection control training without unnecessary delays that impact both dental teams and the patients they serve. This bill also provides dental board-requested technical and non-substantive clean-up to the Dental Practice Act.

Dental practices across California are struggling to hire unlicensed dental assistants due to new statutory barriers. Currently, newly hired unlicensed dental assistants must complete an in-person, eight-hour infection control course before they can begin working in a dental office—a requirement that replaced the previous one-year completion window following the 2024 dental board sunset review.

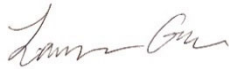
Both unlicensed medical and dental assistants must complete basic infection control training as required by Cal/OSHA. However, unlike medical assistants, who can begin working after completing their required training, unlicensed dental assistants must now also take a separate, state-mandated eight-hour infection control course before starting their roles. This is despite also receiving general onboarding and supervision from their dentist, who is ultimately responsible for ensuring the office complies with state-mandated infection control protocols. While there is no question about the value of this training, allowing a 90-day window to complete the course would provide new dental assistants with valuable on-the-job experience, enabling them to better understand and retain the intensive training.

Additionally, some dentists may prefer to have their dental staff complete the in-person course format. The limited availability of in-person courses—especially in rural and underserved areas already struggling with workforce shortages—creates significant hiring delays. As a result, some candidates pursue jobs in other industries, further reducing the dental workforce. This challenge not only worsens staffing shortages in dental practices but also limits patient access to care.

AB 873 (Alanis) aims to resolve these issues by removing the immediate timing requirement and introducing a 90-day window to complete the eight-hour IC course. It also grants the dental board the authority to approve virtual course formats immediately. Dental assistants play a crucial role in patient care, and restricting the pipeline of new hires only worsens access barriers for patients. By implementing these changes, AB 873 (Alanis) will allow dental offices to hire and train more efficiently while maintaining infection control standards, ultimately strengthening the dental workforce and improving access to care across California.

For these reasons, **CDA is proud to sponsor AB 873 (Alanis) and respectfully requests your AYE vote in the Assembly Business and Professions Committee.** If you have any questions or concerns regarding our position, please contact me at lawrence.gayden@cda.org.

Sincerely,



Lawrence Gayden
Legislative Advocate

cc: Members and staff, Assembly Business and Professions Committee
Assemblymember Juan Alanis