

MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD MEMBERS

FROM: LILI C. REITZ, Esq.
Executive Director

DATE: January 5, 2004

RE: Renewal 2003

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an explanation of what occurred and how the matter was addressed regarding the 2003 renewal for dentists and dental hygienists.

Months before renewal is due, the staff of the Ohio State Dental Board (Board) works with staff of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to prepare the renewal forms and related information for mailing. Each renewal we update the renewal application, and for the second time, we have prepared and included the continuing education log. We also prepared what we believed to be clear instructions for completing the renewal application.

It took several drafts between DAS and the Board to finalize the information to be mailed. Once a final draft is approved, it is then prepared and sent to State Printing by DAS. State Printing then prints the necessary renewal applications and CE logs, and actually mails the renewal packet to all licensed dentists and dental hygienists.

These tasks were all completed as has been done numerous times in the past. Shortly after the mailing was accomplished by State Printing, the Board office was inundated with telephone calls regarding the discrepancy with the fee and the fact that no CE log was attached.

We immediately called State Printing and explained what we had been hearing. They subsequently informed us that the renewal application did have an inconsistency regarding the fee amounts.

Further, they admitted that they had inadvertently failed to include the CE Log with the mailing.

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They agreed to send a second mailing containing the CE logs along with a cover letter explaining what happened, and giving licensees instructions for how to proceed. At that time we explained to licensees that applications with an incorrect fee could not be processed, therefore they would be returned for the correct amount. This letter was written based on our relationship with Bank One who processed our renewal applications. We also put this information on our web site, and we put a downloadable version of the CE log on line. We also changed our voicemail message at the office, and for several days let all calls go to voicemail first, as most people were calling to get this information. We know this tied up the phones for a week or so, but we needed to get the message out quickly and efficiently. Our past experience with Bank One is that Bank One processes only those applications with the correct fee and which include a CE Log. Those that do not meet these criteria are sent to the Board for further handling. Therefore, we had to let licensees know right away of the problem and how we believed it needed to be corrected.

Immediately, and even before, and concurrently with the second mailing, we began receiving new checks with balance amounts, or ones with the correct fee. Additionally, Bank One was unknowingly processing applications with the old fee, and sending us the applications with the new fee as ones that could not be processed.

After conversations with Bank One, we reached an agreement whereby Bank One would process those applications with the new fee, and they would also process applications that had two checks; one with the old fee, and another with the balance amount.

Thereafter, we determined that we would not need to return applications; rather we would hold them and allow licensees to simply submit a check for the balance amount, along with the CE log. We again updated our web site and voicemail to reflect this change.

We also informed everyone who inquired that as long as a licensee can demonstrate attempted compliance with renewal, a late fee/penalty would not be assessed.

Since the Board is compiling all this information manually at the Board office, it is taking some time to verify complete renewal for many individuals. Bank One sends us weekly reports of those applications that were processed, which gives us some information. We send receipts/wallet cards to those licensees that can be confirmed as renewed; for the others, we wait for the balance check to come in, and then match up the fees to ensure compliance. When possible, the CE logs are also being reviewed, however, most licensees

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are sending them in separately, and we are not holding up the processing of renewal for receipt of the log. All collating of fees and renewal applications, etc., is being done manually in the Board conference room.

Once renewal is officially over, we will begin to match up renewal applications with CE logs. As usual, we will audit 20% to ensure compliance with CE requirements.

Despite the fact that the errors in this renewal procedure were not borne by the Board, this has been a huge debacle, creating significant extra work and time on the part of our staff, who have handled this challenge admirably. We are looking at ways to streamline and simplify this process. I suggest that a renewal committee be formed to discuss ideas. One idea that we will implement is to include a CE log for this next biennium (2004-2005) on our web site that a licensee can download and fill out throughout the two year period, instead of having to recreate the information at the end of the biennium.

It is going to take some time for our office to put together all the information to determine who is not in compliance. However, to anyone who inquires, (hospitals, insurance companies), we advise them that all licensees are intended to be renewed as of January 1, 2004.