TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR ..............................................................1
ABOUT US ................................................................................................2
MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES .........................................................4
OUR STRATEGIC GOALS ........................................................................5
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS .........................................................13

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As the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), I am privileged to present the 2017–2020 Strategic Plan and to express my gratitude for all the work that took place in its development. This plan is a road map outlining our goals and objectives for the next three years. I hope it provides a shared understanding of where we want to go toward the planned growth and development of DCA.

This Strategic Plan re-affirms our commitment to consumer protection and sets forth new mission and vision statements with clearly expressed guiding values. It is my belief that a firm commitment to this Strategic Plan will support us to create the future we envision—for the people we serve, our department, and ourselves.

Here are a few highlights of the 2017–2020 Strategic Plan:

• We look at multiple areas in developing strong relationships with our key constituents and providing a strong line of communication to educate them on best practices, efficiency methods, and to provide DCA with feedback on how to improve in specific areas.

• We recognize the need for training programs to help employees perform their jobs more efficiently and accurately. We have identified trainings for enforcement, licensing, the regulations process, the Budget Change Proposal process, and many more.

• We welcome technology to assist with innovation in order to perform our jobs in a more transparent and effective way.

• We embrace diversity and will ensure all outreach encompasses all communities.

This Strategic Plan is a product of a collective effort driven by staff at all levels. The feedback received was instrumental in identifying areas of focus and generating the objectives described in this document. On behalf of DCA, I extend my thanks to all who contributed to DCA’s 2017–2020 Strategic Plan.

I invite you to join us as we implement the various elements of this plan. I hope that you will continue to work with us to achieve these ambitious goals.

Sincerely,

Dean R. Grafilo
Director, Department of Consumer Affairs
DCA protects and serves consumers in many ways, including:

- Providing access to competent and ethical service providers, making sure a person who holds a license issued by a board or bureau under DCA has met minimum qualifications, such as education, experience, and/or examination requirements.

- Fighting fraud and enforcing laws to protect consumers. DCA’s enforcement staff collaborates with the Attorney General’s Office and local district attorneys to take action against unqualified individuals and unlicensed practitioners.
• Verifying a provider’s license status. The license status of the more than 3.3 million licenses, registrations, certifications, and permits issued through DCA is available online or by phone.

• Supporting and advocating for consumer interests before lawmakers. DCA staff review and analyze proposed legislation and regulations to ensure that consumers are protected.

• Investigating consumer complaints. If violations are found, license holders can face discipline that includes probation, suspension or revoking a license, fines and citations, letters of reprimand, or cease-and-desist orders.

ISSUING LICENSES AND PERMITS

DCA issues licenses, certificates, registrations and permits in over 250 business and professional categories through 39 regulatory entities comprised of boards, bureaus, committees, a program, and a commission (boards and bureaus). These 39 entities set and enforce minimum qualifications for the professions and vocations they regulate, which include nearly all of California’s healthcare fields.

SUPPORTING OUR BOARDS AND BUREAUS

DCA’s 39 regulatory entities are supported by a staff of legal, technical, and administrative professionals. These professionals provide human resources, information technology, investigations, professional examinations, training, strategic planning, fiscal management, and other integral support services. DCA is committed to its core mission of consumer protection, which is shared by all of its boards and bureaus. The individuals who serve at DCA inform and empower consumers, promote consumer interests before lawmakers, enforce consumer protection laws, collaborate with law enforcement to fight consumer fraud, resolve disputes between consumers and businesses, promote use of fair and valid licensing examination programs, and work to ensure that consumers have a voice in the California marketplace.
MISSION

We protect California consumers by providing a safe and fair marketplace through oversight, enforcement, and licensure of professions.

VISION

Together, empowering California consumers.

VALUES

Accountability
Communication
Diversity
Employees

Integrity
Leadership
Service
Transparency
1. ENFORCEMENT

DCA ensures its boards and bureaus prevent, reduce, or eliminate unlicensed activity and harmful conduct by licensed professionals who pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of Californians.

2. LICENSING

DCA ensures its boards and bureaus expeditiously license qualified applicants to allow timely entrance into the California workforce, avoid establishing artificial barriers to licensure, and maintain consumer protection.

3. POLICY AND CONSUMER ADVOCACY

DCA advocates on behalf of consumers by ensuring that statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures support and further the mandate and mission of DCA.

4. COMMUNICATION

DCA provides relevant, timely, and accurate information to all stakeholders.

5. SERVICES

DCA provides services to support its boards and bureaus while ensuring compliance with existing laws, rules, and best practices.

6. TECHNOLOGY

DCA explores opportunities to address business needs through technology solutions.

7. ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The DCA standard is to build an exemplary organization through governance, effective leadership, performance, and service.
GOAL 1: ENFORCEMENT

DCA ENSURES ITS BOARDS AND BUREAUS PREVENT, REDUCE, OR ELIMINATE UNLICENSED ACTIVITY AND HARMFUL CONDUCT BY LICENSED PROFESSIONALS WHO POSE A THREAT TO THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF CALIFORNIANS.

1.1 Enhance enforcement training for board and bureau enforcement staff to increase efficiency and quality, and reduce investigation timelines.

1.2 Reduce vacancies in the Division of Investigation (DOI) Health Quality Investigation Unit and Investigation and Enforcement Unit by implementing improved means to attract, recruit, and retain staff.

1.3 Establish a nonsworn investigative unit at DOI that will assist with investigating low-priority cases and develop staff for sworn positions.

1.4 Establish a deputy director position(s) for enforcement oversight to proactively monitor data and develop recommendations regarding board and bureau enforcement functions.
2.1 Continue to educate boards and bureaus about Business and Professions Code Section 139 to improve compliance and to continue to prevent artificial barriers to licensure.

2.2 Establish a deputy director position for licensing oversight to monitor data to proactively develop recommendations.

2.3 Document licensing business processes for all DCA programs for standardization, consistency, and training.

2.4 Improve transparency and communication of the licensing requirements (respective to boards and bureaus) by promoting enhanced education of the licensing process to applicants.

2.5 Partner with boards and bureaus to establish licensing best practices for standardization and consistency.

2.6 Establish a Department ombudsman to help facilitate entry into licensed professions.
GOAL 3: POLICY AND CONSUMER ADVOCACY

DCA ADVOCATES ON BEHALF OF CONSUMERS BY ENSURING THAT STATUTES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES SUPPORT AND FURTHER THE MANDATE AND MISSION OF DCA.

3.1 Partner with boards and bureaus to assess the DCA regulatory review process and reduce timelines.

3.2 Implement a cloud-based regulation tracking system to facilitate concurrent reviews and help keep boards and bureaus better informed during the regulatory review process.

3.3 Create and implement a more detailed board regulation training to enhance board staff’s knowledge about the regulatory process.

3.4 Engage with boards and bureaus to proactively develop a policy direction on a regular basis to achieve Department-wide policy objectives.

GOAL 4: COMMUNICATION

DCA PROVIDES RELEVANT, TIMELY, AND ACCURATE INFORMATION TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

4.1 Formalize and standardize communication by requiring board and bureau staff to adhere to DCA policies and department procedures memoranda (DPMs) and document oversight processes.

4.2 Establish new internal communication channels that enable staff to better recognize their part in the larger DCA community.

4.3 Partner with other stakeholder organizations to better educate the public about DCA’s role.

4.4 Support the boards and bureaus with the development and implementation of their outreach plans to facilitate public awareness of consumer resources and options.

4.5 Improve outreach to diverse communities so that DCA’s communication and consumer protection is reflective of California’s diverse population.
GOAL 5: SERVICES

DCA PROVIDES SERVICES TO SUPPORT ITS BOARDS AND BUREAUS WHILE ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH EXISTING LAWS, RULES, AND BEST PRACTICES.

GENERAL DCA SERVICES

5.1 Educate DCA staff about the roles, expertise, and services provided by DCA divisions to the boards and bureaus to solidify working relationships.

OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

5.2 Establish and maintain real-time position control to monitor board and bureau vacancy metrics.

5.3 Implement a service desk ticketing system for various administrative functions to improve tracking and efficiency.

5.4 Develop training on “Preparing Your Best Budget Change Proposal (BCP) Requests” to better facilitate BCPs that will support organizational needs, fulfill customer service expectations, and achieve proper resource levels.

5.5 Enhance training and tools for boards and bureaus to effectively use the Examination and Certification Online System to facilitate faster and more efficient hiring.

5.6 Implement the statewide FI$CAL system for DCA Accounting and Budgeting.
LEGAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

5.7 Establish a staff upward mobility and retention plan to build a legal team with longevity and decrease vacancies.

5.8 Develop subject matter expertise (for such topics as the Open Meeting Act, anti-trust, employment, conflict of interest, etc.) to improve quality of service and enhance consumer protection.

5.9 Develop and maintain an internal, online opinion bank that houses agency-wide legal opinions to promote consistency with respect to opinions issued by legal staff to boards and bureaus and within the legal office.

SOLID TRAINING AND PLANNING SOLUTIONS

5.10 Research a learning management system to administer, document, track, and report training programs.

5.11 Develop board member training modules on specific topics and offer the trainings in various methods (such as online library, in-person, tutorials) to give board members more effective tools related to their roles.

5.12 Enhance board and bureau enforcement units’ internal ability to train and develop staff.

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION SERVICES

5.13 Partner with boards and bureaus to establish a schedule for timely review of their respective licensing examination programs, regardless of use of state or national exams.
DCA EXPLORES OPPORTUNITIES TO ADDRESS BUSINESS NEEDS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS.

6.1 Increase civic engagement with DCA programs by expanding a dynamic and relevant Web presence. This can be achieved by (1) expanding the functionality, usability, and performance of the Department’s licensee search engines; (2) incorporating geographic information system (GIS) and geo-spatial technologies into DCA’s Web applications; (3) introducing a streamlined process to make DCA licensee datasets available to the public in an automated and secure method; and (4) developing a DCA app to allow access via mobile devices.

6.2 Introduce mobile devices to enhance the enforcement workforce’s abilities in the field.

6.3 Develop software application functionality to support enforcement and field investigations.

6.4 Educate the mobile workforce to better utilize automated tools and devices in their operations.

6.5 Partner with DCA programs in need of technological platform replacement by (1) initiating programs’ analysis and documentation of business processes, (2) educating programs on the State Project Approval Lifecycle to ensure smooth transition to platform replacement, and (3) partnering with DCA programs to develop a methodology to document the unique business and system requirements.

6.6 Increase departmental partnership with internal and external stakeholders by increasing the footprint of audio and video collaboration methods and fully deploying all components of DCA’s Office 365 platform (including Skype for Business and SharePoint).

6.7 Mature the support function for Office of Information Services clients by (1) providing a self-service portal for internal support, (2) providing a fully functioning knowledge library for support assistance, and (3) establishing a configuration management function that promotes equipment upgrades and optimized functionality.
GOAL 7: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

THE DCA STANDARD IS TO BUILD AN EXEMPLARY ORGANIZATION THROUGH GOVERNANCE, EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP, PERFORMANCE, AND SERVICE.

7.1 Improve engagement with the clients on departmental projects and issues.

7.2 Use metrics to identify, manage, and evaluate board and bureau resource needs to improve BCPs, document staff productivity, and assess workload.

7.3 Maintain current DCA policies and DPMs to facilitate staff understanding of DCA protocols.

7.4 Engage with DCA programs, boards, and bureaus to update information and improve DCA’s intranet and the Internet sites to foster staff and stakeholder understanding of DCA objectives.

7.5 Establish an exit process for top management retirements (including executive staff and board and bureau leadership) to stay better apprised with departmental needs, facilitate leadership transition, and protect board and bureau stability.

7.6 Contract with independent organization(s) to perform occupational analyses and salary surveys of management-level positions equivalent to the Executive Officer and Bureau Chief classifications to provide the Department with enhanced ability to attract and retain competitive applicants.
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

To understand the environment in which DCA operates and identify factors that could impact its success, DCA’s SOLID Unit conducted an environmental scan of DCA’s internal and external environments by collecting information through the following methods:

- Interviews conducted with all of DCA’s executive leaders completed during November and December 2016.
- An online survey (collecting qualitative and quantitative information) distributed to all DCA staff, board members, and bureau advisory committee members in November and December 2016.

The themes and trends identified from the environmental scan were discussed by the DCA executive leadership team during a strategic planning session facilitated by SOLID on January 30, 2017. This information guided the development of strategic objectives outlined in this 2017–2020 Strategic Plan.
This strategic plan is based on stakeholder information and discussions facilitated by SOLID for the California Department of Consumer Affairs during late 2016 and early 2017. Subsequent amendments may have been made after adoption of this plan.