

Regulatory/Legislative Report

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Multidisciplinary Advisory Committee (MDC): The Veterinary Medical Board's (VMB) MDC met on January 22 at UC Davis. All committee members were present.

Drs. Kevin Lazarcheff and Jeff Pollard, members of the Complaint Process Audit Subcommittee, reported on the activities of their subcommittee and explained that their goal is to help standardize enforcement between subject matter experts. They also stated that practitioners should be held to "community" standards not "expert" standards.

The MDC reviewed proposed Minimum Standards for Public & Private Shelters. The committee spent considerable time trying to come up with a definition of "herd health", as animals in shelters are treated primarily as a group like large animals. The committee decided that the term "population health" would be more appropriate since it would describe animals of any species. However, the MDC finally decided that the minimum standards for shelters would move forward without Sections 2034 and 2035, so they could put off deciding about the definition of "population health" to a later time.

The MDC voted to approve Sections 2030.6 and 2035.5 with a few minor amendments. These sections define the duties of the supervising veterinarian in the shelter setting and the minimum standards for animal shelter medicine in a fixed facility. Under these new regulations, the supervising veterinarian is required to have direct knowledge of the animal population and to examine the animal(s) consistent with good veterinary practice. Veterinarians will be able to establish written orders for RVTs to perform vaccinations, parasite control and treatment of medical conditions under Indirect Supervision. Veterinary assistants will be able to treat certain medical conditions under Direct Supervision.

Next on the agenda was a discussion of Pet Ambulances. It was determined that the appropriate term is Veterinary Pet Transport, since "ambulance" has a specific definition in human medicine. The subcommittee looking into this issue found that there are a wide variety of services being offered by pet transportation companies, some of which are associated with veterinary practices. It is also clear that most pet transportation vehicles do not meet the standards of a Small Animal Mobile Clinic. The MDC decided that Jessica Sieferman, the EO, should reach out to existing companies to determine just what services they are providing and whether further regulation is needed.

The final issue on the agenda was a discussion on developing guidelines for the discussion of cannabis use with veterinary clients. The legislature passed a bill last year that specifically allows veterinarians to discuss cannabis with their clients, but forbids them to administer or dispense it. The MDC has until January 1, 2020 to come up with guidelines for veterinarians. After much discussion about the boundary between discussion and recommendation, the MDC decided to review the legislation again and come back to the next meeting with more information, including whether the guidelines should include information about toxicity.

The next meeting of the MDC will be on April 16 in Riverside.

Veterinary Medical Board – The VMB met on January 23-24 at UC Davis. All members were present. Staff announced that they are working to put an explanation about the new law requiring veterinarians to offer consultations about prescribed medications on their web site soon.

Dr. Jeff Pollard, Chair of the MDC, presented his report. After discussion, the VMB agreed that staff should investigate the issue of pet transportation and report back at the next meeting.

The VMB moved on to discuss proposed regulations. They created a sub-committee to review Uniform Standards for Substance Abusing Licensees; they voted to amend Section 2032.1, which defines the veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR), by adding that the veterinarian must communicate with the client about a “medical, treatment, diagnostic and/or therapeutic plan appropriate to the circumstance”; they voted to amend Section 2041 to define grounds for discipline.

Next on the agenda was a discussion of legislative proposals. The issue of whether the VMB should regulate the currently unregulated business of pet cremation was first. A member of the public explained how she was convinced that the cremains that she received were obviously not from her pet and that her family was devastated. The members of the VMB were quite sympathetic but they all agreed that the VMB was not the appropriate agency to regulate pet cremation. It was decided that VMB staff would work with the Cemetery and Funeral Bureau to come to an acceptable solution.

The VMB also approved amended language for a regulation defining crimes substantially related to the practice of veterinary medicine and possible rehabilitation as required by a bill that passed last year. The VMB has until July 1, 2020 to come up with regulations. The VMB decided to pull back on legislation regarding the corporate practice of veterinary medicine and ask the MDC to do more research.

A new law that went into effect on January 1, 2019 requires controlled substance prescription forms to include a unique serialized number in a format approved by the Department of Justice. Since there is a backlog in making these forms available to prescribers, the CA State Board of pharmacy released a memo suggesting that prior to July 1, 2019 the enforcement agencies use their judgment when enforcing the law. The VMB also approved amending the law to exempt non-profit/no cost vaccine clinics from paying registration fees.

Dr. Mark Nunez was nominated to serve as a Director for the American Association of State Boards (AAVSB).

The next item on the agenda was a discussion of the CA RVT Exam. Jennifer Loreda, RVT, RVT member of the VMB, suggested that in order to decrease the cost of the exam, the California exam could be a mail-out exam like the California Law Exam for veterinarians. Jessica Sieferman, the EO, said that she had contacted the AAVSB about adding CA content to the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE). She said that she would find out if it was feasible and cost-effective and would report back at the next meeting in April. Nancy Ehrlich, RVT, CaRVTA’s Reg/Leg Advocate, brought up that she had discussed with Ms. Sieferman that there are several references for the 2019 exam that appear to be unrelated to the practice of RVTs. Ms. Sieferman said that she had not had a chance to discuss the issue with the Office of Professional Exam Services yet, but that she would follow up.

Jennifer Loreda, RVT gave her RVT Report. She mentioned that the AAVSB has established a committee to look into the issue of foreign graduate RVTs and that she has been appointed to the committee.

California Exam Statistics:

CA RVT Exam			VTNE	
July-December 2017	78%	Pass	Nov/Dec 2017	53% Pass
Jan – June 2018	98%	Pass	Mar/Apr 2018	67% Pass
July-December 2018	96.2%	Pass	Jul/Aug 2018	68% Pass

The next meeting of the VMB will be April 17-18 in Riverside.