

Regulatory/Legislative Report

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Multidisciplinary Advisory Committee (MDC) – The MDC met on October 8 in Sacramento. All members were present. **The first item on the agenda was discussion of regulatory and statutory proposals that would clarify the role of corporations in veterinary medicine.** The Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) has been concerned that some large corporations are practicing veterinary medicine by telling employed veterinarians how to practice.

Several veterinarians called in to the meeting to express their opinions that the corporations they worked for did indeed interfere with their ability to practice as they saw fit. Two students at UC Davis stated that they had concerns about their ability to practice freely once they graduate. Bonnie Lutz, an attorney who specializes in veterinary medicine, pointed out that any new statutes or regulations need to be easily understood. She also stated that she felt that the new statutes and regulations were unnecessary and could have unintended consequences. She pointed out that it is already illegal for anyone other than a licensed veterinarian to practice veterinary medicine.

The subcommittee that presented the proposals will continue to work on them, including changing the Premise Permit application to clearly state if there is corporate ownership and who is responsible.

Next on the agenda was a discussion about Guidelines for Discussion of the Use of Medical Cannabis in animals. Under current law, the VMB is required to post the Guidelines on their website by January, 2020. The Guidelines were approved and will be sent on to the VMB. SB627, which would allow veterinarians to *recommend* cannabis for their patients, was turned into a 2 year bill, so veterinarians are now limited to discussing, but not recommending cannabis use.

The VMB asked the MDC to discuss finding ways to help shelters recruit veterinarians who would be willing to be the Managing Licensee on the Premise Permit. Several ideas were suggested:

1. Reduce the liability for veterinarians who hold Premise Permits for shelters.
2. Clarify that shelter managers cannot practice medicine.
3. Use the “herd health” model for shelters.

Dr. Grant Miller from CVMA stated that he will be speaking with shelter directors on October 29 and agreed to report back to the VMB in January.

Starting in January 2020, the MDC meeting will be moved to Wednesdays. The next meeting will be held on January 29, 2020, location to be determined.

Veterinary Medical Board – The VMB met on October 9-11 in Sacramento. All members were present except for Public Member Alana Yanez.

Under Public Comment Not on the Agenda, a member of the public complained that the VMB has not been responsive to complaints about injuries to animals at rodeos. He sighted several instances of injured animals that had not been handled according to the rules. The VMB agreed to look into the matter.

The VMB announced that due to their seriously deficient fund condition, they were proposing an Emergency Regulation to increase all fees to the statutory maximum. This regulation would raise the application fee for RVTs from \$150 to \$350. It would also raise the RVT license fee from \$160 to \$350. Fees for veterinarians would be raised accordingly. Virtually everyone in the audience objected to the steep increase in RVT fees, pointing out that many RVT candidates will likely end up not applying and many RVTs will end up not renewing their licenses. VMB RVT member Jennifer Loreda, made an impassioned statement about the VMB solving their fiscal problem by raising fees without considering lowering costs. In spite of all the objections, the VMB voted to approve the fee increases as proposed. They suggested that they will move forward with a proposal to increase the Premise Permit fee – perhaps on a sliding scale based on the size of the practice. However, this change will require legislation and could not go into effect until January 2021. They also suggested that if they are able to raise sufficient funds from increasing the Premise Permit fees, they would also reduce the fees for RVTs.

Once the fee increase emergency regulation is published, stakeholders will have 45 days to comment. If sufficient negative comments were received, the VMB would hold a public hearing. They would have an opportunity at that point to amend their proposal if they wished.

The Board of Pharmacy is proposing guidelines for compounding drugs that would not allow all practitioners, including veterinarians to dispense compounded medications. The VMB will work with the Board of Pharmacy to see if they will exempt veterinarians, as compounded drugs play an important role. In veterinary medicine

The VMB approved proposed language for updated regulations related to Uniform Standards for Substance Abusing Licensees. The proposal will be published for a 45-day comment period.

Jennifer Loreda, RVT presented the RVT Report. She stated that the VMB needs to press the AAVSB to release the VTNE scores by school. California regulations require the schools to maintain a pass rate of no lower than 10% below the average, but without the scores by school, the VMB is unable to hold the schools to that standard. She also condemned the proposed RVT fee increases as unreasonable. She suggested that the VMB send out a survey to determine what RVTs are being paid and if employers are paying licensing fees for RVTs.

As part of the Executive Management Reports, VMB staff reported that they have several vacancies that are causing a backlog in application processing. They will be borrowing 2 employees from the Department of Consumer Affairs, at least through December, to help with the backlog. They are also working to update the BreEze computer system to make it clear if fingerprints are needed for renewal. **The VMB noted that licensees can renew up to 90 days prior to their renewal date, and encouraged licensees to renew early.** They also stated that for those needing to be fingerprinted, there is a fingerprinting form under the Applicants tab on their web site. Applicants are encouraged to put in both the DOJ and the FBI on the form as agencies to send the report to. The VMB is planning to identify all licensees who do not have fingerprints on file and will notify them.

They also reminded the audience that statute says that if the licensee has complied with all the rules for renewal, they can continue to practice even if their license has yet to be renewed by the VMB.

The VMB reelected Dr. Jaymie Noland as Board President and Dr. Cheryl Waterhouse as Vice-President then moved on to Strategic Planning. CaRVTA did not attend that meeting.

The next meeting of the VMB will be on January 3-31, location to be determined.