RESOLUTION 2-2013
Regular Winter Session

Submitted by
Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association
American Association of Bovine Practitioners

ADDING OVERSIGHT TO THE VETERINARIAN-CLIENT-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP
DEFINITION

RESOLVED, that the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) revise the definition of the veterinarian-client-patient relationship by inserting a new d) and re-lettering the current d). The new d) would read: “The veterinarian provides oversight of treatment, compliance and outcome.”

“Veterinarian-client-patient relationship” means that all of the following are required:

a) The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of the patient and the client has agreed to follow the veterinarian’s instructions.

b) The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the patient to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the patient. This means that the veterinarian is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the patient by virtue of:
   i. a timely examination of the patient by the veterinarian, or
   ii. medically appropriate and timely visits by the veterinarian to the operation where the patient is managed.

c) The veterinarian is readily available for follow-up evaluation or has arranged for the following:
   i. veterinary emergency coverage, and
   ii. continuing care and treatment.

d) Patient records are maintained.

e) The veterinarian provides oversight of treatment, compliance and outcome.

Statement about the Resolution

The Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association (WVMA) would like to introduce a resolution to add the following to the veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) definition: The veterinarian provides oversight of treatment, compliance and outcome.

Oversight is defined as supervision or watchful care. Oversight is needed to protect animal welfare, public health and food safety. Oversight is not species specific. All facets of veterinary medicine will be strengthened with oversight. It will enable veterinarians to evaluate effectiveness, productivity and to maintain integrity.

Implementing oversight into the veterinarian-client-patient relationship will enhance the welfare of the patient(s), ultimately reducing pain and suffering, and improving quality of life. Oversight allows veterinarians to work as an advocate for the patient(s) by assessing the compliance and outcome of treatments. Veterinarian oversight is critical as animal health has implications ranging from the health of the individual animal, to the health and well-being of human communities, to food safety and global security.
The WVMA developed a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points for Proper Drug Use Program (HACCP) for Proper Drug Use, being implemented on dairy farms throughout the state. Through the extensive research needed for development of this program, one of the most significant findings was that the lack of veterinarian oversight often leads to improper drug use. This ultimately puts the safety of meat and milk at risk.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is calling for more veterinarian oversight of “medicated feeds.” Dairy and beef producer groups are requiring producers to have their veterinarian(s) sign a pledge document stating the producer has a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship. These documents are used to assure the buyers at the processor level and the consumer level that oversight is being provided by a veterinarian, as it pertains to animal welfare and proper drug use.

In herd health medicine, whether food producing animals or shelter animals, strengthened oversight will support the veterinarian’s role in providing supervision and guidance as well as improving protocol and standard operating procedures compliance. It will also provide the opportunity to train and re-train those executing the prevention and treatment plans.

In companion animal medicine, oversight will enable veterinarians to adjust therapy more quickly to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of treatment plans.

Oversight will better enable veterinarians to monitor vaccination and parasite control programs, surgical outcomes and the healing process, and nutrition and overall wellness of patients.

The Center for Disease Control states: “Approximately 75% of recently emerging infectious diseases affecting humans are diseases of animal origin; approximately 60% of all human pathogens are zoonotic.” Closer oversight of all species will allow veterinarians to identify and report these public health risks.

Adding oversight to the VCPR definition will engage us in moving the profession forward by being able to better identify epidemiology trends, areas for additional training and standard of care issues that need to be changed/improved, and areas where our profession needs additional research.

If approved by the House of Delegates, the proposed language would be incorporated into the Model Veterinary Practice Act and the Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics. According to the AVMA, these two documents have not yet been harmonized.

**Financial Impact:** None

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