

**RESOLUTION #8—2023
Regular Winter Session**

Submitted by
Board of Directors

**REVISED POLICY ON THE VETERINARIAN'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING APPROPRIATE
SELECTION AND USE OF SERVICE, ASSISTANCE, EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, AND
THERAPY ANIMALS**

RESOLVED that the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) House of Delegates adopt the revised policy on The Veterinarian's Role in Supporting Appropriate Selection and Use of Service, Assistance, Emotional Support, and Therapy Animals as noted in the [attachment](#) (additions are underlined, deletions are ~~struck through~~).

Statement about the Resolution

The policy on the Veterinarian's Role in Supporting Appropriate Selection and Use of Service, Assistance, Emotional Support, and Therapy Animals was developed in 2017 and reviewed by the Steering Committee on Human-Animal Interactions. The Policy serves as a foundation for further educational and lobbying efforts to promote appropriate use of service, emotional support, and therapy animals. Building on this and the AVMA's other policies related to service, emotional support, and therapy animals, multiple resources have been created to support veterinarians caring for animals in these unique roles. These include the white paper *Assistance Animals: Rights of Access and the Problem of Fraud* and related Axon webinar; an FAQ: Considering partnership with a service dog; a client handout defining service, emotional and therapy animals; and a brochure outlining the veterinarian's role in caring for these types of animals. All can be accessed at avma.org/assistanceanimals.

The proposed revisions are largely editorial and maintain the focus on simultaneously promoting the appropriate use of service, emotional support, and therapy animals and discouraging fraudulent activities. The addition of the term "emotional support animal" in the initial list of animals to clarifies that they are included in the categories of animals covered in this policy. This addition and the existence of the separate policy on emotional support animals made the example statement regarding emotional support animals unnecessary. Also, a new statement promotes awareness that communication should be tailored to accommodate clients partnering with these types of animals. Finally, language was altered to more accurately represent the supportive role veterinarians play in assisting clients and their communities.

Financial Impact: None

	Board of Directors	House Advisory Committee	Reference Committee #2	House of Delegates
Recommend Approval	X	X		
Recommend Disapproval				
Recommend Referral to...			...to the BOD for further consideration by the Steering Committee on Human-Animal Interaction (SCHAI).	...to the BOD for further consideration by the Steering Committee on Human-Animal Interaction (SCHAI).
No Recommendation				
Recommend Postpone Indefinitely				
(use this space for additional narrative, if needed)				