



**New York State Veterinary
Medical Society's**

**2020
Legislative
Agenda**



Strengthening a Veterinarian's Ability to Treat Patients in a Timely Manner

Compounding – A.2915 (Zebrowski)/S.4343 (Metzger)

NYSVMS continues to advocate for legislation that would permit pharmacists to dispense drugs, including veterinary-specific compounded medications, to a veterinarian. The bill would also permit a veterinarian to keep such drugs in stock for administration and sale pursuant to a non-patient specific regimen. Enactment of this legislation would bolster a veterinarian's ability to treat animals in a timely fashion, as there is often a time lag between when a medication is compounded and when it can be delivered to the patient.

Protecting a Veterinarian's License to Practice Veterinary Medicine

Devocalization – A.1897 (Zebrowski)

Legislation to prohibit the procedure known as bark softening in dogs has been introduced in the legislature a number of times over the past several years. Veterinarians report that they perform this procedure infrequently, with many veterinarians having no experience with it at all; however, they also report that where bark softening has been done it is the final means of preventing euthanasia for a dog that has resisted behavior modification. NYSVMS strongly opposes routine bark softening or devocalization as a means of making a dog more appealing for sale but believes that because the practice does become necessary in certain situations it should not be banned completely. NYSVMS has shared proposed amendments to the existing language with past bill sponsors that would not ban bark softening outright but would create stricter standards for performance of the procedure.

Medically Important Anti-Microbials – S.5742-A (Kavanagh)/A.8335 (Romeo) AND S.2367 (Kavanagh)

Veterinarians are committed to protecting the health of animals and people by judiciously using antibiotics for appropriate prevention, control, and treatment of bacterial illnesses in animals. The FDA has already worked with veterinarians to establish extensive measures to control the spread of anti-microbial resistance through the Veterinary Feed Directive. This legislation would severely restrict the practice of food animal veterinarians and add onerous reporting requirements to the already restricted time and resources of the veterinary profession. The consequences of implementation would be a substantial reduction in the welfare of animals in small farms, and increased difficulties in recruitment of large and food animal veterinarians. NYSVMS opposes this legislation as written and hopes to continue to work with the sponsors to educate them on the steps already taken to promote judicious use of medically important anti-microbials in veterinary practice and to ensure that medically important anti-microbials remain available to our profession.

Protecting Veterinarians from Liability

Animal Guardianship – A.1113 (Glick)/S.3414 (Martinez)

Legislation traditionally introduced in the Assembly would establish a cause of action for the wrongful injury or death of a companion animal and provides for injunctive relief and compensatory and punitive damages. While NYSVMS understands and supports the protection and quality care of animals and believes that those intentionally harming an animal should be subject to punishment,

the concern with this legislation is that it could unfairly penalize veterinarians for routine care, treatment, or invasive procedures with unintended negative results. NYSVMS strongly opposes this legislation based on its potential detrimental impact on veterinarians and the increased costs that could result from lawsuits filed pursuant to this proposed cause of action.

Reporting Abuse – A.1170 (Rosenthal)

NYSVMS traditionally opposes legislation that would change the current reporting requirements imposed upon veterinarians who reasonably and in good faith suspects abuse of an animal. The current standard, which indicates that veterinarians may report suspected abuse and disclose treatment records, would be increased if this bill became law and veterinarians would be required to report the suspicion of abuse. While veterinarians immediately report abuse if they suspect an animal under their care is being mistreated, implementation of this bill could subject veterinarians to increased liability if a sign of abuse is inadvertently missed or misinterpreted as something else. NYSVMS believes this issue should be looked at and addressed comprehensively, with adequate funding for training provided to those investigating abuse and clearly-established pathways for reporting incidents of abuse. NYSVMS is working with legislators and advocates to draft amendments to this legislation that would address some of these concerns.

Buoy's Law – S.3959-C (Brooks) /A.6502-A (Englebright)

Buoy's Law codifies the information which veterinarians need to provide about the side-effects of the medications they prescribe. NYSVMS originally opposed this legislation, but after a period of discussion a substantially amended version of the bill was passed by the Senate. We are now in support of the assembly passing this bill using the same language adopted by the Senate. The result of these amendments is that the requirements of the bill mirror current best-practice.

Informed Consent for Euthanasia – S.1555 (Serrano) /A.5699 (Englebright)

This bill requires informed consent for the humane euthanasia of companion animals; as defined in the legislation, that would mean: prior to the humane euthanasia of an animal, a veterinarian must explain to the owner the various methods which could be utilized to humanely euthanize the animal, the benefits and risks of those methods, the negative impacts of each method, the alternative method to be used if the preferred method cannot be used, and that method's negative impacts and risks. The bill further requires that a veterinarian answer all questions the owner has and allow an owner to stay with the animal during the procedure, and forbids the use of intracardiac injection for euthanasia unless the animal is heavily sedated, anesthetized, or comatose unless it is the most humane option available. NYSVMS is not opposed to informed consent, and veterinarians take not just the medical aspects of euthanasia seriously, they also understand and value the relationship between an owner and their companion animal and how difficult it is to be confronted with an animal's death. Part of the process when determining that an animal will be euthanized is choosing the most humane method based on training and circumstances; offering a menu of options to an animal's owner as this bill would require is time-consuming and insensitive to the needs of the animal and their owner. NYSVMS is in active conversations about potential amendments to this legislation.

Investing in the Profession of Veterinary Medicine

NYSVMS supports all efforts to reinstate necessary funding to Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine so that the school's important training programs are fully funded and operational. NYSVMS also advocates for additional investments in loan forgiveness opportunities for veterinary school graduates. The cost of higher education continues to increase, serving as a deterrent to those interested in pursuing the practice of veterinary medicine. NYSVMS values young professionals and wants to ensure they continue to enter the profession without needing to weigh the cost and potential debt against their desire to work as a veterinarian.

NYSVMS also supports the preservation of funding for various research initiatives for rural veterinarians, farm veterinarians, and large animal veterinarians. Continued availability for research projects related to farming, dairy- and food-producing animals, and other large animals is imperative to ensure that the research and funding in New York State is inclusive of all animal species.

Increasing Savings to the Cost of Practicing Veterinary Medicine – A.602 (Rosenthal)

NYSVMS supports legislation that would establish an exemption from sales tax for drugs and medical equipment used in the practice of veterinary medicine. The costs of running a small veterinary practice add up, and NYSVMS supports all efforts by the State of New York to reduce the tax burden on practicing veterinarians. ●

YOUR BUSINESS *is* OUR BUSINESS



Burzenski & Company understands the veterinary business. We've been providing specialized financial and business consulting services to veterinary practices nationwide since 1983. Our operational consulting, accounting, and bookkeeping services allow you to take care of animals while we take care of business.



BURZENSKI & COMPANY, PC
VETERINARY FINANCIAL ADVISORS

Find out how well we understand your business. Contact Gary I. Glassman, CPA at gary@burzenski.com or 203.468.8133.

100 South Shore Drive, East Haven, CT 06512-4668
www.veterinaryfinancialadvisors.com

