

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Amend the Maine Veterinary Practice Act

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 32 MRSA §4877, as enacted by PL 2015, c. 209, §21, is amended to read:

§ 4877. Veterinarian-client-patient relationship required; Good Samaritan exception; informed consent exception

In order to practice veterinary medicine, a veterinarian must be engaged in a veterinarian-client-patient relationship. A veterinarian-client-patient relationship exists when a veterinarian:

- 1. Engaged by client.** Has been engaged by the client;
- 2. Assumed responsibility.** Has assumed responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of the patient;
- 3. Knowledge of patient.** Has sufficient knowledge of the patient to initiate a preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the patient and has personal knowledge of the keeping and care of the patient as a result of:
 - A. A timely examination of the patient by the veterinarian; or
 - B. A medically appropriate and timely visit or visits by the veterinarian to the patient while that patient is under the care of the veterinarian's practice;
- 4. Follow-up evaluation.** Is readily available for follow-up evaluation or has arranged for veterinary emergency coverage and continuing care and treatment; and
- 5. Records.** Maintains patient records.

A licensed veterinarian who in good faith engages in the practice of veterinary medicine by rendering or attempting to render emergency care to a patient when a client cannot be identified and a veterinarian-client-patient relationship is not established is not subject to any disciplinary sanctions authorized by Title 10, section 8003, subsection 5-A based solely upon the veterinarian's inability to establish a veterinarian-client-patient relationship.

A licensed veterinarian may administer a vaccination against rabies, distemper, parvovirus, rhinotracheitis or panleukopenia in a vaccination clinic setting in the absence of a veterinarian-client-patient relationship if the veterinarian obtains a signed informed consent waiver from the pet owner. The informed consent waiver must include information to ensure that the pet owner is aware of the potential adverse events that may result from vaccinations and is aware that a vaccine given at a vaccination clinic is not a substitute for a complete physical examination.

SUMMARY

This bill amends the Maine Veterinary Practice Act to allow an exception to the requirement that a veterinarian must be engaged in a veterinarian-client-patient relationship in order to practice veterinary medicine. This exception allows a veterinarian to administer a vaccination against rabies, distemper, parvovirus, rhinotracheitis or panleukopenia at a vaccination clinic if the pet owner signs an informed consent waiver.