



To: Maine Legislature Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

Date: April 3, 2025

Re: LD 1220 An Act 899 An Act to Allow Chiropractors to Treat Animals

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and distinguished members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. My name is Robert Reed, I am the Executive Director of the Maine Chiropractic Association (MCA) testifying on behalf of my employer and the over 200 Chiropractors we represent. I speak today in support of LD 1220.

This bill would allow a trained and certified animal chiropractor to obtain a license to treat animals for those conditions where chiropractic care may be appropriate. Similar legislation has either been passed or is in process in many states across the country and its roots date back to 1899.

In summer 2024 we began analysis at the request of some of our members and after years of our patients asking if we could provide chiropractic care for their pet. We immediately reached out to the Maine Veterinary Medicine Association, wanting this to be collaborative and supportive of their work. Throughout the process we have kept them up to date with all actions, answered their questions, and continue to develop the best practices. The bill currently before you is not an end point, but a beginning and with my written testimony I am providing the current draft of the revised bill. We would ask the committee to allow time for the two groups to continue to work on this before your workshop in hopes of presenting a better bill.

I would be happy to answer any questions about the process, and where our remaining differences are, how we might address them and/or ask the committee to make decisions in the interests of both groups. I will defer any questions surrounding the training, certification and questions of a clinical nature to others as that is not my expertise. Our goal is simply to allow trained, certified and licensed animal chiropractors to care for these animals when chiropractic care is appropriate and to report back to the primary veterinarian when doing so as to the findings of examination and any treatment plan offered.

Robert Reed, Executive Director

Maine Chiropractic Association

132nd Maine Legislature

LD 1220

An Act to Allow Chiropractors to Treat Animals

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

Sec. 1. 32 MRSA §456 is enacted to read:

§456. Animal chiropractic care

As used in this LD

- (a) "Animal" means any living animal other than a human being.
- (b) "Animal chiropractic" means the evaluation and treatment of an animal's vertebral or extremity joint dysfunction through spinal, joint, or musculoskeletal manipulative therapy or soft tissue therapy. Spinal adjustments are done by hand and provide a process that allows animals better communication within their nervous systems.
- (c) "Animal chiropractic practitioner" means a person licensed as a chiropractor by the State Board of Chiropractic Examiners and who holds a current, valid certification from any of the following: (1) The (AVCA) American Veterinary Chiropractic Association, unless otherwise specified by regulation. (2) The (IVCA) International Veterinary Chiropractic Association, unless otherwise specified by regulation. (3) Any other credentialing organization that the board specifies by regulation adopted under this article.
- (d) "Board" means the State Board of Chiropractic Licensing
- (e) "Licensed veterinarian" means a person licensed by the Veterinary Medical Board pursuant to the Veterinary Medicine Laws

1.. Certification to perform animal chiropractic care. The board shall certify a person licensed under this chapter to perform animal chiropractic care if the licensee has successfully completed and graduated from an AVCA or IVCA certified program of a minimum of 210 hours of course of instruction in animal chiropractic care approved by the Chiropractic Licensing Board.

After receiving an initial certification from the board, the licensee must successfully complete at least 20 hours of continuing education prior to each renewal of the licensee's license that is specific to the diagnosis and treatment of animals, including a 2-hour course on contagious, infectious and zoonotic diseases in this State and other locations that might affect a licensee's animal patients.

Anyone not having that certification would be required to have direct in-person supervision of a veterinarian.

3. Authorization to perform animal chiropractic care. A person licensed under this chapter who is certified by the board pursuant to subsection 2 may perform animal chiropractic care on a conscious animal in accordance with the requirements of this subsection.

(a) A chiropractor who is not registered as an animal chiropractic practitioner by the board pursuant to this article shall not do either of the following if they are not under the supervision of a veterinarian: (1) Practice animal chiropractic. (2) Represent that the person is, or hold themselves out to the public as, an animal chiropractic practitioner.

(b) All of the following apply to a chiropractor who is an animal chiropractic practitioner: (1) The chiropractor shall register with the board as an animal chiropractic practitioner in a manner specified by the board. (2) The chiropractor may provide animal chiropractic only to types of animals on which the animal chiropractic practitioner has received training. (3) The chiropractor may provide animal chiropractic without supervision by a licensed veterinarian. (4) The chiropractor shall obtain a completed application for care form for each animal evaluated or treated

(c). (5) The chiropractor shall maintain for at least three years a medical record for each animal evaluated or treated that includes the application for care form and, on request, shall provide the medical record to the animal's veterinarian in a timely fashion.

(c) Before providing animal chiropractic in accordance with this section, a chiropractor shall require the animal's owner, owner's agent, or another person responsible for the animal to complete and sign an application for care form that contains at least the following: (1) A statement that the chiropractor is not a licensed veterinarian and cannot maintain primary responsibility for the animal's care. (2) A statement that animal chiropractic is not intended to replace traditional veterinary care and is considered an alternative therapy to be used concurrently and in conjunction with traditional veterinary care by a licensed veterinarian. (3) A question as to whether the animal has been seen by a licensed veterinarian within the past 12 months. (4) A question as to whether a licensed veterinarian has provided a diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal for which animal chiropractic is sought, and if so, a request to specify the diagnosis. (5) A statement authorizing the chiropractor to provide animal chiropractic to the animal.

(d) The board shall maintain and make available to the public a list of animal chiropractic practitioners who are registered with the board pursuant to this section.

(e) This section does not restrict a licensed veterinarian from engaging in the practice of veterinary medicine pursuant to the Veterinary Practice Act or prevent any other individual from lawfully acting in a manner pursuant to the scope of practice pursuant to this division.

(f) An animal's veterinarian is not liable for any actions or omissions of an animal chiropractic practitioner who provides animal chiropractic in accordance with this section.

(g) (1) An animal chiropractic practitioner shall comply with all regulations of the board applicable to chiropractors, unless otherwise specified by the board by regulation. (2) The board may adopt regulations necessary to implement this article. The following regulations, if adopted, shall be adopted in consultation with the Veterinary Medical

Board in accordance with paragraph (2): (A) Regulations regarding standards of medicine or care for an animal. (B) Regulations to remove or specify additional credentialing organizations for purposes of subdivision (c) of Section 1070. (3) When considering adopting, amending, or repealing a regulation, the board shall, in a timely manner, provide to the Veterinary Medical Board the full text of the regulation proposed to be adopted, amended, or repealed. The Veterinary Medical Board shall informally vote on whether to adopt, amend, or repeal the regulation at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Regardless of whether the vote is affirmative or not, the State Board of Chiropractic Licensing may proceed with the adoption, amendment, or repeal of the regulation in accordance with the current law.

(h) A chiropractor who works under the supervision of a veterinarian is authorized to practice animal chiropractic without being registered by the board pursuant to this section.

B. If a licensee suspects that the animal has a contagious disease required to be reported under state law, the licensee shall notify the primary veterinarian and the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

4. Malpractice insurance. A person licensed under this chapter who is certified by the board to perform animal chiropractic care shall at all times maintain malpractice insurance specific to animal chiropractic care.

Sec. 2. 32 MRSA §4860, sub-§13 is enacted to read:

13. Licensed chiropractor certified to perform animal chiropractic care. A chiropractor licensed under chapter 9 performing animal chiropractic care in accordance with the requirements of section 456.

SUMMARY

This bill authorizes a chiropractor licensed in this State to provide chiropractic care to animals when the chiropractor is certified and licensed to perform animal chiropractic care and meets other conditions specified in the bill.