



Legislative Update March 2026

In late March, the [CVMA Board of Governors](#) will take positions on California legislation that affects the veterinary profession. But a few priority bills have already been discussed among the CVMA leadership, and a couple of them have been assigned early positions. Read more about priority legislation below. For more information on the legislative bills being followed by the CVMA this year, log in to [cvma.net](#) and then visit the [Legislative Action Center](#) in the Advocacy section.

Among the top CVMA priority bills are:

[AB 1999](#) (Kalra)
CVMA Co-Sponsored Bill
CVMA Position: [Support](#)



Currently, AB 1999 is still in “spot bill” format- meaning that the actual language of the bill has yet to be published. It is expected to be in print by mid-March.

This extensive measure is co-sponsored by the CVMA, California Veterinary Medical Board (CVMB), San Diego Humane Society (SD Humane) and Social Compassion in Legislation (SCIL). It takes a proactive and innovative multi-pronged approach to improving access to veterinary care, helping animal shelters to connect with veterinarians to address pet overpopulation and improve the lives of shelter animals, improving veterinary telemedicine practices, and curbing the practice of veterinary medicine on animals by their owners. Specifically, the bill does the following:

- 1) Changes California’s Veterinarian-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR) law from “condition-specific” to “patient-specific.” California is one of only two states in the nation that requires a veterinarian to examine a patient for each and every condition that they treat in order to establish a valid VCPR to justify the provision of therapy and medication. In other states, a VCPR is valid based on an annual exam of the animal patient. In turn, the annual exam vests the veterinarian

with the authority to use their professional discretion to decide whether or not they need to examine a patient in order to treat it, or whether they can provide treatment within a good standard of practice based on their general knowledge of the patient via annual examination. California's current "condition-specific" VCPR requirement creates a significant access to veterinary care barrier since animal owners cannot afford the time or money to have their animal examined by the veterinarian for every single condition that requires treatment. In addition, most California veterinarians are unaware of California's "condition-specific" VCPR requirement, which means that in their fair and honest attempts to serve the needs of their client and patients, they may unknowingly be placing their licenses at risk.

- 2) Creates a "retired volunteer" license category at the CVMB for veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians who volunteer at shelters, humane societies, or non-profit animal organizations. This special license category will be available at a discounted licensure fee and will be offered with a reduced number of administrative requirements in order to streamline the licensure process.
- 3) Creates a "shelter veterinarian" license category to streamline licensure for veterinarians who are employed to work solely and exclusively at an animal control shelter or humane society.
- 4) Improves California's veterinary telemedicine law by incorporating new definitions of key terms such as "telemedicine," "teleconsultation," and "teletriage" and amending current language to clarify how telemedicine may be practiced in the state. The passage of AB 1399, California's veterinary telemedicine law, in 2024 inadvertently overrode existing regulations, which resulted in the unintended consequence of veterinary telemedicine now having limitations that were not previously present. The amendments provided in AB 1999 will restore those provisions.
- 5) Narrows California's "owner-exemption" law which permits animal owners to practice veterinary medicine on their own animals. This law was originally instituted to accommodate California's massive animal agriculture industry in which surgical procedures such as castration, dehorning, and others are routinely performed by agriculture producers without veterinarian involvement. Unfortunately, California's owner exemption law does not specify which species of animals apply, and thus all animals are included in the law. This commonly results in "loopholes" in which non-veterinarians are performing surgical and

dental procedures on dogs and cats. AB 1999 will prohibit owners from performing surgical or dental procedures on their dogs and cats.

Status: Currently in “spot bill” format with no published language. AB 1999 will likely be heard in the Assembly Business and Professions Committee in April, however an exact committee hearing date has yet to be assigned.

AB 2010 (Soria): Veterinary medicine: veterinary surgery premises: spay and neuter services.

CVMA Position: No position presently assigned

This measure is sponsored by the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SFSPCA) and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) along with a high-quality high-volume spay/neuter (HQHVSN) non-profit organization called Animal Balance. The legislation seeks to remove select minimum surgery room standards at HQHVSN events in order to enable the entities facilitating the events to accommodate the large number of animals needing to be surgically sterilized. HQHVSN events often take place in an “assembly-line” configuration, which has proved efficient, safe, and effective through the tens of thousands of dogs and cats that have been successfully spayed or neutered at them. But California law requires veterinary surgery rooms to be separate and distinct from other rooms, with fully closeable doors, no open shelving, and no direct access from the outside of the premises. Such provisions are often excessively burdensome for HQHVSN operations, which operate out of improvised facilities not specifically constructed for the purpose of sterile surgery.

See the Author’s press release [here](#).

Status: AB 2010 will likely be heard in the Assembly Business and Professions Committee in April, however an exact committee hearing date has yet to be assigned.

SB 1269 (Ochoa Bogh): Chiropractors: animal chiropractic practitioners.

CVMA Position: Oppose

This bill is essentially a recycled version of the same Author’s 2025 legislation ([SB 687](#)) that permits chiropractors who have taken a certification course to expand their practices to include animals by becoming a “animal chiropractic practitioner.” Last year’s bill was held over by the Author as a “two-year bill,” largely due to extensive concerns raised by a sizeable CVMA-led coalition opposition, as well as by the CVMB.



Despite some minor amendments, SB 1269 will, like its predecessor, circumvent veterinarian involvement in animal chiropractic cases by allowing direct access to chiropractors by consumers. The bill will permit chiropractors to diagnose and treat animals, despite them having no formal training on animals as part of their standardized licensing curriculum. There are multiple examples across animal species in which a complex medical condition, often insidious in its onset, can mimic a chiropractic condition. Chiropractors have no training to identify these conditions, which can result in a delay in proper treatment, prolonged animal suffering, and unnecessary cost to consumers who may instinctively seek a chiropractor for a divergent condition in their pet.

This bill will also place oversight of animal chiropractic practitioners under the California Board of Chiropractic Examiners, a regulatory entity with no animal-related expertise. It circumvents the CVMB and does nothing to address premises minimum standards for animal chiropractors, such as those required of all veterinarians who operate veterinary hospitals. The legislation also does not address the likely possibility that dogs, cats, horses and human beings will all be treated under one roof- a concept that the public would likely find unacceptable if applied to a physician's or dentist's office.

If passed, this bill will take the unprecedented step of permitting human health care practitioners to practice veterinary medicine. **Scope of practice expansion attempts by human health care practitioners remains the highest opposition priority of the CVMA.** In the case of chiropractors, the CVMA believes that California's existing law, which has been in effect for over 30 years and requires a chiropractor to work on animals under the direct supervision of a veterinarian, is the best model for animal and consumer protection.

Should the legislature entertain a scope of practice creep attempt like this one, which human health care provider is next? And if a post-degree certification course is all that is needed for chiropractors to expand their scope of practice to include animals, then why would reciprocity not be granted to veterinarians who take a certification course to perform chiropractic adjustments on human beings?

These are among some of the many concerns that the CVMA has with this reckless scope of practice expansion attempt. For the protection of animals and consumers, this bill and any scope of practice expansion attempts will remain among the CVMA's highest opposition priorities.

Status: This bill will first be heard in the Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee, with a date to be determined.

CVMA members may visit the [CVMA Legislative Action Center](#) and login for a complete list of the bills that the CVMA is following and for more individual bill information.