CALIFORNIA VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Legislative Update September 2026



In late March the CVMA Board of Governors took positions on California legislation that affects the veterinary profession. Among the 30+ bills being followed by the CVMA, a few priority bills are being focused on because of their significant potential impact on the profession. 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.

CVMA Speaks Out Against Scope of Practice Expansion Attempts at Capitol

On June 29, the CVMA **testified in opposition** to two bills—**AB 2774** and **AB 2775**—that were potentially going to include new language that would allow all licensed human health care providers to expand their scopes of practice to include animals following the completion of a certification program.

The CVMA has a long history of successfully fighting scope creep attempts by chiropractors and physical therapists, including **stalled legislation** earlier this year that would have permitted chiropractors who have taken a certification course to expand their practices to include animals by becoming a “animal chiropractic practitioner.”

AB 2774 and 2775 are atypical legislative vehicles for scope expansion language to be introduced because they are "sunset review" bills for the Physical Therapy Board of California and State Board of Chiropractic Examiners, respectively. During a sunset review, the California Legislature conducts a review of each regulatory board within the Department of Consumer Affairs to determine if it is still necessary, cost-effective, and performing its intended duties. The language set forth by each agency is historically noncontroversial "clean-up" language, for if the sunset bill does not pass, the agency's authority expires and it is legally abolished.

However, this year’s sunset reviews for the Physical Therapy Board of California (AB 2774) and State Board of Chiropractic Examiners (AB 2775)

proposed last-minute amendments that would have invited **all** licensed human health care providers to practice veterinary medicine. Furthermore, the model framework language provided no reciprocity for veterinarians to practice on humans.

CVMA Past-President and Co-Legislative Chair Dr. Keith Rode and Director of Regulatory Affairs Dr. Grant Miller testified alongside Jessica Sieferman, the Executive Officer of the California Veterinary Medical Board (CVMB), as opposition witnesses against these proposed amendments at the Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee meeting on Monday.

The committee members debated the issue following the CVMA and CVMB opposition statements and in turn received assurances from the committee chair that the proposed language would not be included in the bills. Rather, the bill analyses task both the Physical Therapy Board and the Board of Chiropractic Examiners to further develop a pathway for the licensees to work on animals with adequate consumer protections in place.

It is likely that stakeholder meetings will occur in the coming months, and the CVMA will be actively participating to represent the veterinary profession in these matters. The CVMA will continue to elevate scope of practice expansion attempts as our #1 opposition priority.

Watch the CVMA bill hearing testimony here.

Among the top CVMA priority bills are:

AB 1999 (Kalra) Veterinary Medicine
CVMA Co-Sponsored Bill
CVMA Position: Support



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 because it requires veterinarians to examine patients for every specific condition that they treat, rather than allowing them to use their professional discretion to decide whether they need to see a patient or not. 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: **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR.**

Read the CVMA support letter **here.**
Read the AB 1999 fact sheet **here.**
Watch the AB 1999 Assembly B&P bill hearing **here.**

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



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.

Status: **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR.**

Read the CVMA support letter **here.**
Read the Author's AB 2010 press release **here.**
Watch the AB 2010 Assembly B&P Hearing **here.**

AB 1733 (Lee): License and registration renewal: continuing education
CVMA Position:* *Support



This measure is sponsored by the California Animal Welfare Association (Cal Animals) and it aims to change California's

existing veterinarian and registered veterinary technician (RVT) continuing education (CE) credit statute in order to help attract veterinarians and RVTs to shelters and to help address California's pet overpopulation crisis. Current law permits veterinarians who offer no-cost spay/neuter surgical services to an animal shelter and RVTs who offer spay/neuter assisting and support services to a shelter to obtain CE credit. Currently, veterinarians may earn up to four units of CE credit, and RVTs up to two units. However, the CE credit is currently listed in statute under the "self-study" category, which leaves little incentive for veterinarians or RVTs to actually volunteer at a shelter, given that "self-study" CE credit can be earned in numerous less cumbersome ways.

Thus, AB 1733 will move the pro-bono spay/neuter CE credit out of the "self-study" category into its own category. While the CE will not be considered "live-interactive," it will be classified next to another existing CE option that permits veterinarians and RVTs who attend Veterinary Medical Board meetings to earn CE credit.

The intention of this move is to better incentivize veterinarians and RVTs to volunteer at shelters. Shelters are in need of veterinary support, and California consumers are in need of low-cost spay/neuter services in order to curb California's epic pet overpopulation problem.

Status: SIGNED BY GOVERNOR.

Read the CVMA support letter **here.**

SB 1269 (Ochoa Bogh): Chiropractors: animal chiropractic practitioners.
CVMA Position: Oppose
STATUS: DEAD- See further comments at the bottom of this section.



This bill was 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 would have, like its predecessor, circumvented veterinarian involvement in animal chiropractic cases by allowing direct access to chiropractors by consumers. The bill would have permitted 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 would have also placed oversight of animal chiropractic practitioners under the California Board of Chiropractic Examiners, a regulatory entity with no animal-related expertise. It circumvented the CVMB and did nothing to address premises minimum standards for animal chiropractors, such as those required of all veterinarians who operate veterinary hospitals. The legislation also did not address the likely possibility that dogs, cats, horses and human beings would have 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 would have taken 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 like it will remain among the CVMA's highest opposition priorities.

Status: This bill was not introduced by the deadline to be heard in policy committee and is dead for the year.

Read the CVMA coalition opposition letter **here.**
Read the CVMA opposition fact sheet **here.**

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.