

The Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) has set a hearing date of September 10, 2015, for a formal public hearing on a [proposed regulation](#) on animal rehabilitation. The CVMA's task force on animal rehabilitation submitted proposed language to the VMB's Multidisciplinary Advisory Committee and had input on the proposal at both MDC and VMB meetings. **The CVMA supports the regulation.**

For many years, the CVMA has voiced concerns about the illegal practice of veterinary medicine in animal rehabilitation. Unlicensed persons have opened illegal facilities where diagnosing and treating of animal patients is occurring without a veterinarian-client-patient relationship and without veterinary supervision. This includes physical therapists (PT) that are only licensed in California to treat human patients. PTs may not take referrals or open private practices for the treatment of animals.

The proposed regulation defines animal rehabilitation (AR) and who may perform AR. The VMB's Initial Statement of Reasons states that "AR may be performed only by a veterinarian or a PT or RVT working under the direct supervision of a veterinarian. This limits the types of professionals that may engage in AR under supervision, for the safety of the public and their animals". The proposal requires a veterinarian to examine the patient, make a diagnosis and assume responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the animal's health and the need for treatment. It also ensures that the veterinarian is readily available should there be adverse reactions or failure of the treatment regimen and for follow-up evaluation.

Animal rehabilitation has become a rapidly expanding veterinary specialty and the necessity for stricter oversight and enforcement has been justified at many meetings. CVMA member veterinarians have testified to the need for an accurate diagnosis in order to develop an effective treatment plan and prognosis, that consideration must be given to existing medical problems, and that drug regimens must be balanced with the physical modalities of treatment. Additionally many of these patients may develop new medical issues and may be in a fragile condition, such as senior pets. Only veterinarians have the education and experience to manage these cases and are the only licensed professionals allowed to diagnose and treat or supervise treatment of animals.

Information has been circulating throughout the veterinary and physical therapist community that PTs will not be allowed to treat animals under this new proposal. This is not true. PTs may treat animals but only under the direct supervision of a veterinarian.

The proposal gives the Veterinary Medical Board stricter enforcement authority to stop the illegal practice of animal rehabilitation in veterinary medicine.

We encourage you to submit letters of support to the VMB as follows:

Written comments, including those sent by mail, facsimile, or e-mail to the addresses listed under "Contact Person" in this [Notice](#), must be received by the Board at its office no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 10, 2015, or must be received by the Board at any hearing.

The VMB has also prepared a [Statement of Reasons](#) regarding the proposed regulations.