

VMB Action on Animal Physical Rehabilitation

The Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) thoroughly discussed the Animal Physical Rehabilitation Task Force recommendations at their meeting on April 19. CVMA leaders and numerous CVMA member veterinarians and RVTs attended the meeting and spoke on the issues. The VMB agreed with the following: the definitions of what does and doesn't constitute animal physical rehabilitation; that any proposed changes would not affect the current law and regulations on musculoskeletal manipulation; that a veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) shall be established prior to performing or authorizing animal physical rehabilitation; and that veterinarians have sufficient education and training to perform it.

The VMB then discussed the levels of supervision for both RVTs and veterinary assistants and their actions were consistent with the current laws and regulations regarding veterinary supervision.

The VMB discussed and rejected the final recommendation which would have allowed a physical therapist, with advanced certification, to provide animal physical rehabilitation by referral at a premises that did not have a veterinarian licensee manager establishing the VCPR. This motion failed by a 5 to 3 vote.

This was followed by a further motion that would clarify the physical therapist's role in treating animals. The VMB's motion included advanced certification for physical therapists as defined by the VMB and Physical Therapy Board, and direct supervision at a veterinary premises by a veterinarian who has established the VCPR unless on a range setting where the appropriate degree of supervision would be established by the veterinarian who established the VCPR. This motion passed by a 6 to 2 vote.

There are some conflicts between this last motion and the requirements of a veterinary assistant which is currently what a physical therapist would be considered in the practice act. This will be taken up at the next VMB meeting.

The CVMA is pleased that the VMB, within their mission of consumer protection, upheld the importance of the VCPR and that the direct or indirect supervision of a veterinarian is critical for the care and treatment of animal patients.