



For Immediate Release

September 28, 2018

Contact:

Roseryn Bhudsabourg, Director of Communications

Office of Assembly Member Ash Kalra

(916) 319-2027

roseryn.bhudsabourg@asm.ca.gov

Governor Signs Timely Bill Authored by Assemblymember Ash Kalra, Paving Way for California to Become First State in Nation to Allow Veterinarians to Discuss Medical Cannabis for Pets

SACRAMENTO – Governor Jerry Brown has signed into law a bill authored by Assemblymember Ash Kalra (D-San Jose), Assembly Bill (AB) 2215, which will allow veterinarians to discuss the use of medicinal cannabis for their animal patients in their licensed practice, making California the first state in the country to give veterinarians the protection they need to answer questions about using medical cannabis for pets. AB 2215 also requires the California Veterinary Medical Board to adopt guidelines that veterinarians may use to follow in discussing medicinal cannabis on an animal within the veterinarian-client-patient relationship.

“I am grateful to Governor Brown for signing AB 2215 into law and allowing veterinarians to discuss the use of medical cannabis without fear of penalization or losing their state license,” said Assemblymember Kalra. “Veterinarians in California, unlike physicians, currently have absolutely no protection from being subject to disciplinary action for having a simple discussion with their clients about medical cannabis. Especially now that Californians have greater access to cannabis than ever before and many pet owners are already looking at the use of cannabis to provide therapeutic and medical relief, this bill is a valuable first step in providing veterinarians the tools they need to better inform a pet owner’s decision on the use of cannabis and promote safe, responsible use of medicinal cannabis.”

AB 2215 also requires the California Veterinary Medical Board to establish guidelines for licensed veterinarians that can be the basis for discussions on the use of medical cannabis on an animal patient. Similar guidelines for physicians recommending medical cannabis were developed by the Medical Board of California.¹ The bill also includes prohibitions against veterinarian conflicts of interest with a licensed cannabis business.

Last year, the California Veterinary Medical Board issued a statement to all licensed veterinarians, stating: “There is nothing in California law that would allow a veterinarian to prescribe, recommend, or approve marijuana for treating animals. Veterinarians are in violation

¹ http://www.mbc.ca.gov/Publications/guidelines_cannabis_recommendation.pdf

of California law if they are incorporating cannabis into their practices.² Although a veterinarian may lawfully discuss and administer treatment for cannabis toxicity, it has been unclear whether a veterinarian is protected from discipline or prosecution during discussions with a client regarding the use of medical cannabis treatment on an animal patient.³

Cannabinoids, including Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD), are naturally derived from cannabis and have shown to provide a variety of clinical benefits with existing therapeutic modalities. Preliminary research suggests THC can be useful for conditions such as epilepsy, cerebral ischemia, motion sickness, and cancer treatment. Research has identified CBD useful for psychosis, seizures, anxiety, stress, irritable bowel syndrome, arthritis, pain, vomiting, diabetes, mellitus, cancer, and repair of traumatized tissue.⁴

AB 2215 is supported by the California Veterinary Medical Board and the California Veterinary Medical Association, as well as business groups like the California Cannabis Industry Association and Social Compassion in Legislation, one of the state's leading animal welfare advocacy groups.

###

² http://www.vmb.ca.gov/laws_regs/marijuana_animals_law.pdf

³ <https://cvma.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/VMB-Cannabis-Legal-Opinion.pdf>

⁴ <https://ivcjournal.com/medical-cannabis-animals/?hilite=%27medical%27%2C%27cannabis%27>