

Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board
Position Statement
On
Telemedicine/Telehealth

Purpose:

Telemedicine/Telehealth (Telehealth) encompasses a broad variety of technologies and tactics to deliver virtual medical, health, and educational services. Telehealth is not specifically addressed in the Ohio Veterinary Medical Practice Act. As a result, the Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board (Board) has developed this Position Statement to address questions related to the practice of Veterinary Telehealth in the State of Ohio based on current law and regulations.

Position:

A veterinarian using telehealth technologies must take appropriate steps to establish a valid Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) and conduct all appropriate evaluations and history of the patient consistent with traditional standards of care for the particular patient presented. The Board recognizes that telehealth technologies, in lieu of hands-on medical care, may be useful in some situations where a VCPR has already been established. The Veterinarian must employ sound professional judgment to determine whether using Telehealth is suitable each time veterinary services are provided and only furnish medical advice or treatment via Telemedicine when it is medically appropriate.

VCPR

In accordance with Revised Code 4741.04, a veterinary client patient relationship serves as the basis for interaction between veterinarians, their clients and their patients. A veterinary-client-patient relationship exists when all of the following conditions have been met:

- (A) A veterinarian assumes responsibility for making clinical judgment regarding the health of a patient and the need for medical treatment, medical services or both for the patient, and the client has agreed to follow the veterinarians' instructions regarding the patient.
- (B) The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the patient to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the patient. In order to demonstrate that the veterinarian has sufficient knowledge, the veterinarian shall have seen the patient recently and also shall be acquainted personally with the keeping and care of the patient either by examining the patient or by making medically appropriate timely visits to the premises where the patient is kept.
- (C) The veterinarian is readily available for follow-up evaluation, or had arranged for emergency coverage, in the event the patient suffers adverse reactions to the treatment regimen or the treatment regimen fails.

Telemedicine is a reasonable option for patients who lack regular access to veterinary care. It enhances opportunities to access emergency or specialty veterinary expertise in geographic areas where no other options are available. The location of the patient determines the location of the practice of medicine. The Veterinarian must be licensed in the State of Ohio to treat a patient in the State of Ohio.

The veterinarian must obtain Informed Consent from the Client and identify him or herself and the licensure status when performing Telehealth. Evidence of the permission by the Client to use telehealth technologies must be maintained in the medical record. Medical records must contain sufficient information for continued veterinary medical care in accordance with Rule 4741-1-21 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

Prescribing medications requires a VCPR and is at the professional discretion of the Veterinarian. The indication, appropriateness, and safety considerations for each prescription issued in association with Telehealth services must be evaluated by the Veterinarian in accordance with Ohio Pharmacy laws and standards of care.

Veterinarian consultation:

There is one exception in the law to the VCPR requirement. RC 4741.20(H) permits a Colleague to Colleague consultation. Revised Code 4741.20 provides exemptions to the Ohio Veterinary Practice Act. R.C. 4741.20(H) permits a veterinary consultation when consulting with a licensed veterinarian, on the condition that the service performed by the veterinary consultant is limited to the consultation and under all circumstances, the responsibility for the care and treatment of the patient remains with the veterinarian who holds a current license in this state and who is providing treatment, or consultation as to treatment, to the patient.

Board approved January 9, 2019