

Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board Newsletter

2020-21 Edition

Current Board Members

Matthew Verbsky, DVM
President
West Liberty, OH
Term: 1/8/19-12/31/2021

Nancy O'Connor, DVM
Vice-President
Akron, OH
Term: 2/19/16-12/31/21

Dianne "Annie" Jones, RVT
Secretary
Ostrander, OH
Term: 3/12/15-12/31/21

Craig Miesse, DVM
Celina, OH
Term: 4/24/17-12/31/22

Cindy Kidd, DVM
Jackson, OH
Term: 8/8/12-12/31/20

Kim Riker-Brown, DVM
Toledo, OH
Term: 7/13/15-12/31/22

Public Member
Susan Pohler, Esq
Columbus, OH
Term: 6/2020-12/31/2021

Board meetings are open to the public to listen to discussion on Agenda items.

Board Staff:
Theresa Stir, Executive Director
Joseph McClain, Licensure Coordinator
Andrea Jones, Clerk

Email:
info@ovmlb.state.oh.us

Website:
www.ovmlb.ohio.gov

Phone (614) 644-5281
Fax: (614) 644-9038

The Board office is closed on state holidays. The staff are continuing to work remotely, but will respond as quickly as able.

Message from the Board President

Colleagues and Friends,

As we draw past Thanksgiving and into the Holiday season, we see the dawn of a new year that all hope will be different than what we have seen in 2020. The challenges we have all endured over the past nine plus months have taxed our bodies and minds like few have seen in their lifetimes. The practice of our profession has certainly seen a transformation with curb-side care and more formal inclusions of telemedicine within our daily practice lives. With the challenges and changes quickly upon us we must remember our responsibilities to both our patients and their owners.

The OVMLB has also seen changes – our meetings have been virtual since March and look to stay that way through mid-year of 2021. Our dedicated support team continues to maintain the needs of our profession and the public's safety remotely as well.

The board continues to process complaints against our licensees with several common themes this year. There has been an increase of situations allowing unlicensed individuals within the practice setting complete tasks that are specifically tied to licensed professionals. Please review the available updated Veterinary Assistant / RVT task list on the Board's website for clarity. The lack of medical record completeness has continued to an issue. The Ohio Administrative Code Section 4741-1-21 – Recordkeeping can also be accessed via our website under Law and Rules.

Lastly, proper and adequate communication between the practice and the client regarding all aspects of patient care and financial impact could eliminate many of the complaints we review.

Finally, I personally want to thank Dr. Cindy Kidd for her dedication and leadership these many years to the board and the people of Ohio.

Take care and be safe,

Dr. Matt Verbsky, President OVMLB



RVT Renewal Extended

RVT licenses typically expire on March 1, 2021. However, recent COVID legislation extended the expiration date until **July 1, 2021** for this renewal period only. RVTs can renew anytime between January through July 1, 2021 at the regular renewal fee of \$35.00 via credit card (Visa or Mastercard). There is also a \$3.50 processing fee assessed by the State of Ohio. Late fees are assessed immediately after the expiration date of July 1st.

ALL License renewal communications will be sent via email notification only. It is important to notify the Board of any email changes! Instructions for the ELicensing system are on the Board's web site. **No paper applications or checks will be accepted.**

Reminder: All ten hours of required continuing education can be obtained through online CE opportunities.

Below is a link to a survey about staffing healthcare entities for the COVID-19 response. The goal of this survey is to identify unaffiliated personnel (people not already being counted by hospitals) who can offer support in a healthcare surge. Support may be needed for both clinical and behavioral health care. This is an unprecedented incident and we need to identify all available healthcare providers to mount an effective response. Available and interested licensees will be contacted by a representative from the State of Ohio or by interested healthcare entities to discuss next steps. If you filled out the survey this past spring and remain interested, you must complete the survey again. **PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LicenseeBank>

Board resolution for Online CE during the COVID Pandemic:

On March 14, 2020, an Executive Order was issued from Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health declaring a state of emergency due to COVID 19. As a result, numerous live continuing education opportunities were cancelled or developed into webinars or online continuing education events. On July 8, 2020, the Ohio Veterinary Licensing Board enacted a Resolution to permit unlimited continuing education hours to be obtained online CE in order to meet the requirements for renewal of a veterinary, limited veterinary, or registered veterinary technician license.

This resolution shall remain in effect for the current renewal cycles of 2021 and 2022.

Telehealth Guidelines (Board approved January 9, 2019)

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.



Ohio Board of Pharmacy Updates

New Rules Specific to Veterinary Practice

The Ohio Board of Pharmacy has introduced new rules for those licensed as a Terminal Distributor of Dangerous Drugs (TDDD license). Pharmacy Rule 4729:5-3-18 impacts terminal distributors who dispense or personally furnish dangerous drugs. The Rule now requires those veterinarians to develop and implement a policy in the event of a manufacturer's recall. Staff will need to quarantine drugs subject to the recall.

The proposed rules can be found on the Ohio Board of Pharmacy's web site: www.pharmacy.ohio.gov or on the Register of Ohio's web site at: <http://www.registerofohio.state.oh.us/rules/search>

From the Board of Pharmacy Newsletter (November 2019)

Verification of Licensure

As a reminder, before a terminal distributor of dangerous drugs may purchase dangerous drugs at wholesale, the terminal distributor is required by Ohio law to verify either of the following: ♦ The seller is licensed to engage in the sale of dangerous drugs in accordance with Section 4729.52 of the ORC (ie, the seller is licensed in Ohio as a manufacturer of dangerous drugs, outsourcing facility, third-party logistics provider, repackager of dangerous drugs, or wholesale distributor of dangerous drugs). ♦ The seller is licensed to engage in the occasional sale or distribution of dangerous drugs at wholesale in accordance with OAC 4729:5-3-09. Verification of licensure requirements for terminal distributors can be found in OAC 4729:5-3-04.

Veterinary Student Loan(s) Program

The student loan program was developed to provide large animal veterinary services or protect public health in veterinary resource shortage areas. \$10.00 of each veterinary license renewal fee is deposited in the loan repayment fund. In May, 2020 the Board awarded \$20,000 to Dr. Casey Skowron of Fremont for a service commitment of two years. Applications for 2021 can be found on the Board's web site and are due by May 1st to the Board office.

HB 67 has been amended to create a new scholarship program based on charitable veterinary work for the Board to administer from veterinary license fees. HB 67 is currently being heard in the Senate Agriculture Committee.

License Verification

Licensees will no longer receive a small certificate upon initial licensure or upon renewal of licensure. Licensees will receive an email validating the license/renewal which should be maintained for recordkeeping purposes. It is not necessary to display the email.

Employers and Pharmaceutical companies can validate a license through the [Licensure Verification](#) port on the Board's web site or the ELicense site. (elicense.ohio.gov) The Licensure Verification will now have the initial licensure date as well as disciplinary action. Please enter VET.## or RVT.## (## = license number) when validating a license by license number rather than name. If you hold a specialty license, it may be necessary to add ".SPEC" to the verification.

It is no longer a requirement to display a license per Rule 4741-1-03 OAC.

OVMLB Military law and rule update

The Board recently amended Rule 4741-1-18 of the Administrative Code to comply with a new law that was enacted to permit active duty military licensees or their spouse serving in Ohio to obtain a free license to practice veterinary medicine in the State of Ohio for six (6) years as long as all of the conditions for the military license are maintained. However, the rule is currently being reviewed through the appropriate government channels and has not yet been approved for filing.

The Board will comply with the requirements stated in the law in order to comply with the new licensure type. The military license application is currently available through https://elicense.ohio.gov/OH_HomePage

How Important is Wellness?

by Tim Kolb, DVM

I learned a valuable lesson years ago. My church had a Sunday school room for young children. The walls were adorned with small posters with maxims for good behavior and success in life. Fearing certain deficiencies in my own upbringing, I tried to absorb this simple wisdom. One particular quote stayed with me and has made all the difference: “It is INTELLIGENT to ask for help.”

This pandemic has compounded many of the challenges of our profession. The stresses and strains of running a practice, meeting the needs of our clients and patients, as well as maintaining compliance with increased regulatory demands may become overwhelming for some. Developing our teams and safeguarding their health and wellbeing has never been more important. But how well do we take care of ourselves?

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and often physical exhaustion brought on by prolonged or repeated stress. Similarly, Compassion Fatigue is described as a reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy, a diminished sense of enjoyment or satisfaction with work, and an impaired ability to make decisions and care for patients and/or clients; exhaustion, anger and irritability may lead to negative coping behaviors including alcohol and drug abuse. (ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

Efforts to improve our wellbeing at both the personal and professional level have been undertaken on many fronts. Veterinary colleges, state VMA's, the AVMA and the American Association of Veterinary State Boards offer numerous programs and resources on wellbeing. Yet many veterinarians have an independent spirit, a belief that with our intelligence and harder work we can handle any challenge by ourselves. There is a resistance to admitting our struggles, our self-doubt, our fears and failures.

The stigma of mental health issues, including substance use disorders, has not gone away. Many licensed professionals fear publicity about their personal struggles, whether on social media or on the local news. And worst of all is the threat of a licensing board which has the power to suspend or even revoke one's license to practice.

Since the early 1990's the OVMLB and OVMA have had a cooperative relationship with the Ohio Physicians Health Program (OPHP). The OVMA has provided financial support to OPHP and OPHP has provided services to numerous DVM's and RVT's over the years. Most importantly, confidentiality is paramount. Individuals who voluntarily seek help with OPHP are kept in strict confidence and do not have to be reported to the OVMLB.

The OVMLB has seen an increasing number of complaints stemming from suspected impairment and/or drug diversion. Veterinarians are also suffering from the impact of the opioid epidemic. These individuals will typically agree to a consent agreement that requires a mental health assessment to make a diagnosis and treatment plan. The consent agreement typically requires the individual to work with OPHP which provides periodic reports to the Board to ensure compliance with the consent agreement.

As with most conditions, early diagnosis and treatment is crucial. If you have concerns for yourself or for a colleague, confidential assistance is available through OPHP, at 614-841-9690 or ophp.org.

Remember: “It is INTELLIGENT to ask for help

Dr. Kolb is chair of the OVMA Wellbeing Committee. He is a Director on the Board of the AAVSB and OPHP and served on the OVMLB from 2010-2018.

Notice regarding Xylazine

The Board received notification that there have been a number of drug-related deaths involving the veterinary drug Xylazine in Franklin, Hamilton, and Butler counties. This is just another reminder to keep your dangerous and controlled drugs secure and to be cautious when prescribing any controlled substance for a pet.