



Washington State Veterinary Medical Association

May 18, 2020

Veterinary Board of Governors sets temporary policies for VCPR/Virtual Care and Continuing Education

The Veterinary Board of Governors released two new COVID-19 related policies today. One allows unlimited use of online continuing education through December 31, 2020. The other lifts some restrictions in the Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship rule to facilitate access to veterinary services during the COVID-19 emergency.

VCPR Policy: [VBOG VCPR COVID-19 Policy Stmt FINAL 5.15.20.pdf](#)

To address the difficulties related to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic that impact licensed veterinarians with regard to establishing a veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR) in Washington State, the Veterinary Board of Governors (board) makes the following allowance:

For the duration of the COVID-19 state declared emergency, the board does not intend to strictly enforce the requirement in [WAC 246-933-200\(2\)](#). Even so, veterinarians must exercise professional judgment to determine whether establishing a VCPR remotely is appropriate. For example, diagnosing and treating a condition that may not require a hands-on examination could be reasonable; diagnosing and treating a condition that requires a hands-on examination or diagnostic testing is probably not.

[WAC 246-933-200\(2\)](#) prohibits licensed veterinarians from establishing a VCPR solely through telemedicine and requires the veterinarian to have examined the animal patient within the previous year.

Continuing Education [VBOG CE COVID-19 Policy Stmt FINAL 5.15.20.pdf](#)

To address the difficulties related to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic that impact licensed veterinarians and licensed veterinary technicians with regard to meeting continuing education (CE) requirements in Washington State, and in accordance with WAC 246-12-210, the Veterinary Board of Governors (board) makes the following allowances:

- 1. Until December 31, 2020 unrestricted use of teaching or preprogrammed materials will be accepted in order for licensed veterinarians to meet the CE requirements in [WAC 246-933-445](#).*
- 2. Until December 31, 2020 unrestricted use of teaching or preprogrammed materials will be accepted in order for licensed veterinary technicians to meet the CE requirements in [WAC 246-935-295](#).*

Chapter 246-12 WAC regulates healthcare practitioners credentialed under the Uniform Disciplinary Act; veterinarians are health care practitioners subject to the Act. [WAC 246-12-210](#) states: "A practitioner may be excused from or granted an extension of continuing education requirements due to illness or

other extenuating circumstances. The profession's regulatory entity determines when the requirements may be waived or may grant an extension." The board is the regulatory entity with authority to make determinations about continuing education requirements for veterinarians.

WAC 246-933-420 requires licensed veterinarians to complete and document 30 hours of continuing education every two years. WAC 246-935-280 requires 20 CE hours every two years for licensed veterinary technicians.

As the spread of COVID-19 continued and the Center for Disease and Prevention (CDC) guidance encouraged the restriction of large gatherings, organizations and entities began to cancel large professional development events and conferences that included continuing education opportunities. As a result, veterinarians and veterinary technicians are without the ability or the means to meet their CE obligations for renewal of their licenses.