

AAVSB 2025 AMC - Resolution 2025-3

A Resolution on the Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR)

PASSED
26 YAY / 19 NAY
/ 1 Abstentions

WHEREAS, U.S. federal law defines a valid Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) as requiring an in-person examination of the animal or timely visits to the premises where the patients animals are located;

WHEREAS, for example, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s regulations, contained at 21 C.F.R. § 530.3, demands that the VCPR “can exist only when the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal(s) by virtue of examination of the animal(s), and/or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal(s) are kept.”;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s governing regulations in 9 C.F.R. § 107.1(a)(1)(ii) similarly assume, and require, that “to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal(s),” requires “that the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal(s), and/or by medically appropriate” and has made “timely visits to the premises where the animal(s) are kept”;

WHEREAS, the in-person requirement is an essential requirement to accurately and fully assess the patient’s condition and the client’s ability to adhere to the prescribed treatment regimen;

WHEREAS, the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) is a regulatory member organization comprised of 63 jurisdictions, including all U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the ten Canadian provinces;

WHEREAS, the majority of Member Boards do not support the establishment of a VCPR solely by virtual means and instead maintain statutory requirements—established by the duly elected representatives of the voters of each jurisdiction—mandating in-person examination to establish a valid VCPR;

WHEREAS, the Member Boards embrace and laud the technological advancements that have improved the delivery and practice of veterinary medicine within the context of an appropriately established VCPR;

WHEREAS, such technological advancements must serve the goal of public protection and cannot override the foundational principles of safe and effective delivery of veterinary medicine; and

WHEREAS, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), whose membership includes a broad spectrum of veterinary medicine experts, practitioners, and professional associations, has strongly opposed the establishment of a VCPR solely through virtual means;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the practice of veterinary medicine is deemed to occur where the patient is located, and thus, the practitioner must hold a valid license in the jurisdiction where the veterinarian is practicing veterinary medicine;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, for the safety and well-being of animal patients, there must be enforceable requirements for access to in-person veterinary care,

including initial examinations, follow-up visits, and situations where a diagnosis cannot be reliably made virtually;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AAVSB shall provide legislative and other support to Member Boards that are working to clarify or codify the in-person requirement for establishing a VCPR in their jurisdictions' statutes and regulations governing the practice of veterinary medicine;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AAVSB shall also offer support to Member Boards that oppose legislative efforts to authorize the establishment of a VCPR solely through virtual means;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any documents, model regulations, or policy guidance developed by the AAVSB shall include this resolution, affirming that Member Boards do not support the establishment of a VCPR solely by virtual means; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the AAVSB shall collaborate with Member Boards to develop and disseminate educational materials for veterinarians and clients, emphasizing the importance of in-person examinations in establishing a VCPR and the limitations of telemedicine in veterinary practice.