

Chapter 68. Board of Veterinary Examiners.

12 AAC 68 is amended by adding a new section to read:

12 AAC 68.215. Veterinarian-client-patient relationship. (a) A veterinarian-client-patient relationship exists, and a licensed veterinarian may engage in the practice of veterinary medicine for the patient, if the licensed veterinarian or licensed veterinarian with access to the patient's medical records

(1) conducts an initial physical meeting with the client and patient, at which the veterinarian

(A) performs a physical examination on the patient; or

(B) is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the patient through medically appropriate visits to the premises where the patient is maintained;

(2) and therefore has sufficient knowledge of the patient to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the patient's medical conditions;

(3) has assumed responsibility for making clinical judgements for the health of the patient and the need for medical therapy, and has instructed the client on a course of therapy appropriate to the circumstance; and

(4) maintains patient records; and

(5) provides oversight of treatment and is readily available to provide, or has provided for, follow-up medical care in the event of adverse reactions or failure of the treatment regimen.

(b) Once a veterinarian-client-patient relationship is established under (a) of this section, it may be maintained by electronic or telephonic means during the 12 months that follow the initial exam or premises visit. Not later than 12 months after the initial physical exam or

medically appropriate visit of premises, the licensed veterinarian, client, and patient must have another physical exam or premises visit. Each additional physical exam or premises visit must occur not later than 12 months after the prior physical exam or premises visit in order for the veterinarian-client-patient relationship to continue.

(c) The licensed veterinarian or the client may decline or discontinue a veterinarian-client-patient relationship.

(d) A licensed veterinarian who in good faith engages in the practice of veterinary medicine by rendering or attempting to render emergency or urgent care to a patient when a client cannot be identified, or where a veterinarian-client-patient relationship is not established, is not subject to discipline based solely on the veterinarian's inability to establish a veterinarian-client-patient relationship.

(e) Notwithstanding (a)(1) and (b) of this section, a veterinarian licensed in Alaska may conduct an initial evaluation of a patient through electronic or telephonic means only in remote regions of this state where there is no locally available veterinarian if

(1) travel for a physical exam or premises visit with the client is impossible;

(2) the veterinarian requests that, when reasonably achievable, the patient be presented for an in-person examination or that the veterinarian conduct a medically appropriate visit to the premises where the patient is kept; and

(3) the veterinarian provides the client with

(A) the veterinarian's identity, location, and licensure status; and

(B) any privacy or security issues involved in accessing veterinary services through electronic means.

(f) A veterinarian providing care for patients under (e) of this section will not have

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established a veterinarian-client-patient relationship without having met the requirements of (a) and (b) in this section. (Eff. ____/____/_____, Register _____)

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