

COLORADO

Changes to the Veterinary Practice Act in Effect

Changes to the Veterinary Practice Act went into effect on August 10 at 12:01 a.m.; the practice act bill was signed by Governor Polis on June 8 after being passed by the state legislature. [Read the full bill summary here.](#)

What are the changes to the Veterinary Practice Act?

Colorado's new Veterinary Practice Act went into effect on August 10, 2022. There are portions of the act that will go into effect at a later date — these portions are noted below.

1. Continues the veterinary practice act for 11 more years until 2033.
2. Establishes title protection regulation of veterinary technicians (this amendment was proposed jointly by CVMA and CACVT), which goes into effect January 1, 2023. [Click here to read our full article and timeline of what this means.](#)
3. Expands the administration of rabies vaccines (**Note: While this changes Colorado statute, Colorado is a home rule state which means that local municipalities have the power to enforce rules differently than the state — read more further down**):
 - Allows administration of rabies vaccine by a person who is not a licensed veterinarian under direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian, or through the indirect supervision of a licensed veterinarian if the person is working on behalf of an animal shelter for shelter-owned animals
 - Amends public health statute 25-4-607 to allow veterinarians to delegate under indirect supervision the administration of rabies vaccinations in a public health emergency situation
4. Expands continuing education requirements for veterinarians' license renewal (**Note: These changes apply for the NEXT licensing cycle November 1, 2022-October 31, 2024, not the licensing cycle that ends October 31, 2022**):
 - Allows veterinarians to receive up to 16 hours of credit toward relicensing for continuing education on topics such as client communication, management, leadership, wellbeing and developing a highly function veterinary workforce
 - Requires two hours of jurisprudence CE on the Veterinary Practice Act per license renewal period
5. Requires veterinarians to create a written plan for the storage, security, and disposal of patient records.
6. Permits the state veterinary board to require a physical examination of a licensed veterinarian if there is reasonable cause to believe the veterinarian is unable to practice with reasonable skill and safety (Note: This provision exists in other practice acts such as the Dentist and Dental Hygienists Practice Act, Medical Practice Act, Nurses and Nurse Aides Practice Act, and Pharmacists Practice Act).

7. Requires a veterinarian to notify the board if the veterinarian suffers from a physical illness or condition or a behavioral or mental health disorder that renders the veterinarian unable to practice with reasonable skill and safety.
8. Requires a veterinarian to self-report to Peer Assistance Services for a drug-or alcohol-related offense to help ensure those who need help with a substance use disorder get access to care more quickly.
9. Repeals the requirement that the state veterinary board send a letter of admonition by certified mail.
10. Cleans up vague or conflicting language related to supervision:
 - Defines indirect supervision
 - Resolves conflicting language among 12-315-105 (b) and (k) and 12-315-116 regarding duties delegated to veterinary students under direct supervision
 - Clarifies the requirements concerning confidential agreements

What does this mean for you?

On August 10 at 12:01 am, the updated Veterinary Practice Act took effect and the changes listed above have gone into effect.

There are a few exceptions:

- While the Veterinary Practice Act now allows delegation of rabies vaccines, Colorado is a home rule state and local municipalities may still enforce their own regulations regarding administration of rabies vaccines. Check with your local municipality regarding regulations.
- The new CE requirements will take effect for the licensing cycle that runs from November 1, 2022 to October 31, 2024.
- The regulation of veterinary technicians will begin on January 1, 2023. [Click here](#) to read the full article. CVMA will continue to keep members up to date with updates as they occur.

If the state now allows veterinarians to delegate rabies vaccine administration, why isn't this automatically applied at the local county level?

Because Colorado is a home rule state, local municipalities have the power to enforce differently than the state. This is referenced in the below section (page 29 of the updated Veterinary Practice Act):

25-4-607. Order of board of health requiring inoculation of animals – veterinarian waiver of order. (1) (a) When it is deemed advisable in the interest of public health and safety, the board of health of an organized health department or a county board of health may order that all dogs, cats, other pet animals, or other mammals in the county or district be vaccinated against rabies, such vaccination to be performed by a licensed veterinarian OR UNDER THE INDIRECT SUPERVISION, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 12-315-104 (10.5), OF A LICENSED VETERINARIAN. THE VETERINARIAN SIGNING A RABIES VACCINATION CERTIFICATE SHALL ENSURE THAT THE PERSON WHO ADMINISTERED THE

VACCINE IS IDENTIFIED ON THE CERTIFICATE AND HAS BEEN APPROPRIATELY TRAINED IN VACCINE STORAGE, HANDLING, AND ADMINISTRATION AND IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ADVERSE EVENTS.

At this point in time, veterinarians should not assume that they can delegate the administration of rabies vaccinations legally. While this new change is in effect at the state level, counties still need to update their ordinances and regulations. CVMA encourages clinics to contact their local public health agencies to ask them to update their regulations to align with state law...and to be patient as these updates are made! Additionally, CVMA is working with county partners to have these updates enacted at the county level as well.

How are the new CE requirements different from the old ones?

The CE changes take effect for the November 1, 2022-October 31, 2024 licensing cycle; veterinarians may apply up to 16 hours of non-biomedical CE toward their 2024 license renewal, and will also be required to complete 2 hours of jurisprudence CE on the Veterinary Practice Act (CVMA plans to offer this CE for Colorado veterinarians).

For the current licensing cycle, which ends October 31, 2022, veterinarians may still only apply 6 hours of non-biomedical CE toward their license renewal; veterinarians do not need to complete the 2 hours of CE on the Veterinary Practice Act for the 2022 renewal period.

[Click here](#) to read more about CE requirements in the Veterinary Practice Act (pages 28-30).

CVMA thanks our elected leaders!

Three highly respected, thoughtful, and dedicated legislators have been working with CVMA to guide HB22-1235 through the 2022 legislative session. We invite Colorado veterinarians to extend warm thanks to these elected leaders.

CVMA is very appreciative for the House of Representatives leadership of our prime sponsors Rep. Karen McCormick, DVM, who represents District 11 in Boulder County, and Rep. Marc Catlin, who represents District 58, including Dolores, Montezuma, Montrose, and San Miguel counties. In the Senate, CVMA appreciates working with prime sponsor Sen. Joann Ginal, who represents District 14 in Larimer County.

Additionally, we'd like to extend a thank you to our Practice Act Review Taskforce (chaired by CVMA member Dr. Michelle Larsen) who put forth many, many hours of their time, knowledge, and efforts in making sure that Colorado veterinarians were fully represented in this review.

Why CVMA's advocacy work is important

One of the most essential and impactful services that CVMA provides on behalf of members is advocating on behalf of Colorado's veterinary profession in before various legislative and regulatory groups. This work is empowered by the strength of 2,600+ CVMA members standing alongside us, and it is funded exclusively by your annual membership dues. Your commitment to CVMA means that we can effectively work at many levels to protect you, your practice, and the veterinary profession in Colorado. We consistently ensure that legislators know how proposed

bills can help or hurt your livelihood, veterinary medicine, and animal health and welfare. No one else will do this work for the Colorado veterinary profession. This effort requires continual attention and action and it can only be accomplished when we come together as a single, unified voice. Together, we protect veterinary medicine.

