

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Budget Subcommittee on General Government Appropriations

BILL: SB 228

INTRODUCER: Senator Latvala

SUBJECT: Veterinary Practice

DATE: December 8, 2011      REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Oxamendi	Imhof	RI	<b>Favorable</b>
2.	Howard	DeLoach	BGA	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
3.			BC	
4.				
5.				
6.				

**I. Summary:**

The bill renames the term “limited service veterinary medical practice” to “limited service veterinary vaccination clinic.” It also redefines the term to mean veterinary practice in which a veterinarian performs vaccinations or immunizations on multiple animals at a temporary location and for a limited time. In effect, the bill would not permit “limited service veterinary vaccination clinics” to offer parasite removal services, which is a service currently permitted to be performed in a “limited service veterinary medical practice.” The bill requires the board to establish by rule minimum standards for limited-service veterinary vaccination clinics. The rules must be consistent with the type of limited veterinary vaccination service provided.

This bill removes the authority for the business professional and health care professional, including veterinarians, to practice on animals used in a sporting event if he or she is licensed in another state or in a foreign jurisdiction, are in Florida for a specific sporting event, and are employed or designated by the sport’s team.

This bill substantially amends sections 455.2185, 456.023, 474.202 and 474.215, Florida Statutes.

**II. Present Situation:**

**Veterinary Medical Practice**

The Board of Veterinary Medicine (board) within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (department) is the agency charged with the regulation of the practice of veterinary medicine under ch. 474, F.S., the Veterinary Medical Practice Act (act). The legislative purpose

for the act is to ensure that every veterinarian practicing in Florida meets minimum requirements for safe practice and veterinarians who are not normally competent or who otherwise present a danger to the public are disciplined or prohibited from practicing in Florida.<sup>1</sup>

The department is the state agency responsible for the licensing of veterinarians, while the board<sup>2</sup> within the department is responsible for adopting rules to establish fees and implement the provisions of ch. 474, F.S.

For a person to be licensed as a veterinarian he or she must apply to the department to take a licensure examination. The department must license each applicant who the board certifies has:

- Completed the application form and remitted an examination fee set by the board.<sup>3</sup>
- Graduated from a college of veterinary medicine accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education or graduated from a college of veterinary medicine listed in the American Veterinary Medical Association Roster of Veterinary Colleges of the World and obtained a certificate from the Education Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates.
- Successfully completed the examination provided by the department for this purpose, or an examination determined by the board to be equivalent.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of veterinary medicine in Florida in a manner designated by rules of the board.<sup>4</sup>

The department is prohibited from issuing a license to any applicant who is under investigation in any state or territory of the United States or in the District of Columbia for an act which would constitute a violation of ch. 474, F.S., until the investigation is complete and disciplinary proceedings have been terminated.<sup>5</sup>

An unlicensed doctor of veterinary medicine who has graduated from an approved college or school of veterinary medicine and has completed all parts of the examination for licensure is permitted, while awaiting the results of the examination for licensure or while awaiting issuance of the license, to practice under the immediate supervision of a licensed veterinarian. A person who fails any part of the examination may not continue to practice, except in the same capacity as other nonlicensed veterinary employees, until the person passes the examination and is eligible for licensure.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 474.201, F.S.

<sup>2</sup> The board consists of seven members, who are appointed by the Governor, and are subject to confirmation by the Senate. Five members of the board must be licensed veterinarians and two members of the board must be laypersons who are not and have never been veterinarians or members of any closely related profession or occupation. *See s. 474.204, F.S.*

<sup>3</sup> For applicants taking the Laws and Rules examination that is not conducted by a professional testing service, the examination fee is \$165.00, payable to the DBPR. For applicants taking the Laws and Rules examination that is conducted by a professional testing service, the examination fee is \$151.50 payable to the department plus \$13.50 payable to the testing service. Rule 61G18-12.002, F.A.C. The applicant for licensure must also pay an initial licensure fee of \$200, if the person is licensed in the first 12 months of the biennium, or \$100, if the person is licensed in the second 12 months of the biennium. Rule 61G18-12.007, F.A.C.

<sup>4</sup> Section 474.207, F.S.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

An applicant may be eligible for temporary licensure if certain requirements are met. In order for the board to certify an applicant to the department for issuance of a temporary license to practice veterinary medicine, an applicant must demonstrate to the board that the applicant:

- Has filed an application for temporary licensure identifying the name and address of the owner of the animals to be treated, the type of animals to be treated and their injury or disease, the location the treatment is to be performed, and the names, addresses, and titles of all persons entering the state with the applicant to perform the treatment; or
- Has filed an application and is responding to an emergency for the treatment of animals of multiple owners.
- Has paid the temporary licensure fee.
- Holds an active license to practice veterinary medicine in another state of the United States and that any license to practice veterinary medicine that the person has ever held has never been revoked, suspended or otherwise acted against by the licensing authority.
- Is neither the subject of any pending prosecution nor has ever been convicted of any offense which is related to the practice of veterinary medicine; and
- Satisfies the qualifications for licensure by endorsement.<sup>7</sup>

A temporary license is valid for a period of 30 days from its issuance. A temporary license does not cover more than the treatment of the animals of the owner identified in the application. Upon expiration of the license, a new license is required.<sup>8</sup>

An applicant may also be eligible for licensure by endorsement if specific requirements are met. The department must issue a license by endorsement to any applicant who, upon applying to the department and remitting the requisite fee,<sup>9</sup> demonstrates to the board that she or he:

- Has demonstrated, in a manner designated by rule of the board, knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of veterinary medicine in Florida; and
- Either holds, and has held for the 3 years immediately preceding the application for licensure, a valid, active license to practice veterinary medicine in another state of the United States, the District of Columbia, or a territory of the United States, provided that the requirements for licensure in the issuing state, district, or territory are equivalent to or more stringent than the requirements of ch. 474, F.S.; or meets the application and examination requirements under Florida law and has successfully completed a state, regional, national, or other examination which is equivalent to or more stringent than the examination given by the department.<sup>10</sup>

The department is prohibited from issuing a license by endorsement to any applicant who is under investigation in any state, territory, or the District of Columbia for an act which would constitute a violation of ch. 474, F.S., until the investigation is complete and disciplinary proceedings have been terminated.

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<sup>7</sup> Rule 61G18-25.001, F.A.C.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> The fee for licensure by endorsement is \$500. Rule 61G18-12.011, F.A.C.

<sup>10</sup> Section 474.217, F.S.

Under s. 474.213, F.S., a person commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084, F.S. (maximum imprisonment of 5 years, maximum fine of \$5,000, or penalties applicable for a habitual offender) if the person:

- Leads the public to believe that such person is licensed as a veterinarian, or is engaged in the licensed practice of veterinary medicine, without such person holding a valid, active license pursuant to ch. 474, F.S.;
- Uses the name or title “veterinarian” when the person has not been licensed pursuant to ch. 474, F.S.;
- Presents as her or his own the license of another;
- Gives false or forged evidence to the board or a member thereof for the purpose of obtaining a license;
- Uses or attempts to use a veterinarian’s license which has been suspended or revoked;
- Knowingly employs unlicensed persons in the practice of veterinary medicine;
- Knowingly concealing information relative to violations of ch. 474, F.S.;
- Obtains or attempts to obtain a license to practice veterinary medicine by fraudulent representation;
- Practices veterinary medicine in Florida, unless the person holds a valid, active license to practice veterinary medicine pursuant to ch. 474, F.S.;
- Sells or offers to sell a diploma conferring a degree from a veterinary school or college, or a license issued pursuant to ch. 474, F.S., or procures such diploma or license with the intent that it shall be used as evidence of that which the document stands for by a person other than the one upon whom it was conferred or to whom it was granted; or
- Knowingly operates a veterinary establishment or premises without having a premise permit issued under s. 474.215, F.S.

### **Limited Service Veterinary Medical Practice**

Section 474.202(6), F.S., defines the term “limited-service veterinary medical practice” to mean:

offering or providing veterinary services at a location that has a primary purpose other than that of providing veterinary medical services at a permanent or mobile establishment permitted by the Board of Veterinary Medicine; provides veterinary medical services for privately owned animals that do not reside at that location; operates for a limited time; and provides limited types of veterinary medical services.

Section 474.202(9), F.S., defines the term “practice of veterinary medicine” to mean:

diagnosing the medical condition of animals and prescribing, dispensing, or administering drugs, medicine, appliances, applications, or treatment of whatever nature for the prevention, cure, or relief of a wound, fracture, bodily injury, or disease thereof; performing any manual procedure for the diagnosis of or treatment for pregnancy or fertility or infertility of animals; or representing oneself by the use of titles or words, or undertaking, offering, or holding oneself

out, as performing any of these functions. The term includes the determination of the health, fitness, or soundness of an animal.

Section 474.215(7), F.S., requires the board to establish by rule minimum standards for limited-service veterinary medical practices. The rules cannot restrict limited service veterinary medical practices and must be consistent with the type of limited veterinary medical service provided. The board has defined by rule minimum standards to include vaccinations, immunizations and preventative procedures for parasitic control<sup>11</sup> on multiple animals at a temporary location and for a limited time.<sup>12</sup> The rule defines the term “limited time” as no more than once every two weeks and no more than four hours in any one day for any single location where a clinic is held.<sup>13</sup>

According to the department, anyone, such as a retailer, may obtain a permit for limited service veterinary medical permit, but a licensed veterinarian must perform the services. These limited service clinics are inspected on a random basis. There has been an issue with these clinics not notifying the department before the clinic is conducted.

According to the department, it has not received any substantiated complaints about the care administered at limited service clinics. The complaints it has received about the clinics have been limited to paperwork violations, such as failure to properly register the clinics.

Mobile veterinarian clinics are licensed, must have a premises permit for the mobile unit, and must be inspected prior to providing veterinarian services. A “mobile veterinary establishment” and “mobile clinic” is:

a mobile unit which contains the same treatment facilities as are required of a permanent veterinary establishment or which has entered into a written agreement with another veterinary establishment to provide any required facilities not available in the mobile unit. The terms do not refer to the use of a car, truck, or other motor vehicle by a veterinarian making a house call.<sup>14</sup>

### **General Provisions for Business and Health Professionals**

Chapter 455, F.S., provides the general powers of the department and sets forth the procedural and administrative frame-work for all of the professional boards housed under the department. The general provisions for licensure, certification, education, examination, and penalties for the following medical professionals are provided under ch. 456, F.S. In addition, ch. 456, F.S., provides the authority of the following boards to regulate their respective professions.

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<sup>11</sup> According to the department, preventive services for parasitic control may require a prescription and testing to determine the health status of an animal.

<sup>12</sup> Rule 61G18-15.007, F.A.C.

<sup>13</sup> Rule 61G18-15.007(1), F.A.C.

<sup>14</sup> Section 474.202(7), F.S.

### **Exemption for Out-of-state or Foreign Professionals**

Sections 455.2185(1) and 456.023(1), F.S., permit professionals from another state, nation, or foreign jurisdiction to practice in Florida under limited circumstances. Such professionals are exempt from the license requirements under chs. 455 and 456, F.S., and the applicable professional practice act if that person:

- Holds, if so required in the jurisdiction in which that person practices, an active license to practice that profession.
- Engages in the active practice of that profession outside the state.
- Is employed or designated in that professional capacity by a sports entity visiting the state for a specific sporting event.

Sections 455.2185(2) and 456.023(2), F.S., limit the practice of the professional to the members, coaches, and staff of the team for which that professional is employed or designated and to any animals used if the sporting event for which that professional is employed or designated involves animals. Sections 455.2185(2) and 456.023(2), F.S., also provide that these professionals do not have practice privileges in any licensed veterinary facility without the approval of that facility.

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

#### **Limited Service Veterinary Medical Practice**

The bill amends s. 474.202(6), F.S., to rename the term “limited service veterinary medical practice” to “limited service veterinary vaccination clinic.” It also redefines the term to mean veterinary practice in which a veterinarian performs vaccinations or immunizations on multiple animals at a temporary location and operating for a limited time.

The bill amends s. 474.215(7), F.S., to require the board to establish by rule minimum standards for limited-service veterinary vaccination clinics. It deletes the provision that requires the board to establish by rules minimum standards for limited-service veterinary medical practices. The rules must be consistent with the type of limited veterinary vaccination service provided.

Rule 61G18-15.007, F.A.C., permits “limited-service veterinary medical practices” to perform preventive procedures for parasitic control. In effect, the bill would delete the board’s authority for this rule, and would not permit “limited service veterinary vaccination clinics” to offer parasite removal services, which is a service currently permitted to be performed in a “limited service veterinary medical practice.”

The department has indicated that this bill would not affect mobile veterinary clinics or veterinarians who make house calls.

#### **Exemption for Out-of-state or Foreign Professionals**

The bill amends s. 455.2185, F.S., to delete the authority of a business professional to practice on animals used in a sporting event if he or she is licensed in another state or foreign jurisdiction, is in Florida for a specific sporting event, and is employed or designated by the sport’s team.

The bill also amends s. 456.023, F.S., to delete the authority of a health care professional to practice on animals used in a sporting event if he or she is licensed in another state or foreign jurisdiction, is in Florida for a specific sporting event, and is employed or designated by the sport's team.

The bill deletes the provisions in ss. 455.2185 and 456.023, F.S. that prohibit these professionals from practicing in veterinary facilities without the approval of the facility, which is consistent with the above changes that prohibit the professionals from practicing on animals used by the sporting teams while in Florida.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

#### **V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Sports teams from out-of-state or from foreign jurisdictions that participate in sporting events involving animals in Florida may incur additional costs associated with hiring a Florida-licensed veterinarian to provide veterinary services.

According to the department, veterinarians who work for the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) would be affected by the removal of that exemption from 455.2185, F.S., and would definitely impact the USEF's events held in Florida. The department also advised that the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI), which is the international sanctioning organization for Olympic level sporting events involving equines, requires that a veterinarian licensed by the FEI from a foreign jurisdiction be a part of the Ground Jury at any competition to perform veterinary services.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Additional Information:**

**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

**B. Amendments:**

None.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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