

By Senator Martin

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to the practice of veterinary medicine; amending s. 474.201, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; amending s. 474.202, F.S.; defining terms; amending s. 474.204, F.S.; revising the membership of the Board of Veterinary Medicine; creating s. 474.223, F.S.; requiring the board to adopt specified rules; providing application criteria for the licensure of veterinary technicians; specifying the services a veterinary technician or veterinary technologist must be licensed to perform, under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian; requiring supervising veterinarians to determine the appropriate level of supervision in the performance of such services unless otherwise provided for by board rule or general law, according to specified conditions; specifying that licensed veterinarians are responsible for all services performed by licensed veterinary technicians or veterinary technologists; specifying the services that only licensed veterinarians may perform or provide; authorizing a supervising veterinarian to delegate to a licensed veterinary technician the responsibility of supervising certain tasks performed by unlicensed persons; prohibiting persons from making specified representations; prohibiting veterinary assistants from identifying themselves as veterinary technicians or licensed veterinary technicians unless certain conditions are met; providing a criminal

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penalty; amending s. 828.30, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 474.201, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

474.201 Purpose.—The Legislature finds that the practice of veterinary medicine is potentially dangerous to the public health and safety if conducted by incompetent and unlicensed practitioners and veterinary technicians. The legislative purpose in enacting this chapter is to ensure that every veterinarian and licensed veterinary technician practicing in this state meet minimum requirements for safe practice. It is the legislative intent that veterinarians and licensed veterinary technicians who are incompetent ~~not normally competent~~ or who otherwise present a danger to the public shall be disciplined or prohibited from practicing in this state.

Section 2. Present subsections (6) through (12), (13), and (14) of section 474.202, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (7) through (13), (15), and (19), respectively, and new subsections (6) and (14) and subsections (16), (17), and (18) are added to that section, to read:

474.202 Definitions.—As used in this chapter:

(6) "Licensed veterinary technician" means a person who practices veterinary technology in this state and is licensed under the authority of this chapter.

(14) "Veterinary assistant" means a person who practices on

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a veterinary team providing medical care for animals and who is not a licensed veterinary technician.

(16) "Veterinary technician" means a person who has graduated with an associate degree from a veterinary technology training program accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities (CVTEA).

(17) "Veterinary technologist" means a person who has graduated with a bachelor's degree from a veterinary technology training program accredited by the CVTEA.

(18) "Veterinary technology" means the science and art of providing certain aspects of the medical care and treatment of patients within an established veterinarian/client/patient relationship by a veterinary technician or veterinary technologist which are delegated and supervised by a veterinarian. The term does not include diagnosis, surgery, or the prescription of medications.

Section 3. Subsection (2) of section 474.204, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

474.204 Board of Veterinary Medicine.—

(2) (a) Five members of the board must ~~shall~~ be licensed veterinarians.

(b) One member of the board must be a licensed veterinary technician who has been actively engaged in the practice of veterinary technology for at least 5 years immediately preceding the date of appointment to the board.

(c) One member of the board must be a layperson ~~Two members of the board shall be laypersons who is are not and has have never been a veterinarian or member veterinarians or members of~~

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any closely related profession or occupation.

Section 4. Section 474.223, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

474.223 Licensed veterinary technicians.—

(1) The board shall adopt rules to regulate the profession and practice of veterinary technology.

(2) A person may become licensed as a veterinary technician if he or she submits an application to the board and meets all of the following requirements:

(a) Has graduated from a college program of veterinary technology accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities.

(b) Has obtained a passing score on the Veterinary Technician National Exam, as determined by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards.

(c) Demonstrates knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of veterinary technology in this state in a manner designated by rules of the board.

(3) A person who is a certified veterinary technician in good standing with the Florida Veterinary Technician Association or the Florida Veterinary Medical Association may become licensed as a veterinary technician if he or she submits an application to the board and demonstrates knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of veterinary technology in this state in a manner designated by rules of the board.

(4) A veterinary technician or a veterinary technologist must be licensed under this section to perform the following veterinary technology services under the supervision of a

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117 licensed veterinarian:

118 (a) Arterial and central venous catheterization.

119 (b) Euthanasia, under the immediate supervision of a
120 veterinarian.

121 (c) Intraperitoneal injections.

122 (d) Placement of gastric, nasoesophageal, and nasogastric
123 tubes.

124 (e) Suture or staple skin lacerations, gingival incisions,
125 or existing surgical incisions.

126 (f) Paravertebral blocks and epidurals.

127 (g) A complex single root extraction that is beyond a
128 simple digital extraction of a tooth and that requires
129 periosteal elevation but does not require sectioning of the
130 tooth or of the bone.

131 (h) Blood or blood component collection, preparation, and
132 administration for transfusion or blood banking purposes.

133 (i) Ear flushing with powered mechanical devices creating
134 pressure or suction.

135 (j) A thoracentesis or an abdominocentesis.

136 (k) Application of casts, splints, and slings for the
137 immobilization of fractures.

138 (l) Placement of an epidural, an intraosseous, or a nasal
139 catheter.

140 (m) Administering rabies vaccinations, under the immediate
141 supervision of a veterinarian.

142 (n) Examinations performed within a previously established
143 veterinarian/client/patient relationship for routine health care
144 needs, follow-up treatment, or accepted animal husbandry on
145 livestock, excluding an examination required for the purpose of

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146 state or federal health certificates.

147 (5) Unless otherwise provided for in this section or
148 designated by board rule, the supervising veterinarian shall
149 determine the appropriate level of supervision and protocol for
150 a service under subsection (4). All other tasks may be performed
151 by licensed or unlicensed persons at the discretion of the
152 supervising veterinarian. In determining the appropriate level
153 of supervision, the veterinarian shall consider the level of
154 training and experience of the person to whom the task is
155 delegated. However, the licensed veterinarian is responsible for
156 all services performed by such persons, regardless of licensure,
157 and only a licensed veterinarian may make or provide any
158 diagnosis, perform any surgery, or prescribe any medicinal drugs
159 as defined in s. 465.003 or controlled substances as defined in
160 s. 893.02.

161 (6) A supervising veterinarian may, in his or her
162 discretion, delegate to a licensed veterinary technician the
163 responsibility of supervising a task performed by an unlicensed
164 person, except for a service under subsection (4).

165 (7) (a) A person may not:

166 1. Lead others to believe that he or she is a licensed
167 veterinary technician or is engaged in the licensed practice of
168 veterinary technology unless he or she holds a valid, active
169 license under this section.

170 2. Use the name or title "licensed veterinary technician"
171 if he or she is not licensed pursuant to this section.

172 (b) A veterinary assistant may not identify himself or
173 herself as a veterinary technician or a licensed veterinary
174 technician unless he or she is a graduate of an accredited

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veterinary technology program or licensed under this chapter, as applicable.

(c) A person who violates this subsection commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

Section 5. Subsection (1) of section 828.30, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

828.30 Rabies vaccination of dogs, cats, and ferrets.—

(1)(a) All dogs, cats, and ferrets 4 months of age or older must be vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian, a licensed veterinary technician under the immediate supervision of a veterinarian, or a person authorized under paragraph (b) against rabies with a vaccine that is licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture for use in those species.

(b) Acting under the indirect supervision of a veterinarian, an employee, an agent, or a contractor of a county or municipal animal control authority or sheriff may vaccinate against rabies dogs, cats, and ferrets that are in the custody of an animal control authority or a sheriff and which will be transferred, rescued, fostered, adopted, or reclaimed by the owner. The supervising veterinarian assumes responsibility for any person vaccinating animals at his or her direction or under his or her direct or indirect supervision. As used in this paragraph, the term "indirect supervision" means that the supervising veterinarian is required to be available for consultation through telecommunications but is not required to be physically present during such consultation.

(c) The owner of every dog, cat, and ferret shall have the animal revaccinated 12 months after the initial vaccination.

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Thereafter, the interval between vaccinations shall conform to the vaccine manufacturer's directions. The cost of vaccination must be borne by the animal's owner. Evidence of circulating rabies virus neutralizing antibodies may not be used as a substitute for current vaccination in managing rabies exposure or determining the need for booster vaccinations.

Section 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.