

**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.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Regulated Industries

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BILL: SB 796

INTRODUCER: Senator Bradley

SUBJECT: Veterinary Medicine

DATE: January 9, 2026

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Baird	Imhof	RI	Pre-meeting
2.		AEG	
3.		RC	

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## **I. Summary:**

SB 796, titled the “Veterinary Workforce and Innovation Act,” amends the regulatory framework for veterinary medicine in Florida, creating two new levels of veterinary professionals (veterinary professional associates and veterinary technicians) that would be registered with the state and allowed to work under a licensed veterinarian.

The bill defines the new positions and specifies a formal registration process, prohibitions, and duties and actions, for two new categories of veterinary professionals: “veterinary professional associate” and “veterinary technician” or “veterinarian technologist.”

The bill increases the duration for prescriptions based solely on telehealth evaluations.

Additionally, the bill amends the exemptions in chapter 474 of the Florida Statutes to include the newly created terms.

The bill also changes the composition of the Board of Veterinary Medicine from seven members to nine members, two of which must be veterinary professional associates, veterinarian technicians or veterinarian technologists.

## **II. Present Situation:**

### **Practice of Veterinary Medicine**

The Board of Veterinary Medicine (board) within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) implements the provisions of ch. 474, F.S., relating to veterinary medical practice (practice act). The purpose of the practice act is to ensure that every veterinarian

practicing in this state meets minimum requirements for safe practices to protect public health and safety.<sup>1</sup>

A “veterinarian” is a health care practitioner licensed by the board to engage in the practice of veterinary medicine in Florida<sup>2</sup> and they are subject to disciplinary action from the board for various violations of the practice act.<sup>3</sup>

The practice of “veterinary medicine” is the diagnosis of medical conditions of animals, and the prescribing or administering of medicine and treatment to animals for the prevention, cure, or relief of a wound, fracture, bodily injury, or disease, or holding oneself out as performing any of these functions.<sup>4</sup>

Veterinary medicine includes, with respect to animals:<sup>5</sup>

- Surgery;
- Acupuncture;
- Obstetrics;
- Dentistry;
- Physical therapy;
- Radiology;
- Theriogenology (reproductive medicine); and
- Other branches or specialties of veterinary medicine.

Any permanent or mobile establishment where a licensed veterinarian practices must have a premises permit issued by the DBPR.<sup>6</sup> Each person to whom a veterinary license or premises permit is issued must conspicuously display such document in her or his office, place of business, or place of employment in a permanent or mobile veterinary establishment or clinic.<sup>7</sup>

By virtue of accepting a license to practice veterinary medicine in Florida, a veterinarian consents to:

- render a handwriting sample to an agent of the DBPR and, further, to have waived any objections to its use as evidence against her or him.
- waive the confidentiality and authorize the preparation and release of medical reports pertaining to the mental or physical condition of the licensee when the DBPR has reason to believe that a violation of this chapter has occurred and when the DBPR issues an order, based on the need for additional information, to produce such medical reports for the time period relevant to the complaint.<sup>8</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> Section 474.202(11), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Sections 474.213 and 474.214, F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 474.202(9), F.S. Also included is the determination of the health, fitness, or soundness of an animal, and the performance of any manual procedure for the diagnosis or treatment of pregnancy or fertility or infertility of animals.

<sup>5</sup> Section 474.202(13), F.S. Section 474.202(1), F.S., defines “animal” as “any mammal other than a human being or any bird, amphibian, fish, or reptile, wild or domestic, living or dead.”

<sup>6</sup> Section 474.215(1), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 474.216, F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 474.2185, F.S.

For Fiscal Year 2023-2024, there were 13,392 actively licensed veterinarians in Florida. The DBPR received 611 complaints, which resulted in 44 disciplinary actions.<sup>9</sup>

## Veterinary Telehealth

In 2024, the Legislature created and passed the Providing Equity in Telehealth Services Act (PETS act), establishing a framework for the practice of veterinary telehealth.<sup>10</sup> The PETS act allows veterinarians who hold current licenses to practice veterinary telehealth.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Limitations***

The PETS act puts certain limitations on what veterinarians are able to do via telehealth. The bill requires that a veterinarian:

- Provide certain information to the client, including the veterinarian's name, license number and contact information;
- Must prescribe all drugs and medications in accordance with federal and state laws;
- May not order or prescribe medicinal drugs or drugs as defined in s. 465.003, F.S., approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for human use, or compounded antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, or antiparasitic medications, unless the veterinarian has conducted an in-person physical examination of the animal or made medically appropriate and timely visits within the past year to the premises where the animal is kept;
- May not use veterinary telehealth to prescribe a controlled substance as defined in ch. 893, F.S. (Drug Abuse Prevention and Control), unless the veterinarian has conducted an in-person physical examination of the animal or made medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal is kept;
- May not prescribe a drug or other medication for use on a horse engaged in racing or training at a facility under the jurisdiction of the Florida Gaming Control Commission or on a horse that is a covered horse, as defined in the federal Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act, 15 U.S.C., ss. 3051 et seq.

## Telehealth Prescriptions

Prescriptions based solely on a telehealth evaluation may be issued for up to **1 month** for products labeled solely for flea and tick control and up to **14 days** of treatment for other animal drugs.<sup>12</sup> Prescriptions based solely on a telehealth evaluation may not be renewed without an in-person examination.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Department of Business and Professional Regulation, *Division of Professions Annual Report Fiscal Year 2023-2024*, <https://www2.myfloridalicense.com/os/documents/Division%20Annual%20Report%20FY%2023-24.pdf>, (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>10</sup> Ch. 2024-260, Laws of Fla. (codified at section 474.2021, F.S., effective July 1, 2024).

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* Florida law requires the practice of telehealth to be consistent with a veterinarian's scope of practice and the prevailing professional standard of practice for a veterinarian who provides in-person veterinary services to patients in Florida, and who must employ sound, professional judgment to determine whether using veterinary telehealth is an appropriate method for delivering medical advice or treatment to the patient.

<sup>12</sup> Section 474.2021, F.S.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

## Immediate Supervision

Currently, certain individuals that are not licensed doctors of veterinary medicine (employees, veterinary nurses, students, preceptors, interns, post-exam graduates) can provide some level of care to animals if they are under immediate supervision.<sup>14</sup> The practice act defines “immediate supervision” to mean that a “licensed doctor of veterinary medicine is on the premises whenever veterinary services are being provided.”<sup>15</sup>

Veterinary tasks requiring immediate supervision include:<sup>16</sup>

- Administering anesthesia and tranquilization by a veterinary aide, nurse, laboratory technician, intern, or other employee of a licensed veterinarian.
- Administering certain vaccinations by a veterinary aide, nurse, technician, intern, or other employee of a licensed veterinarian which is not specifically prohibited.

The following tasks may be performed without the licensed veterinarian on the premises:<sup>17</sup>

- Administering medication and treatment, excluding vaccinations, as directed by the licensed veterinarian; and
- Obtaining samples and the performance of those diagnostic tests, including radiographs, as directed by the licensed veterinarian.

## Exemptions

Ten categories of persons are exempt from complying with ch. 474, F.S.:<sup>18</sup>

- Faculty veterinarians with assigned teaching duties at accredited<sup>19</sup> institutions;
- Intern/resident veterinarians at accredited institutions who are graduates of an accredited institution, but only until they complete or terminate their training;

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<sup>14</sup> Section 474.207(5), F.S.

<sup>15</sup> Section 474.202(5), F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Fla. Admin. Code R. 61G18-17.005, provides that all tasks that may be delegated to a veterinary aide, nurse, laboratory technician, intern, or other employee of a licensed veterinarian shall be performed only under the “immediate supervision” of a licensed veterinarian as that phrase is defined in subsection 474.202(5), F.S., with the exception of the following tasks which may be performed without the licensed veterinarian on the premises.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> Section 474.203, F.S.

<sup>19</sup> Sections 474.203(1) and (2), F.S., provide that accreditation of a school or college must be granted by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Council on Education, or the AVMA Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates. The AVMA Council on Education is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as the accrediting body for schools and programs that offer the professional Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree (or its equivalent) in the United States and Canada, and may also approve foreign veterinary colleges. See

<https://www.avma.org/professionaldevelopment/education/accreditation/colleges/pages/coe-pp-overview-of-the-coe.aspx>

(last visited January 9, 2026). The AVMA Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates assists graduates of foreign, non-accredited schools to meet the requirement of most states that such foreign graduates successfully complete an educational equivalency assessment certification program. See

<https://www.avma.org/professionaldevelopment/education/foreign/pages/ecfvg-about-us.aspx> (last visited January 9, 2026).

In turn, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, a national advocate for regulation of academic quality through accreditation, is an association of degree-granting colleges and universities. See <http://chea.org/about> (last visited January 9, 2026).

- Students in a school or college of veterinary medicine who perform assigned duties by an instructor (no accreditation of the institution is required), or work as preceptors<sup>20</sup> (if the preceptorship is required for graduation from an accredited institution);
- Doctors of veterinary medicine employed by a state agency or the United States Government while actually engaged in the performance of official duties at the installations for which the services were engaged;
- Persons or their employees caring for the persons' own animals, as well as part-time or temporary employees, or independent contractors, who are hired by an owner to help with herd management and animal husbandry tasks (excluding immunization or treatment of diseases that are communicable to humans and significant to public health) for herd/flock animals, with certain limitations; however, the exemption is not available to a person licensed as a veterinarian in another state and temporarily practicing in Florida, or convicted of violating ch. 828, F.S., on animal cruelty, or of any similar offense in another jurisdiction, and employment may not be provided for the purpose of circumventing ch. 474, F.S.;
- Certain entities or persons<sup>21</sup> that conduct experiments and scientific research on animals as part of the development of pharmaceuticals, biologicals, serums, or treatment methods or techniques to diagnose or treat of human ailments, or in the study and development of methods and techniques applicable to the practice of veterinary medicine;
- Veterinary aides, nurses, laboratory technicians, preceptors, or other employees of a licensed veterinarian, who administer medication or provide help or support under the responsible supervision<sup>22</sup> of a licensed veterinarian;
- Certain non-Florida veterinarians who are licensed and actively practicing veterinary medicine in another state, are board certified in a specialty recognized by the board and are assisting upon request of a Florida-licensed veterinarian to consult on the treatment of a specific animal or on the treatment on a specific case of the animals of a single owner;
- Employees, agents, or contractors of public or private animal shelters, humane organizations, or animal control agencies operated by a humane organization, county, municipality, or incorporated political subdivision, whose work is confined solely to implanting radio frequency identification device microchips in dogs and cats in accordance with s. 823.15, F.S.;  
<sup>23</sup> and
- Paramedics or emergency medical technicians providing emergency medical care to a police canine<sup>24</sup> injured in the line of duty while at the scene of the emergency or while the police canine is being transported to a veterinary clinic or similar facility.

<sup>20</sup> A preceptor is a skilled practitioner or faculty member, who directs, teaches, supervises, and evaluates students in a clinical setting to allow practical experience with patients. See

<https://www.merriam-Webster.com/dictionary/preceptor#medicalDictionary> (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>21</sup> See s. 474.203(6), F.S., which states that the exemption applies to “[s]tate agencies, accredited schools, institutions, foundations, business corporations or associations, physicians licensed to practice medicine and surgery in all its branches, graduate doctors of veterinary medicine, or persons under the direct supervision thereof . . .”

<sup>22</sup> The term “responsible supervision” is defined in s. 474.202(10), F.S., as the “control, direction, and regulation by a licensed doctor of veterinary medicine of the duties involving veterinary services” delegated to unlicensed personnel.

<sup>23</sup> Section 823.15(5), F.S., which authorizes such persons to perform microchipping of dogs and cats.

<sup>24</sup> Section 401.254, F.S., defines the term “police canine” as “any canine that is owned, or the service of which is employed, by a state or local law enforcement agency, a correctional agency, a fire department, a special fire district, or the State Fire Marshal for the principal purpose of aiding in the detection of criminal activity, flammable materials, or missing persons; the enforcement of laws; the investigation of fires; or the apprehension of offenders.” A paramedic or an emergency medical technician who acts in good faith to provide emergency medical care to an injured police canine is immune from criminal or civil liability

## The Board of Veterinary Medicine

The board consists of seven members that are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup>

The board is required, like all boards regulated under chapter 455 of Florida Statutes, to meet at least once annually and may meet as often as is necessary.<sup>27</sup> There is currently one vacancy on the board.<sup>28</sup>

## Veterinary Schools in Florida

Currently the University of Florida is the only school in Florida to offer a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program that is accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).<sup>29</sup>

The following institutions offered through Florida's state college system offer an accredited veterinary technology program:<sup>30</sup>

- Eastern Florida State College,
- Florida A&M University,
- Hillsborough Community College,
- Miami-Dade College,
- Pensacola State College, and
- St. Petersburg College.

## Veterinarian Shortage

According to a survey conducted by the American Pet Products Association (APPA), 70 percent of U.S. households, or about 90.5 million families, own a pet. This is an increase from 56 percent of U.S. households in 1988, and 67 percent in 2019.<sup>31</sup> As a result, experts say there is a shortage of veterinarians in the U.S., which is expected to result in the need for approximately 15,000 veterinarians by the year 2030.<sup>32</sup> A study from Banfield Pet Hospital reveals an estimated 75

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<sup>25</sup> Section 474.204(1), F.S.

<sup>26</sup> Section 474.204(2), F.S.

<sup>27</sup> Section 455.207(3), F.S.

<sup>28</sup> Department of Business & Professional Regulation Board Member Appointments, Updated March 2025, [https://www2.myfloridalicense.com/pro/vetm/documents/vet\\_board.pdf](https://www2.myfloridalicense.com/pro/vetm/documents/vet_board.pdf) (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>29</sup> American Veterinary Medical Association, *Accredited Veterinary Colleges*, <https://www.avma.org/education/center-for-veterinary-accreditation/accredited-veterinary-colleges> (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>30</sup> American Veterinary Medical Association, *Accredited Veterinary Technology Programs*, <https://www.avma.org/education/center-for-veterinary-accreditation/veterinary-technology-programs-accredited-avma-cvtea#florida> (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>31</sup> Insurance Information Institute, *Facts + Statistics: Pet Ownership and Insurance*, <https://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/facts-statistics-pet-ownership-and-insurance#:~:text=Seventy%20percent%20of%20U.S.%20households,an%2067%20percent%20in%202019>. (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>32</sup> Spectrum News 13, *Mobile 'ElleVet' clinic helps relieve veterinarian shortage*, <https://www.mynews13.com/fl/orlando/news/2023/02/03/the-ellevet-project>

million pets in the U.S. may not have access to the veterinary care they need by 2030, with an important factor being a critical shortage of veterinarians.<sup>33</sup>

The University of Florida's Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Dana Zimmel, has indicated that there is a shortage of veterinarians in Florida, which in addition to pets has "1.7 million beef cattle and dairy cows, more horses than Kentucky and an alarming decline of manatee." The state's only veterinary medical college, the University of Florida, also reports that due to limited capacity, it must turn away 1,500 qualified candidates a year.<sup>34</sup>

According to the AVMA:

Conditions have pushed the idea of a midlevel practitioner to the fore as veterinary practices have struggled to meet service demands. This issue has been compounded by continued inefficiencies in practices as pandemic disruptions persist and client expectations for availability and convenience. Inflation has also increased costs for labor and for products such as medical equipment and medications, creating additional concern around clients' ability to afford needed care. Additionally, retention of veterinary practice staff members and attrition from the profession are ongoing and increasing concerns.<sup>35</sup>

The AVMA found that a midlevel practitioner may not be the best option to address these concerns, and that time and effort should be spent on resources, tools, and programs designed to retain veterinarians and credentialed veterinary technicians; further develop veterinary technician specialties; help veterinary practices operate at optimum efficiency; and effectively collaborate—within practice teams and across the profession—to meet clients' needs for high-quality veterinary services.<sup>36</sup>

However, according to a study conducted by the National Library of Medicine:

The projected shortage of veterinarians has created a need to explore alternatives designed to meet society's future demands. A veterinary professional health care provider, similar to the human medical profession's physician assistant (PA), is one such alternative. It is suggested that perhaps veterinary professional associates, modeled after PAs, could be employed to handle routine veterinary care and thereby allow veterinarians additional time to focus on the more demanding and

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[#:~:text=%E2%80%94%20Experts%20say%20there's%20a%20shortage,States%20may%20not%20get%20care.](#) (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>33</sup> Banfield Pet Hospital, *75 million pets may not have access to veterinary care by 2030, New Banfield® study finds*, <https://www.banfield.com/en/about-banfield/newsroom/press-releases/2020/75-million-pets-may-not-have-access-to-veterinary> (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>34</sup> Dana Zimmel, *Florida needs more veterinarians* | Column, Tampa Bay Times (January 3, 2022), <https://www.tampabay.com/opinion/2022/01/03/florida-needs-more-veterinarians-column/> (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>35</sup> American Veterinary Medical Association, AVMA News, *Idea of midlevel practitioner rejected in favor of better support, engagement of credentialed veterinary technicians* (Jan. 10, 2023), <https://www.avma.org/news/idea-midlevel-practitioner-rejected-favor-better-support-engagement-credentialed-veterinary> (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*

challenging aspects of veterinary medicine. Perhaps a team approach, similar to the physician/PA team, could help the field of veterinary medicine to better serve both clients and patients. As veterinary medicine directs its attention toward the new challenges on the horizon, creative solutions will be needed. Perhaps some variation of a veterinary professional associate is worthy of future discussion.<sup>37</sup>

### **Human Physician Assistants**

According to the Mayo Clinic, PAs are “licensed medical professionals who hold an advanced degree and are able to provide direct patient care. They work with patients of all ages in virtually all specialty and primary care areas, diagnosing and treating common illnesses and working with minor procedures. With an increasing shortage of health care providers, PAs are a critical part of today’s team-based approach to health care. They increase access to quality health care for many populations and communities. The specific duties of a PA are determined by their supervising physician and state law, but they provide many of the same services as a primary care physician. They practice in every state and in a wide variety of clinical settings and specialties.”<sup>38</sup>

In Florida, PAs are licensed medical professionals that are authorized to perform services delegated by a supervising physician.<sup>39</sup> PAs are regulated by the Florida Council on Physician Assistants in conjunction with either the Board of Medicine for PAs licensed under ch. 458, F.S., or the Board of Osteopathic Medicine for PAs licensed under ch. 459, F.S. During fiscal year 2023-2024, there were 11,890 actively licensed PAs in the state, and 1,339 initial PA licenses were issued by the Florida Department of Health.<sup>40</sup>

### **Veterinary Professional Associates in Other Jurisdictions**

#### **States**

In 2024, voters of the state of Colorado approved a ballot measure to create a new, state-regulated veterinary position (Veterinary Professional Associate) that was to address, in part, the shortage of care, especially in rural areas, for pets.<sup>41</sup> Colorado’s proposition empowered the state to create a regulatory scheme to license and regulate these Veterinary Professional Associates.

Similarly to what is being proposed in the bill, Colorado would provide this Veterinary Professional Associate a pathway for those who complete a master’s degree in veterinary clinical

<sup>37</sup> Lori Kogan, Sherry Stewart, *Veterinary professional associates: does the profession's foresight include a mid-tier professional similar to physician assistants?*, National Library of Medicine (2009), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19625672/> (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>38</sup> Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science, *Physician Assistant*, <https://college.mayo.edu/academics/explore-health-care-careers/careers-a-z/physician-assistant/> (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>39</sup> Sections 458.347(2)(e) and 459.022(2)(e), F.S.

<sup>40</sup> Florida Department of Health, Division of Medical Quality Assurance, Annual Report and Long-Range Plan, Fiscal Year 2023-2024, <https://flhealthsource.gov/pdf/reports/2024.10.28.FY23-24AR-FINAL.pdf> (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>41</sup> Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, *State Board of Veterinary Medicine: Proposition 129*, <https://dpo.colorado.gov/Veterinary/Proposition129>, (last visited January 9, 2026).

care, or an equivalent degree determined by the state board.<sup>42</sup> This new Colorado law went into effect on January 1, 2026.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Universities***

In 2022, The Lincoln Memorial University-College of Veterinary Medicine created the first-of-its-kind Master of Veterinary Clinical Care degree.<sup>44</sup> Students can obtain this degree fully online and in as little as 3 semesters (30 credit hours).<sup>45</sup>

In 2025, Colorado State University developed a similar program that is now admitting students.<sup>46</sup>

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

**Section 1** of the bill establishes the title of the bill as the “Veterinary Workforce Innovation Act.”

**Section 2** of the bill amends s. 474.201, F.S., to update the state’s legislative findings and intent, stating that the “practice of educated, trained and experienced veterinary professional associates, veterinary technicians, and veterinary technologists will increase consumer access to high-quality medical services at reasonable cost to consumers, while also increasing the efficiency of the practice of veterinary medicine in this state.”

**Section 3** of the bill amends s. 474.202, F.S., to define the new roles: “veterinary professional associate” and “veterinary technician” or “veterinary technologist.” The bill also defines “veterinary technology.” The terms are defined as follows:

- Veterinary professional associate: an individual who has graduated with a master’s degree or the equivalent in veterinary clinical care from an accredited institution and who meets the requirements to be registered by the department.
- Veterinary technician or veterinary technologist: an individual who has graduated from an accredited veterinary technology program and who meets the requirements to be registered by the department. The term also includes a veterinary nurse.
- Veterinary technology: The provision of medical care, monitoring, and treatment of a veterinary patient by a person who is registered veterinary technician or technologist working under supervision of a licensed veterinarian. The term includes veterinary nursing.

**Section 4** of the bill amends s. 474.2021, F.S., by changing the duration of time medications can be prescribed via telehealth from **1 month** to **6 months** for flea and tick medication and from **14 days** to **30 days** for other animal drugs.

**Section 5** of the bill amends s. 474.203, F.S., to provide that a student in a program of veterinary technology is also exempt from ch. 474, F.S., while under the supervision of a licensed

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<sup>42</sup> *Id.*

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*

<sup>44</sup> Lincoln Memorial University, *Master of Veterinary Clinical Care*, <https://www.lmunet.edu/academics/programs/graduate-professional/master-of-veterinary-clinical-care>, (last visited January 9, 2026).

<sup>45</sup> *Id.*

<sup>46</sup> Colorado State University, *About the Master of Science in Veterinary Clinical Care*, <https://vetmedbiosci.colostate.edu/vpa/>, (last visited January 9, 2026).

veterinarian. The bill provides an exemption to the chapter for registered veterinary professional associates, technicians, and technologists who are licensed in another jurisdiction and practicing temporarily in this state or who are employees of a licensed veterinarian.

**Section 6** of the bill amends s. 474.204, F.S., to expand the composition of the Board of Veterinary Medicine from seven members to **nine members** with the two new members being either a registered “veterinary professional associate” or a “veterinary technician” that has been employed as such for at least 5 years immediately preceding the date of appointment to the board.

**Section 7** of the bill creates s. 474.2426, F.S., laying out the regulatory framework for the newly created positions of “veterinary professional associate”, “veterinary technicians”, and “veterinary technologists.” The bill requires:

- The DBPR to issue a certificate of registration to each veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinarian technologist, or applicant whom the DBPR verifies has applied, graduated from the relevant accredited program, and received a passing score on the relevant professional national competency examination approved by the board.
- The DBPR to issue a certificate of registration for a veterinary technician who has not passed the exam if they meet certain requirements:
  - Possesses 5 or more years of practical experience performing the tasks of a veterinary technician in this state;
  - Graduated from an accredited program before January 1, 2000; and
  - Is in good standing with the appropriate certifying and is eligible to apply for registration.
- The DBPR to make a list of registrants available to public on its website.

The bill allows for the DBPR to suspend the registration of any veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist who the board determines has caused serious harm to an animal due to negligence, incompetence, or misconduct related to duties performed under this section and in a manner inconsistent with the supervising veterinarian’s specific direction, until which the time as the registrant has completed remedial training or education directed by the board.

The bill allows for the DBPR to rescind the registration of any veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist who is convicted of animal cruelty or animal fighting.

The bill prohibits any individual from holding themselves out as a registered veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist or from using the abbreviations RVT, RVTg, VT, VPA, or MVCC or in any other way represent themselves as a veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist unless he or she has a valid certificate of registration from the DBPR.

#### ***Duties and Actions of a Registered Veterinary Technician or Veterinary Technologist***

The bill allows for a registered veterinary technician or veterinary technologist to perform any duty or action in which they are competent and have the necessary training, current knowledge,

and expertise to provide, so long as the duties or actions are done *with approval* under responsible supervision, as defined in s. 474.202, F.S., of a licensed veterinarian or a registered veterinary professional associate.

A veterinary technician or a veterinary technologist may do any of the following duties without direct approval but with responsible supervision as defined in s. 474.202, F.S.:

- Administer medical drugs prescribed for a patient by the supervising veterinarian or provide treatments as directed;
- Prepare, record, and administer vaccinations and microchips; or
- Perform humane euthanasia of animals and prepare, log, and administer controlled substances for the purpose of analgesia, anesthesia, or humane euthanasia, as delegated by a licensed veterinarian and performed under responsible supervision.

A registered veterinary technician or a veterinary technologist may not do the following:

- Make or provide any diagnosis or prognosis;
- Perform any surgery, except that a registered veterinary technician or registered veterinary technologist may perform suturing or stapling of skin lacerations, gingival incisions, or existing surgical incisions or tooth extraction procedures; or
- Prescribe any medical drugs as defined in ch. 465, F.S., or controlled substances as defined in ch. 893, F.S.

#### ***Duties and Actions of a Registered Veterinary Professional Associate***

The bill allows for a registered veterinary professional associate to engage in *the practice of veterinary medicine* as delegated under the responsible supervision, as defined in s. 474.202, F.S., of a licensed veterinarian, unless prohibited by other state or federal law, to the extent that he or she is competent and has the necessary training, current knowledge, and experience to provide such care.

A registered veterinary professional associate may not do any of the following:

- Prescribe a controlled substance listed in s. 893.03, F.S.,
  - With the exception that a registered veterinary professional associate may perform humane euthanasia and prepare, log, and administer controlled substances for the purpose of analgesia, anesthesia, or humane euthanasia, as delegated by a licensed veterinarian and performed under responsible supervision.
- Perform a surgical procedure,
  - With the exception that a veterinary professional associate may perform an orchietomy,<sup>47</sup> veterinary dental surgery, or veterinary suturing or stapling of skin lacerations, gingival incisions, or existing surgical incisions.

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<sup>47</sup> This procedure is for reproductive sterilization (spay/neuter). It is used to reduce the incidence of the most common canine prostatic diseases, tumors, and unwanted behaviors. Today's Veterinary Practice, *Update on Orchietomy*, [https://todaysveterinarypractice.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/10/TVP-2022-1112\\_Orchietomy.pdf](https://todaysveterinarypractice.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/10/TVP-2022-1112_Orchietomy.pdf) (last visited January 9, 2026).

***Administration of Medication***

The bill also changes the scope of supervision, preventing unregistered individuals to administer medication prescribed by the supervising veterinarian unless they are under the immediate supervision of a licensed veterinarian, a veterinary professional associate, a veterinary technician, or a veterinarian technologist. The bill does not prevent an individual from rendering lifesaving aid and treatment if the animal is in a life-threatening condition.

***Delegation and Liability***

The bill allows, unless otherwise prohibited under state or federal law, a supervising licensed veterinarian to delegate to a registered veterinary professional associate, a veterinary technician, or a veterinary technologist, the responsibility of supervising a task or tasks performed by a veterinary assistant.

The bill makes a supervising licensed veterinarian liable for any acts or omissions of the registered veterinary professional associate, a veterinary technician, or a veterinarian technologist acting under the licensed veterinarian's supervision and control.

**Section 8** of the bill amends s. 828.30, F.S., to allow registered veterinary professional associates, veterinary technicians, or veterinarian technologists to administer rabies vaccinations.

**Effective Date**

The bill takes effect January 1, 2027.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:****A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

**B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

**C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

**D. State Tax or Fee Increases:**

None.

**E. Other Constitutional Issues:**

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:****A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

None.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

Section 7 of the bill would possibly remove the current ability of unregistered/unlicensed employees of veterinarians to administer medication under responsible supervision<sup>48</sup> (without a licensed veterinarian on the premises) and instead only allow unregistered individuals to administer medication under immediate supervision of either a veterinarian, a veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or a veterinary technologist.

The bill makes it illegal for any individual to hold themselves out to be a “veterinary technician” if they are not registered as one with the DBPR. This represents a major shift for the industry; currently it is common practice for animal clinics, offices, and hospitals to use the “veterinary technician” or “vet tech” title interchangeably for any skilled support staff. The bill remains silent on how this provision will be enforced.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 474.201, 474.202, 474.2021, 474.203, 474.204, and 828.30.

This bill creates section 474.2126 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:****A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

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

None.

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<sup>48</sup> Fla. Admin Code R. 61G18-17.005, currently reasonable supervision allows an employee to administer medication if a licensed veterinarian has given the order but is not on the premise.

**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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