

By Senator Bradley

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to veterinary medicine; providing a short title; amending s. 474.201, F.S.; revising legislative findings, intent, and purpose; amending s. 474.202, F.S.; defining terms; amending s. 474.2021, F.S.; increasing the amount of time for which prescriptions based solely on a veterinary telehealth evaluation may be issued for certain drugs; amending s. 474.203, F.S.; revising the applicability of certain exemptions; amending s. 474.204, F.S.; revising the membership of the Board of Veterinary Medicine; creating s. 474.2126, F.S.; providing requirements for veterinary professional associates, veterinary technicians, and veterinary technologists to receive certificates of registration from the Department of Business and Professional Regulation; requiring the department to make a list of veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, and veterinary technologist registrants publicly available on its website; providing registration eligibility for certain individuals; authorizing the department to suspend the registration of a veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist upon a certain determination by the Board of Veterinary Medicine; authorizing the department to rescind the registration of a veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist under certain circumstances; prohibiting a person from holding himself or herself out as a

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veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist under certain circumstances; authorizing a registered veterinary technician or veterinary technologist to take certain actions as delegated under the responsible supervision of a licensed veterinarian or registered veterinary professional associate; prohibiting a registered veterinary technician or veterinary technologist from taking certain actions; authorizing a registered veterinary professional associate to engage in the practice of veterinary medicine under certain circumstances; prohibiting a registered veterinary professional associate from taking certain actions; authorizing a person who is not registered as a veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist to take certain actions only while under the immediate supervision of specified persons; providing construction; authorizing a supervising veterinarian to delegate certain tasks to specified persons; providing that a supervising licensed veterinarian is liable for any acts or omissions by certain persons under his or her supervision and control; 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. This act may be cited as the "Veterinary

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59 Workforce Innovation Act."

60 Section 2. Section 474.201, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
61 read:

62 474.201 Legislative findings, intent, and purpose.—

63 (1) The Legislature finds that the practice of veterinary  
64 medicine is potentially dangerous to the public health and  
65 safety if conducted by incompetent and unlicensed practitioners.  
66 The legislative purpose in enacting this chapter is to ensure  
67 that every veterinarian practicing in this state meet minimum  
68 requirements for safe practice. It is the legislative intent  
69 that veterinarians who are not normally competent or who  
70 otherwise present a danger to the public must ~~shall~~ be  
71 disciplined or prohibited from practicing in this state.

72 (2) The Legislature finds that the practice of educated,  
73 trained, and experienced veterinary professional associates,  
74 veterinary technicians, and veterinary technologists will  
75 increase consumer access to high-quality veterinary medical  
76 services at a reasonable cost to consumers, while also  
77 increasing the efficiency of the practice of veterinary medicine  
78 in this state.

79 Section 3. Present subsection (14) of section 474.202,  
80 Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (17), and a new  
81 subsection (14) and subsections (15) and (16) are added to that  
82 section, to read:

83 474.202 Definitions.—As used in this chapter:

84 (14) "Veterinary professional associate" means an  
85 individual who has graduated with a master's degree or the  
86 equivalent in veterinary clinical care from an accredited  
87 institution and who meets the requirements to be registered by

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the department.

(15) "Veterinary technician" or "veterinary technologist" means 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.

(16) "Veterinary technology" includes, with respect to animals, the provision of medical care, monitoring, and treatment of a veterinary patient by a person who is a registered veterinary technician or technologist working under supervision of a licensed veterinarian as authorized under this chapter. The term includes veterinary nursing.

Section 4. Subsection (4) of section 474.2021, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

474.2021 Veterinary telehealth.—

(4) A veterinarian practicing veterinary telehealth:

(a) May not engage in the practice of veterinary telehealth unless it is within the context of a veterinarian/client/patient relationship;

(b) Shall practice in a manner consistent with his or her scope of practice and the prevailing professional standard of practice for a veterinarian who provides in-person veterinary services to patients in this state and shall employ sound, professional judgment to determine whether using veterinary telehealth is an appropriate method for delivering medical advice or treatment to the patient;

(c) May use veterinary telehealth to perform an initial patient evaluation to establish the veterinarian/client/patient relationship if the evaluation is conducted using synchronous,

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117 audiovisual communication. The evaluation may not be performed  
118 using audio-only communications, text messaging, questionnaires,  
119 chatbots, or other similar means. If a veterinarian practicing  
120 telehealth conducts a patient evaluation sufficient to diagnose  
121 and treat the patient, the veterinarian is not required to  
122 research a patient's medical history or conduct a physical  
123 examination of the patient before using veterinary telehealth to  
124 provide a veterinary health care service to the patient;

125 (d) If the initial patient evaluation is performed using  
126 veterinary telehealth, must provide the client with a statement  
127 containing the veterinarian's name, license number, and contact  
128 information and the contact information for at least one  
129 physical veterinary clinic in the vicinity of the patient's  
130 location and instructions for how to receive patient follow-up  
131 care or assistance if the veterinarian and client are unable to  
132 communicate because of a technological or equipment failure or  
133 if there is an adverse reaction to treatment, and inform the  
134 client that, if medication is prescribed, the client may obtain  
135 a prescription that may be filled at the pharmacy of his or her  
136 choice. The veterinarian shall obtain from the client a signed  
137 and dated statement indicating the client has received the  
138 required information before practicing veterinary telehealth;

139 (e) Shall prescribe all drugs and medications in accordance  
140 with all federal and state laws and the following requirements:

141 1. A veterinarian practicing veterinary telehealth may  
142 order, prescribe, or make available medicinal drugs or drugs  
143 specifically approved for use in animals by the United States  
144 Food and Drug Administration, the use of which conforms to the  
145 approved labeling. Prescriptions based solely on a telehealth

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evaluation may be issued for up to 6 months ~~1 month~~ for products labeled solely for flea and tick control and up to 30 ~~14~~ days of treatment for other animal drugs. Prescriptions based solely on a telehealth evaluation may not be renewed without an in-person examination.

2. A veterinarian practicing veterinary telehealth may not order, prescribe, or make available medicinal drugs or drugs as defined in s. 465.003 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 to the premises where the animal is kept.

3. A veterinarian may not use veterinary telehealth to prescribe a controlled substance as defined in chapter 893 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.

4. A veterinarian practicing veterinary telehealth 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.;

(f) Shall be familiar with available veterinary resources, including emergency resources, near the patient's location and be able to provide the client with a list of nearby veterinarians who may be able to see the patient in person upon

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the request of the client;

(g) Shall keep, maintain, and make available a summary of the patient record as provided in s. 474.2165; and

(h) May not use veterinary telehealth to issue an international or interstate travel certificate or a certificate of veterinary inspection.

Section 5. Subsection (3), paragraph (a) of subsection (5), and subsection (7) of section 474.203, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

474.203 Exemptions.—This chapter does not apply to:

(3) A student in a school or college of veterinary medicine or a program for veterinary technology while in the performance of duties assigned by her or his instructor or when working as a preceptor under the immediate supervision of a licensee, if such preceptorship is required for graduation from an accredited school or college of veterinary medicine or program for veterinary technology. The licensed veterinarian is responsible for all acts performed by a preceptor under her or his supervision.

(5)(a) Any person, or the person's regular employee, administering to the ills or injuries of her or his own animals, including, but not limited to, castration, spaying, and dehorning of herd animals, unless title is transferred or employment provided for the purpose of circumventing this law. This exemption does not apply to any person licensed as a veterinarian or registered as a veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist in another state or foreign jurisdiction and practicing temporarily in this state. However, except as provided in s. 474.2126 or s.

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828.30, only a veterinarian may immunize or treat an animal for diseases that are communicable to humans and that are of public health significance.

(7) Any veterinary aide, nurse, laboratory technician, preceptor, or assistant; any registered veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist, registered pursuant to s. 474.2126; or other employee of a licensed veterinarian who administers medication or who renders auxiliary or supporting assistance under the responsible supervision of a licensed veterinarian, including those tasks identified by rule of the board requiring immediate supervision, provided that a registered veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist is subject to s. 474.2126. However, the licensed veterinarian is responsible for all such acts performed under this subsection by persons under her or his supervision.

For the purposes of chapters 465 and 893, persons exempt pursuant to subsection (1), subsection (2), or subsection (4) are deemed to be duly licensed practitioners authorized by the laws of this state to prescribe drugs or medicinal supplies.

Section 6. Section 474.204, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

474.204 Board of Veterinary Medicine.—

(1) To carry out ~~the provisions of~~ this chapter, there is created within the department the Board of Veterinary Medicine composed consisting of all of the following ~~seven~~ members, who shall be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate:—



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233        (a) ~~(2)~~ Five members of the board who are ~~shall be~~ licensed  
234 veterinarians.

235        (b) Two members who are registered with the department as a  
236 veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or  
237 veterinary technologist and who have been employed as such for  
238 at least 5 years immediately preceding the date of appointment  
239 to the board.

240        (c) Two members of the board who are ~~shall be~~ laypersons  
241 who are not and have never been veterinarians or members of any  
242 closely related profession or occupation.

243        (2) ~~(3)~~ All provisions of chapter 455 relating to activities  
244 of regulatory boards shall apply.

245        Section 7. Section 474.2126, Florida Statutes, is created  
246 to read:

247        474.2126 Veterinary professional associates, veterinary  
248 technicians, and veterinary technologists; registration.-

249        (1) REGISTRATION.-

250        (a) A veterinary professional associate, veterinary  
251 technician, or veterinary technologist may apply to the  
252 department for registration by submitting a form prescribed by  
253 the board. The department shall consider for registration each  
254 qualified veterinary professional associate, veterinary  
255 technician, or veterinary technologist, or applicant who the  
256 department verifies has submitted a completed application and  
257 meets the applicable requirements of this subsection.

258        (b) The department shall issue a certificate of  
259 registration to each veterinary professional associate,  
260 veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist applicant who  
261 the department verifies has graduated from the relevant

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262 accredited program and received a passing score on the relevant  
263 professional national competency examination approved by the  
264 board.

265 (c) The department shall issue a certificate of  
266 registration to an veterinary technician who does not meet the  
267 requirements of paragraph (b), if he or she:

268 1. Submits a notarized document from an employer who is a  
269 licensed veterinarian certifying that as of January 1, 2000, the  
270 applicant possesses 5 or more years of practical experience  
271 performing the tasks of a veterinary technician in this state;

272 2. Provides proof of graduation from a veterinary  
273 technology program accredited by the American Veterinary Medical  
274 Association Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and  
275 Activities before January 1, 2000; and

276 3. Is in good standing with the appropriate Florida  
277 certifying body, including the Florida Veterinary Technician  
278 Association or the Florida Veterinary Medical Association, is  
279 eligible to apply for registration.

280 (d) The department shall make the list of registrants  
281 available to the public on its website.

282 (e) The department may suspend the registration of any  
283 veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or  
284 veterinary technologist who the board determines has caused  
285 serious harm to an animal due to negligence, incompetence, or  
286 misconduct related to duties performed under this section and in  
287 a manner inconsistent with the supervising veterinarian's  
288 specific direction, until which time as the registrant has  
289 completed remedial training or education directed by the board.

290 (f) The department may rescind the registration of any

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291 veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or  
292 veterinary technologist who is convicted of animal cruelty or  
293 animal fighting under s. 828.12 or s. 828.122.

294 (2) PROHIBITION.—An individual may not hold himself or  
295 herself out as a registered veterinary professional associate,  
296 veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist or use the  
297 abbreviation RVT, RVTg, VT, VPA, or MVCC or in any other way  
298 represent himself or herself as a veterinary professional  
299 associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist  
300 unless he or she has a valid certificate of registration from  
301 the department.

302 (3) DUTIES AND ACTIONS OF A REGISTERED VETERINARY  
303 TECHNICIAN OR VETERINARY TECHNOLOGIST.—

304 (a) Unless otherwise prohibited by this section or other  
305 state or federal law, a registered veterinary technician or  
306 veterinary technologist may perform duties or actions in which  
307 he or she is competent and has the necessary training, current  
308 knowledge, and experience to provide, as delegated under the  
309 responsible supervision, as defined in s. 474.202, of a licensed  
310 veterinarian or registered veterinary professional associate. In  
311 addition to other duties or actions approved by the supervising  
312 veterinarian, a registered veterinary technician or veterinary  
313 technologist may perform all the following actions under the  
314 responsible supervision, as defined in s. 474.202, of a licensed  
315 veterinarian or a veterinary professional associate as delegated  
316 by a licensed veterinarian:

317 1. Administer medical drugs as defined in chapter 465  
318 prescribed for a patient by the supervising veterinarian, or  
319 provide treatments, as directed;

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320       2. Prepare, record, and administer vaccinations and  
321 microchips; or

322       3. Perform humane euthanasia of animals and prepare, log,  
323 and administer controlled substances for the purpose of  
324 analgesia, anesthesia, or humane euthanasia, as delegated by a  
325 licensed veterinarian and performed under responsible  
326 supervision.

327       (b) Except as otherwise authorized by this section or other  
328 state law, a registered veterinary technician or veterinary  
329 technologist may not perform any of the following actions:

330       1. Make or provide any diagnosis or prognosis;

331       2. Perform any surgery, except that a registered veterinary  
332 technician or registered veterinary technologist may perform  
333 suturing or stapling of skin lacerations, gingival incisions, or  
334 existing surgical incisions or tooth extraction procedures; or

335       3. Prescribe any medical drugs as defined in chapter 465 or  
336 controlled substances as defined in chapter 893.

337       (4) DUTIES AND ACTIONS OF A REGISTERED VETERINARY  
338 PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATE.—

339       (a) Unless otherwise prohibited by this section or other  
340 state or federal law, a registered veterinary professional  
341 associate may engage in the practice of veterinary medicine as  
342 defined in s. 474.202 or veterinary medicine as defined in s.  
343 474.202, to the extent that he or she is competent and has the  
344 necessary training, current knowledge, and experience to provide  
345 such care, as delegated under the responsible supervision, as  
346 defined in s. 474.202, of a licensed veterinarian.

347       (b) A registered veterinary professional associate may not  
348 do any of the following:

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349       1. Prescribe a controlled substance listed in s. 893.03,  
350 except that a registered veterinary professional associate may  
351 perform humane euthanasia and prepare, log, and administer  
352 controlled substances for the purpose of analgesia, anesthesia,  
353 or humane euthanasia, as delegated by a licensed veterinarian  
354 and performed under responsible supervision.

355       2. Perform a surgical procedure, except that a veterinary  
356 professional associate may perform the following surgical  
357 procedures:

358           a. Orchiectomy;  
359           b. Veterinary dental surgery; or  
360           c. Veterinary suturing or stapling of skin lacerations,  
361 gingival incisions, or existing surgical incisions.

362       (5) ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION.—An individual who is not  
363 registered with the state as a veterinary professional  
364 associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist may  
365 administer medication prescribed by the supervising veterinarian  
366 for a patient or render auxiliary or supporting assistance only  
367 under the immediate supervision, as defined in s. 474.202, of a  
368 licensed veterinarian or under the immediate supervision of a  
369 registered veterinary professional associate, veterinary  
370 technician, or veterinary technologist who is acting under the  
371 responsible supervision of a licensed veterinarian or his or her  
372 delegee as defined in s. 474.202, as provided for in subsection  
373 (6). This section does not prohibit an individual from rendering  
374 lifesaving aid and treatment to an animal in the absence of a  
375 veterinarian if the animal is in a life-threatening condition  
376 and requires immediate treatment to sustain life or prevent  
377 further injury.

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(6) DELEGATION.—Unless otherwise prohibited under this section or other state law or federal law, a supervising licensed veterinarian may in his or her judgment delegate to a registered veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist the responsibility of supervising a task or tasks performed by a veterinary assistant.

(7) LIABILITY.—A supervising licensed veterinarian is liable for any acts or omissions of the registered veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist acting under the licensed veterinarian's supervision and control.

Section 8. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) and subsection (3) of section 828.30, Florida Statutes, are 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 or a person authorized under paragraph (b) or s. 474.2126 against rabies with a vaccine that is licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture for use in those species.

(3) Upon vaccination against rabies, the licensed veterinarian shall provide the animal's owner and the animal control authority with a rabies vaccination certificate. Each animal control authority and veterinarian shall use the "Rabies Vaccination Certificate" of the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV) or an equivalent form approved by the local government that contains all the information required by the NASPHV Rabies Vaccination Certificate. The veterinarian who administers the rabies vaccination or who supervises the administration of the rabies

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407 vaccination as provided in paragraph (1)(b) or s. 474.2126 to an  
408 animal as authorized under this section may affix his or her  
409 signature stamp in lieu of an actual signature.

410 Section 9. This act shall take effect January 1, 2027.