

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to veterinary medicine; providing a
3 short title; amending s. 474.201, F.S.; revising
4 legislative findings, intent, and purpose; amending s.
5 474.202, F.S.; defining terms; amending s. 474.2021,
6 F.S.; increasing the amount of time for which
7 prescriptions based solely on a veterinary telehealth
8 evaluation may be issued for certain drugs; amending
9 s. 474.203, F.S.; revising the applicability of
10 certain exemptions; amending s. 474.204, F.S.;
11 revising the membership of the Board of Veterinary
12 Medicine; creating s. 474.2126, F.S.; providing
13 requirements for veterinary professional associates,
14 veterinary technicians, and veterinary technologists
15 to receive certificates of registration from the
16 Department of Business and Professional Regulation;
17 requiring the department to make a list of veterinary
18 professional associate, veterinary technician, and
19 veterinary technologist registrants publicly available
20 on its website; providing registration eligibility for
21 certain individuals; authorizing the department to
22 suspend the registration of a veterinary professional
23 associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary
24 technologist upon a certain determination by the Board
25 of Veterinary Medicine; authorizing the department to

26 rescind the registration of a veterinary professional
27 associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary
28 technologist under certain circumstances; prohibiting
29 a person from holding himself or herself out as a
30 veterinary professional associate, veterinary
31 technician, or veterinary technologist under certain
32 circumstances; authorizing a registered veterinary
33 technician or veterinary technologist to take certain
34 actions as delegated under the responsible supervision
35 of a licensed veterinarian or registered veterinary
36 professional associate; prohibiting a registered
37 veterinary technician or veterinary technologist from
38 taking certain actions; authorizing a registered
39 veterinary professional associate to engage in the
40 practice of veterinary medicine under certain
41 circumstances; prohibiting a registered veterinary
42 professional associate from taking certain actions;
43 authorizing a person who is not registered as a
44 veterinary professional associate, veterinary
45 technician, or veterinary technologist to take certain
46 actions only while under the immediate supervision of
47 specified persons; providing construction; authorizing
48 a supervising veterinarian to delegate certain tasks
49 to specified persons; providing that a supervising
50 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 Workforce Innovation Act."

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

474.201 Legislative findings, intent, and purpose.—

(1) 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. The legislative purpose in enacting this chapter is to ensure that every veterinarian practicing in this state meet minimum requirements for safe practice. It is the legislative intent that veterinarians who are not normally competent or who otherwise present a danger to the public must ~~shall~~ be disciplined or prohibited from practicing in this state.

(2) The Legislature finds that the practice of educated, trained, and experienced veterinary professional associates, veterinary technicians, and veterinary technologists will 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
88 the department.

89 (15) "Veterinary technician" or "veterinary technologist"
90 means an individual who has graduated from an accredited
91 veterinary technology program and who meets the requirements to
92 be registered by the department. The term also includes a
93 veterinary nurse.

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

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

(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
140 accordance with all federal and state laws and the following
141 requirements:

142 1. A veterinarian practicing veterinary telehealth may
143 order, prescribe, or make available medicinal drugs or drugs
144 specifically approved for use in animals by the United States
145 Food and Drug Administration, the use of which conforms to the
146 approved labeling. Prescriptions based solely on a telehealth
147 evaluation may be issued for up to 6 months ~~1 month~~ for products
148 labeled solely for flea and tick control and up to 30 ~~14~~ days of
149 treatment for other animal drugs. Prescriptions based solely on
150 a telehealth evaluation may not be renewed without an in-person

151 examination.

152 2. A veterinarian practicing veterinary telehealth may not
153 order, prescribe, or make available medicinal drugs or drugs as
154 defined in s. 465.003 approved by the United States Food and
155 Drug Administration for human use or compounded antibacterial,
156 antifungal, antiviral, or antiparasitic medications, unless the
157 veterinarian has conducted an in-person physical examination of
158 the animal or made medically appropriate and timely visits to
159 the premises where the animal is kept.

160 3. A veterinarian may not use veterinary telehealth to
161 prescribe a controlled substance as defined in chapter 893
162 unless the veterinarian has conducted an in-person physical
163 examination of the animal or made medically appropriate and
164 timely visits within the past year to the premises where the
165 animal is kept.

166 4. A veterinarian practicing veterinary telehealth may not
167 prescribe a drug or other medication for use on a horse engaged
168 in racing or training at a facility under the jurisdiction of
169 the Florida Gaming Control Commission or on a horse that is a
170 covered horse as defined in the federal Horseracing Integrity
171 and Safety Act, 15 U.S.C. ss. 3051 et seq.;

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

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

201 veterinarian or registered as a veterinary professional
202 associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist in
203 another state or foreign jurisdiction and practicing temporarily
204 in this state. However, except as provided in s. 474.2126 or s.
205 828.30, only a veterinarian may immunize or treat an animal for
206 diseases that are communicable to humans and that are of public
207 health significance.

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

221
222 For the purposes of chapters 465 and 893, persons exempt
223 pursuant to subsection (1), subsection (2), or subsection (4)
224 are deemed to be duly licensed practitioners authorized by the
225 laws of this state to prescribe drugs or medicinal supplies.

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

228 474.204 Board of Veterinary Medicine.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

248 474.2126 Veterinary professional associates, veterinary
249 technicians, and veterinary technologists; registration.—

250 (1) REGISTRATION.—

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

259 (b) The department shall issue a certificate of
260 registration to each veterinary professional associate,
261 veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist applicant who
262 the department verifies has graduated from the relevant
263 accredited program and received a passing score on the relevant
264 professional national competency examination approved by the
265 board.

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

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

273 2. Provides proof of graduation from a veterinary
274 technology program accredited by the American Veterinary Medical
275 Association Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and

276 Activities before January 1, 2000; and

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

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

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

291 (f) The department may rescind the registration of any
292 veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or
293 veterinary technologist who is convicted of animal cruelty or
294 animal fighting under s. 828.12 or s. 828.122.

295 (2) PROHIBITION.—An individual may not hold himself or
296 herself out as a registered veterinary professional associate,
297 veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist or use the
298 abbreviation RVT, RVTg, VT, VPA, or MVCC or in any other way
299 represent himself or herself as a veterinary professional
300 associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist

301 unless he or she has a valid certificate of registration from
302 the department.

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

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

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

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

323 3. Perform humane euthanasia of animals and prepare, log,
324 and administer controlled substances for the purpose of
325 analgesia, anesthesia, or humane euthanasia, as delegated by a

326 licensed veterinarian and performed under responsible
327 supervision.

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

332 1. Make or provide any diagnosis or prognosis;

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

338 3. Prescribe any medical drugs as defined in chapter 465
339 or controlled substances as defined in chapter 893.

340 (4) DUTIES AND ACTIONS OF A REGISTERED VETERINARY
341 PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATE.—

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

350 (b) A registered veterinary professional associate may not

do any of the following:

1. Prescribe a controlled substance listed in s. 893.03,
except 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.

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

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

(5) ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION.—An individual who is not
registered with the state as a veterinary professional
associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist may
administer medication prescribed by the supervising veterinarian
for a patient or render auxiliary or supporting assistance only
under the immediate supervision, as defined in s. 474.202, of a
licensed veterinarian or under the immediate supervision of a
registered veterinary professional associate, veterinary
technician, or veterinary technologist who is acting under the
responsible supervision of a licensed veterinarian or his or her
delegee as defined in s. 474.202, as provided for in subsection

376 (6). This section does not prohibit an individual from rendering
377 lifesaving aid and treatment to an animal in the absence of a
378 veterinarian if the animal is in a life-threatening condition
379 and requires immediate treatment to sustain life or prevent
380 further injury.

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

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

392 **Section 8. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) and subsection**
393 **(3) of section 828.30, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

394 828.30 Rabies vaccination of dogs, cats, and ferrets.—

395 (1)(a) All dogs, cats, and ferrets 4 months of age or
396 older must be vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian or a person
397 authorized under paragraph (b) or s. 474.2126 against rabies
398 with a vaccine that is licensed by the United States Department
399 of Agriculture for use in those species.

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

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