

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 the term "veterinary  
6     professional associate"; amending s. 474.2021, F.S.;  
7     increasing the amount of time for which prescriptions  
8     based solely on a veterinary telehealth evaluation may  
9     be issued for certain drugs; amending s. 474.203,  
10    F.S.; revising the applicability of certain  
11    exemptions; creating s. 474.2126, F.S.; providing  
12    requirements for veterinary professional associates to  
13    receive certificates of registration from the  
14    Department of Business and Professional Regulation;  
15    requiring the department to make a list of veterinary  
16    professional associate registrants publicly available  
17    on its website; authorizing the department to suspend  
18    the registration of a veterinary professional  
19    associate upon a certain determination by the Board of  
20    Veterinary Medicine; authorizing the department to  
21    rescind the registration of a veterinary professional  
22    associate under certain circumstances; prohibiting a  
23    person from holding himself or herself out as a  
24    veterinary professional associate under certain  
25    circumstances; 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; providing exceptions; 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 ~~shall~~ be disciplined or prohibited from practicing in this state.

(2) The Legislature finds that the practice of educated,

51 trained, and experienced veterinary professional associates will  
52 increase consumer access to high-quality veterinary medical  
53 services at a reasonable cost to consumers, while also  
54 increasing the efficiency of the practice of veterinary medicine  
55 in this state.

56 **Section 3. Present subsection (14) of section 474.202,**  
57 **Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (15), and a new**  
58 **subsection (14) is added to that section, to read:**

59 474.202 Definitions.—As used in this chapter:

60 (14) "Veterinary professional associate" means an  
61 individual who has graduated with a master's degree or the  
62 equivalent in veterinary clinical care from an accredited  
63 institution and who meets the requirements to be registered by  
64 the department.

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

67 474.2021 Veterinary telehealth.—

68 (4) A veterinarian practicing veterinary telehealth:

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

72 (b) Shall practice in a manner consistent with his or her  
73 scope of practice and the prevailing professional standard of  
74 practice for a veterinarian who provides in-person veterinary  
75 services to patients in this state and shall employ sound,

76 professional judgment to determine whether using veterinary  
77 telehealth is an appropriate method for delivering medical  
78 advice or treatment to the patient;

79       (c) May use veterinary telehealth to perform an initial  
80 patient evaluation to establish the veterinarian/client/patient  
81 relationship if the evaluation is conducted using synchronous,  
82 audiovisual communication. The evaluation may not be performed  
83 using audio-only communications, text messaging, questionnaires,  
84 chatbots, or other similar means. If a veterinarian practicing  
85 telehealth conducts a patient evaluation sufficient to diagnose  
86 and treat the patient, the veterinarian is not required to  
87 research a patient's medical history or conduct a physical  
88 examination of the patient before using veterinary telehealth to  
89 provide a veterinary health care service to the patient;

90       (d) If the initial patient evaluation is performed using  
91 veterinary telehealth, must provide the client with a statement  
92 containing the veterinarian's name, license number, and contact  
93 information and the contact information for at least one  
94 physical veterinary clinic in the vicinity of the patient's  
95 location and instructions for how to receive patient follow-up  
96 care or assistance if the veterinarian and client are unable to  
97 communicate because of a technological or equipment failure or  
98 if there is an adverse reaction to treatment, and inform the  
99 client that, if medication is prescribed, the client may obtain  
100 a prescription that may be filled at the pharmacy of his or her

choice. The veterinarian shall obtain from the client a signed and dated statement indicating the client has received the required information before practicing veterinary telehealth;

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

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

126 prescribe a controlled substance as defined in chapter 893  
127 unless the veterinarian has conducted an in-person physical  
128 examination of the animal or made medically appropriate and  
129 timely visits within the past year to the premises where the  
130 animal is kept.

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

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

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

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

147 **Section 5. Paragraph (a) of subsection (5) and subsection**  
148 **(7) of section 474.203, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

149 474.203 Exemptions.—This chapter does not apply to:

150 (5) (a) Any person, or the person's regular employee,

151 administering to the ills or injuries of her or his own animals,  
152 including, but not limited to, castration, spaying, and  
153 dehorning of herd animals, unless title is transferred or  
154 employment provided for the purpose of circumventing this law.  
155 This exemption does not apply to any person licensed as a  
156 veterinarian in another state or foreign jurisdiction and  
157 practicing temporarily in this state. However, except as  
158 provided in s. 474.2126 or s. 828.30, only a veterinarian may  
159 immunize or treat an animal for diseases that are communicable  
160 to humans and that are of public health significance.

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

171  
172 For the purposes of chapters 465 and 893, persons exempt  
173 pursuant to subsection (1), subsection (2), or subsection (4)  
174 are deemed to be duly licensed practitioners authorized by the  
175 laws of this state to prescribe drugs or medicinal supplies.

176       **Section 6. Section 474.2126, Florida Statutes, is created**  
177 **to read:**

178       474.2126 Veterinary professional associates;  
179 registration.—

180       (1) REGISTRATION.—

181       (a) A veterinary professional associate may apply to the  
182 department for registration by submitting a form prescribed by  
183 the board. The department shall consider for registration each  
184 qualified veterinary professional associate who the department  
185 verifies has submitted a completed application and meets the  
186 applicable requirements of this subsection.

187       (b) The department shall issue a certificate of  
188 registration to each veterinary professional associate applicant  
189 who the department verifies has graduated from the relevant  
190 accredited program and received a passing score on the relevant  
191 professional national competency examination approved by the  
192 board.

193       (c) The department shall make a list of registrants  
194 available to the public on the department's website.

195       (d) The department may suspend the registration of any  
196 veterinary professional associate who the board determines has  
197 caused serious harm to an animal due to negligence,  
198 incompetence, or misconduct related to duties performed under  
199 this section and in a manner inconsistent with the supervising  
200 veterinarian's specific direction, until such time as the



registrant has completed remedial training or education directed  
by the board.

(e) The department may rescind the registration of any  
veterinary professional associate who is convicted of animal  
cruelty under s. 828.12 or animal fighting under s. 828.122.

(2) PROHIBITION.—An individual may not hold himself or  
herself out as a registered veterinary professional associate or  
in any other way represent himself or herself as a veterinary  
professional associate unless he or she has a valid certificate  
of registration from the department.

(3) DUTIES AND ACTIONS OF A REGISTERED VETERINARY  
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATE.—

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

(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

226 controlled substances for the purpose of analgesia, anesthesia,  
227 or humane euthanasia, as delegated by a licensed veterinarian  
228 and performed under responsible supervision.

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

232 a. Orchiectomy;

233 b. Veterinary dental surgery; or

234 c. Veterinary suturing or stapling of skin lacerations,  
235 gingival incisions, or existing surgical incisions.

236 **Section 7. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) and subsection**  
237 **(3) of section 828.30, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

238 828.30 Rabies vaccination of dogs, cats, and ferrets.—

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

244 (3) Upon vaccination against rabies, the licensed  
245 veterinarian shall provide the animal's owner and the animal  
246 control authority with a rabies vaccination certificate. Each  
247 animal control authority and veterinarian shall use the "Rabies  
248 Vaccination Certificate" of the National Association of State  
249 Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV) or an equivalent form  
250 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 8.** This act shall take effect January 1, 2027.