
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1999 (Kalra) - Veterinary medicine

Version: June 17, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: June 29, 2026

Policy Vote: B., P. & E.D. 11 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Janelle Miyashiro

Bill Summary: AB 1999 revises requirements for purposes of establishing the Veterinary-Client Patient Relationship (VCPR); establishes a retired license status and a retired volunteer license status; creates a designated shelter veterinary license; revises and adds terminology related to telehealth services; and makes numerous other technical and conforming changes related to the Veterinary Practice Act (Act).

Fiscal Impact:

- The California Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) anticipates minor, absorbable costs associated with licensee outreach, education, and applicant eligibility verification for the new license and retired statuses (VMB Contingent Fund). While the creation of the shelter veterinarian license and the two retired statuses will generate initial revenue, the VMB estimates the overall fiscal impact to be revenue neutral. Any initial revenue increase generated by the retired statuses is expected to be offset by a corresponding decline in active veterinarian license revenue as eligible practitioners may choose to transition to the retired categories.
- The Office of Information Services (OIS) within the Department of Consumer Affairs reports costs of approximately \$132,000 to create new initial and renewal applications and implement other necessary updates to the BreEZe system. OIS notes these costs are absorbable within existing resources.

Background: To practice veterinary medicine in California, an individual must hold a license issued by the VMB. The VMB protects the public from unprofessional and unlicensed practice of veterinary medicine. The VMB requires adherence to strict licensure or registration requirements for veterinarians, registered veterinary technicians (RVTs), and veterinary assistant-controlled substance permit (VACSP) holders.

The VMB is responsible for ensuring that each licensee or registrant has met the level of competence required to perform animal health care services. The VMB investigates complaints – and if violations confirmed, takes disciplinary action against its licensees or those individuals who may be providing unlicensed practice. In order to obtain a license to practice veterinary medicine an individual must meet specified education requirements and pass a national examination.

The VMB was subject to sunset review in 2025, and as part of that process, a number of issues and priorities were raised by the VMB, stakeholders, and legislative policy committees, many of which were addressed in AB 1502 (Berman, Chapter 195, Statutes of 2025). However, some of the issues identified during the VMB's 2025 Sunset Review process were not included in legislation and remain issues for the VMB, some of which are addressed in this bill.

Proposed Law:

- Allows a rabies vaccination to be given to an animal patient without an established VCPR.
- Revises the definition of a VCPR.
- Replaces references to “telehealth” with “telemedicine.”
- Revises requirements related to the establishment and maintenance of a VCPR to clarify that a VCPR established via in-person examination is valid for 12 months, and a VCPR established via telemedicine is valid for 6 months, subject to certain specifications.
- Permits the VCPR to continue to exist in the absence of the veterinarian if all of the following are met:
 - The VCPR was established with an original veterinarian and subsequent veterinarian serves in the absence of the original veterinarian at the original location where the records are kept.
 - The subsequent veterinarian has assumed responsibility for making medical judgements regarding the health of the animal patient
 - The subsequent veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal patient to initial at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal patient through one of the following methods:
 - Examining the animal patient in person.
 - Examination of the animal patient via telemedicine.
 - Making medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal patient is kept.
 - Consulting with the original veterinarian who established the VCPR.
 - The subsequent veterinarian has continued the medical treatment, diagnostic, or therapeutic plan that was set forth and documented in the medical record by the original veterinarian.
 - If the plan differs from that of which was communicated to the client or the client’s agent by the original veterinarian than the subsequent veterinarian has attempted to communicate the changes within a timely manner.
- Authorizes in the absence of the originally prescribing veterinarian who established the VCPR, the subsequent veterinarian to prescribe, dispense, furnish a refill if specified conditions are met.
- Narrows the “owner exemption” to specify that owners cannot perform any surgical or dental operation upon their animal. Defines “operation” as “any procedure

performed on an animal in which the skin or tissue of the animal is penetrated or severed”, and excludes the following actions:

- Administering injectable drugs; artificial insemination; castrating male livestock or dehorning or branding animals; inserting a microchip for identifying an animal; placing an ear tag or tattoo for identifying an animal; and venipuncture for diagnostic purposes.
- Clarifies that the provisions of this bill do not prohibit an organization accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, or a university, college, or governmental research agency from practicing veterinary medicine on an animal owned by that entity.
- Authorizes veterinarians licensed in another state to provide assistance a California veterinarian on a specific case through any means.
- Exempts from the provisions of the Act, a person who is not licensed and provides teleconsultation to a California-licensed veterinarian.
- Clarifies that an RVT may render lifesaving aid through any means including teletriage.
- Deletes the prohibition for a person whose license has been expired for more than five years from renewing, as specified.
- Establishes a retired license for a veterinarian or RVT, exempts a licensee or registrant from continuing education (CE) requirements, prohibits a licensee with retired license status from practicing veterinary medicine and requires the licensee to use the words “retired” directly preceding or following their professional title.
- Prohibits a retired license from being granted while there is a pending complaint, investigation, or enforcement action against a licensee or registrant or the license or registration has been revoked, surrendered or subject to terms and condition of probation.
- Permits the VMB to investigate potential violations of the Act or take action against a retired license holder for a violation of the Act.
- Establishes a retired volunteer license for a veterinarian or RVT and requires the following to obtain a retired volunteer license:
 - Complete an application.
 - Certify that the sole purpose of the volunteer license is to provide voluntary, unpaid, veterinary services to an animal shelter.
 - Pay the applicable fee.
 - Disclose the state or states in which the applicant holds a license or registration, as specified.

- Hold a California license or registration in active status or was placed in retired or expired status within the past five years, or a California license or registration placed in retired more than five years ago must submit additional information including fingerprints for background check purposes, compliance with CE, and for veterinarians, pass an examination.
- Authorizes a retired volunteer license to be subject to denial, as specified, and prohibits an applicant for a retired volunteer license to be granted while there is a pending complaint, investigation, or enforcement action against the licensee or registrant.
- Prohibits a retired volunteer license or registration holder from practicing veterinary medicine in any circumstance other than for an animal shelter or specified emergency situations.
- Requires a retired volunteer license or certification holder to certify that the sole purpose of retired volunteer status is to provide voluntary, unpaid, medical services for an animal shelter.
- Establishes a shelter veterinarian license specific to out-of-state licensed veterinarians and specifies the requirements for licensure as a shelter veterinarian which includes only practicing for an animal shelter, as specified.
- States that all the following apply to a shelter veterinarian license:
 - It is subject to denial, revocation, and suspension.
 - It may be renewed upon payment of a renewal fee, completion of CE, application prior to the license expiring, and certification that the sole purpose of the shelter veterinarian license is to practice veterinary medicine for an animal shelter.
- Prohibits a shelter veterinarian from practicing veterinary medicine in any circumstance other than for an animal shelter or pursuant to an emergency.
- Requires that premises registration holders provide and/or confirm specified information upon renewal of their registration.
- Establishes initial application and biennial renewal fees for a retired license, a retired volunteer license, and a shelter veterinarian license, as specified.
- Adds definitions to the Act.
- Makes other technical and conforming changes.

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