
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 2010
Author: Soria (D), et al.
Amended: 4/22/26 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE BUS., PROF. & ECON. DEV. COMMITTEE: 11-0, 6/15/26
AYES: Wahab, Choi, Archuleta, Arreguín, Caballero, Grayson, Menjivar, Niello,
Smallwood-Cuevas, Strickland, Umberg

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 74-0, 5/21/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Veterinary medicine: veterinary surgery premises: spay and neuter services

SOURCE: American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
San Diego Humane Society
San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Animal Balance

DIGEST: This bill exempts a veterinary premises where “high-quality, high-volume” spay and neuter services (HQHVSN) are performed, from specified regulatory standards, including the requirement for a separate room for aseptic surgeries, as specified.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Veterinary Medical Board (VMB), under the jurisdiction of the Department of Consumer Affairs to license and regulate veterinarians, registered veterinary technicians (RVTs), register veterinary premises (premises) and issue veterinary assistant-controlled substance permits (VACSPs) and sunsets the VMB and its authority to appoint an EO January 1,

2030. (Business and Professions Code (BPC) § 4800, et. seq.)

- 2) Prohibits a veterinarian from prescribing, dispensing, or administering a drug, medicine, application, or treatment of whatever nature for the prevention, cure, relief of a wound, fracture, bodily injury, or disease of animals unless a veterinarian-client patient relationship (VCPR) exists and specifies the conditions under which a VCPR is established, as specified. (BPC § 4826.6)
- 3) Requires all veterinary premises to be registered with the VMB. (BPC § 4853)
- 4) Authorizes the VMB at any time to inspect the premises in which veterinary medicine, veterinary dentistry, or veterinary surgery is being practiced, and specifies the board's inspection authority does not extend to premises that are not registered with the VMB. (BPC § 4809.5)

This bill:

- 1) Exempts HQHVSN services performed either in a registered veterinary premises, or by a veterinarian employed or contracted with a veterinary premises in a temporary setting from a requirement that it take place in a facility that complies with any of the following standards:
 - a) A requirement for a separate room that is reserved for aseptic surgical procedures that require aseptic preparation;
 - b) A prohibition on open shelving in the area in which the aseptic surgical sterilization procedure is performed;
 - c) A requirement for equipment for viewing radiographs.
- 2) Defines for purposes of this bill HQHVSN to mean the aseptic surgical sterilization by a veterinarian, including the supervision by the veterinarian of presurgical preparation and recovery of the animals, of 20 or more dogs, cats, or rabbits, or any combination thereof, within 12 consecutive hours.

Background

The Act and the Veterinary Medical Board (VMB). The VMB is the regulatory entity responsible for the licensure and regulation of veterinarians, RVT, schools and programs along with veterinary premises through the enforcement of the

California Veterinary Medicine Practice Act (Act). The practice of veterinary medicine is specified in statute (BPC § 4826) and includes actions such as diagnosing or prescribing a drug, medicine, appliance, application, treatment of whatever nature, for the cure or relief of a wound, fracture, bodily injury or disease of animals (including those actions of an RVT or a veterinary assistant under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian).

Premises Registration. The VMB is responsible for licensing and inspecting veterinary premises where animal health care tasks are performed. Current law requires that any owner, operator, officer, director, shareholder, general partner or agent for service of process be clearly identified on a premises application and require any changes in these positions to be reported to the VMB within 30 days. Under current regulations, veterinary premises must meet stringent requirements to ensure animal patient safety. In recognition that veterinary care services are evolving to meet the need of communities, and that some veterinary care services may be performed safely outside of a traditional veterinary premises hospital, the VMB recently adopted regulations to establish separately regulatory requirements for vaccination clinics, mobile veterinary premises, and small animal premises.

The minimum standards for a veterinary premises include administrative requirements such as signage, kenneling standards for animals that remain in care for more than 24 hours, phone access, facility hours of operations, among others. Premises must have capacity for radiological services, pathology and diagnostic services at the site, through another premises or outside service. Premises must abide by drug storage, sanitary standards, sterilized equipment standards, veterinary reference materials, among others.

Current regulations delineate additional standards that are required when providing *aseptic surgical services*, which include: 1) limits on storage to surgical supplies only, 2) prohibition on open shelving, 3) have a means for viewing diagnostic images, 4) specifications for surgical equipment, 5) sterile equipment standards, 6) appropriate attire of staff, and 7) compliance with specified building standards, which require a separate surgical room for aseptic procedures that require aseptic preparation.

Minimal regulations for mobile veterinary premises include requirements to provide disclosure notices about the hours of operation, phone number for access to after-hour emergency services, and a number for follow up questions. Mobile clinics must also meet specified requirements for standard veterinary premises and have a separate and distinct room where aseptic surgical services are provided.

Aseptic surgical procedures refer to those practices used to maintain a sterile environment during surgery to prevent contamination and infection.

Spay and Neuter and High-Quality, High-Volume Spay and Neuter. Generally, the practice of spay and neuter (the common terms) is referred to as the surgical sterilization of an animal. “Spaying” is the typical procedure for a female animal and “neuter” is the typical procedure for a male animal. Both procedures aim to ensure that the animals will not reproduce, mainly to control pet overpopulation.

HQHVSNS services relate to the specialized surgical techniques and operational practices which are designed to perform many spay and neuter surgeries more swiftly, while maintaining the high standards of patient care. Because this type of spay and neuter is a special technique that allows for a more rapid surgical procedure, these services are often performed at HQHVSNS clinics, where a high-volume of animals can be spayed and neutered during the clinic hours. This specialized service is valuable for shelters and rescue organizations that contract with local government for animal care services as a way to provide these necessary surgeries to many animals who need it, and also for those consumers who have difficulties accessing traditional veterinary care services, as they can attend one of these clinics which are typically offered at a low or no cost.

This bill creates a definition of HQHVSNS as “the aseptic surgical sterilization by a veterinarian, including the supervision by the veterinarian of presurgical preparation and recovery of the animals, of 20 or more dogs, cats, or rabbits, or any combination thereof, within 12 consecutive hours.” This definition provides clarification to the number of animals treated in these events rather than specifics on the actual surgical skills required or utilized to perform these surgeries.

The author and sponsor note that the requirement for separate surgical rooms for any veterinary surgery is problematic to meet specifically for HQHVSNS events. They note, HQHVSNS is most effective when it can be done in community centers and large rooms, allowing for a more efficient flow of animals and exponential increase in the number of animals that can be safely and quickly sterilized. To address this challenge for HQHVSNS pop-up event providers, this bill would exempt HQHVSNS from the requirement to comply with certain veterinary premises regulations, including the requirement for a separate room that is reserved for aseptic surgical procedures, the requirement to maintain equipment for viewing radiographs, and the prohibition on open shelving in the area in which the aseptic surgical sterilization procedure is performed.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 6/29/26)

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (co-source)
San Diego Humane Society (co-source)
San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (co-source)
Animal Balance (co-source)
Ace of Hearts Dog Rescue
Animal Shelter Assistance Program
Animalsave
Arc Inland Empire
Bay Area CATS
Berkeley-east Bay Humane Society
Best Friends Animal Society
Better World Rescue
CalAnimals
City of Huron
City of Rancho Cordova
City of Sacramento
County of Riverside
Eastwood Ranch Foundation
Forgotten Felines of Sonoma County
Friends of Colusa County Animal Shelter
Frosted Faces Foundation
Humane Society of Imperial County
Humane Veterinary Medical Association
Humane World for Animals
Inland Valley Humane Society & SPCA
Island Cat Resources and Adoption
Joybound People & Pets
Madera County Animal Services
Norcal German Shorthaired Pointer Rescue, INC
Oakland Animal Services
Orange County Animal Allies
Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA
Pets in Need
Rancho Coastal Humane Society
Ridgecrest Animal Shelter
Sacramento SPCA
Santa Barbara Humane
Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter
Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter Foundation

Sequoia Humane Society
The Dancing Cat
The Paw Mission
Town of Apple Valley Animal Services
Valley Humane Society

OPPOSITION: (Verified 6/29/26)

Fix our Shelters

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: A broad coalition of stakeholders write in support and note generally that this bill will help remove barriers to vital spay and neuter services and will also support overcrowded animal shelters.

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION: Fix our Shelters writes in opposition to the provisions of this bill and notes a preference to “allow for the CVMB to assert its role in ensuring that any expansion of spay/neuter services is guided by evidence-based medical standards, enforceable safeguards, and a clear commitment to preven7ng avoidable harm to animal patients.”

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 74-0, 5/21/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Chen, Garcia, Lackey, Ramos, Celeste Rodriguez

Prepared by: Elissa Silva / B., P. & E.D. / 916-651-4104
7/1/26 16:55:07

**** END ****