

PUBLIC COMMENTS: SENATE BILL 1539

POSITION STATEMENT: OPPOSED

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Committee Members regarding Senate Bill 1539:

Please allow me to express my opinions regarding this bill before you.

I have major concerns with individuals performing a task better served by licensed veterinary professionals. The concerns I have with unlicensed individuals include;

A lack of a certification, accreditation, or oversight standards.

A lack of any requirements of post secondary education degrees or continuing educational credits.

A lack of liability insurance requirements.

Weakening the Veterinarian-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR) that currently exists for our cattle clients. This relationship allows veterinarians to provide a multitude of services related to biosecurity, disease monitoring such as Avian Influenza, and New World Screwworm, herd health programs, diagnostics, animal welfare, and generating prescriptions for pharmaceutical use.

Rural producers that have difficulties getting professional veterinary assistance for timely veterinary pregnancy exams do have the option of performing individual blood tests that easily identify open (non-pregnant) cattle. Producers can submit these samples via the postal service or package carriers. Any assistance with interpretations can easily be accomplished with veterinarians by phone.

How can I as a veterinarian with a valid VCPR for a particular client, provide pharmaceuticals or a pharmaceutical prescription for these drugs to be used in a very specific circumstance such as in an open cow, when I have no knowledge of the reliability or the accuracy of the individual who is examining the cattle and determining which animals should receive such drugs. Some these pharmaceuticals are potent abortifacients and when given to a pregnant cow who was misdiagnosed as being open, will usually result in abortion. This flies in the face of our commitment as veterinarians in causing no harm.

My major point in this discussion: I finished my career while on staff at the College of Veterinary Medicine at OSU and to see the sacrifice of time and treasure with current veterinary students is inspiring. It shows those of us who are retiring that our profession is in good hands. But at the same time, students that are choosing the lifestyle and opportunities of rural veterinary practice, are now challenged with the fact that they may be directly competing with individuals that not only lack the amount of knowledge and training they have received over their four years of veterinary school, but they are also competing with individuals that have no oversight concerning their qualifications and level of service. Many of these individuals do not have the level of student debt, nor the specific amounts of liability insurances, certification requirements, and continuing education requirements that are currently in place for licensed veterinarians in Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to express myself,
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