

New York State Veterinary Medical Society's 2023 Legislative Agenda



The NYSVMS mission is to lead New York State veterinarians through education, advancement and protection of animal wellness, public health, and the veterinary medical profession and we work to make sure that New Yorkers have access to the highest caliber veterinary care available in the most cost-effective way.

Strengthening a Veterinarian's Ability to Treat Patients in a Timely Manner

NYSVMS strongly supports legislation, historically sponsored by Senator Skoufis (S.2314) and Assemblymember Zebrowski (A.4505), that would permit a veterinarian to keep compounded drugs in stock for office use and sale pursuant to a non-patient specific regimen. This would enable veterinarians to provide compounded medications to patients for use at home, which helps to fill gaps between in-office treatment and the time a compounded medication becomes available at a pharmacy or for home delivery. NYSVMS continues to have discussions with the State Education Department and bill sponsors about the importance of this legislation; we have made suggested changes to the bill language in response to comments and concerns that have arisen and hope to continue these discussions through the beginning of the legislative session with the goal of finalizing a bill that works for veterinarians.

Position Statement: NYSVMS will continue to advocate for the passage of a compounding bill in the Senate and Assembly to ensure that compounded medications are readily available for use by patients and to work with the FDA to ensure their guidance on this subject is clear.

Protecting a Veterinarian's License to Practice Veterinary Medicine

- Senator Gianaris (S.142) and Assemblyman Zebrowski (A.3569) continue to sponsor legislation that would prohibit bark softening in dogs unless performed by a veterinarian where the procedure is medically necessary for a dog. NYSVMS strongly believes bark softening is a medical decision which should be left to the sound discretion of fully trained, licensed, and state supervised veterinary professionals operating within appropriate standards of practice. Further, NYSVMS already discourages bark softening unless the procedure is medically necessary for a dog, is a last alternative to euthanasia, or when the animal will be surrendered by the owner if the procedure is not performed. Therefore, NYSVMS believes the determination to perform bark softening should be done on a case-by-case basis where specifics of the situation can be reviewed and evaluated, rather than having a ban placed on the procedure altogether.

- Legislation that would restrict the use of medically important antimicrobials in food-producing animals has been sponsored by Senator Kavanagh (S.4021) and Assemblymember Rosenthal (A.1675). This bill has the potential to restrict the practice of food animal veterinarians in a manner that could have a detrimental impact on animal welfare. The bill would also establish an onerous set of reporting requirements. NYSVMS looks forward to continued discussions on this bill and the opportunity to continue to educate legislators about the use of medically important antimicrobials in food-producing animals and the guidelines followed by veterinarians to ensure use only as necessary.
- A bill to mandate informed consent for euthanasia and limit the use of intracardiac injection requires extensive conversation with a client whose pet requires euthanasia, including discussion of all alternatives available, the benefits and risks of each method, and the negative impacts on an animal. NYSVMS has explained the challenges of this legislation to the sponsor and proposed amendments to the language that should be adopted if the bill moves forward. NYSVMS will continue to monitor this bill and ensure that conversations with the sponsors continue.

Position Statement: NYSVMS urges the legislature to work carefully to balance the interests of animals with legislation that implements mandates on the performance of medical procedures. Medical decisions should be left to the sound discretion of fully trained, licensed, and state-regulated professionals operating within the appropriate standards of practice.

Protecting Veterinarians from Liability

Animal Guardianship

Legislation carried by Assemblymember Glick (A.3976) and Senator Brisport (S.4084) would establish a cause of action for the wrongful injury or death of a companion animal and provides for injunctive relief and compensatory and punitive damages. While NYSVMS understands and supports the protection and quality care of animals and believes that those intentionally harming an animal should be subject to punishment, the concern with this legislation is that it could unfairly penalize veterinarians for routine care, treatment, or invasive procedures with unintended negative results. NYSVMS strongly opposes this legislation based on its potential detrimental impact on veterinarians and the increased costs that could result from lawsuits filed pursuant to this proposed cause of action.

Position Statement: NYSVMS opposes any legislation regarding animal guardianship.

Expanding Buoy's Law

Buoy's Law, enacted in 2022, codifies the information which veterinarians need to provide about the side-effects of the medications they prescribe. NYSVMS originally opposed this legislation, but after a period of discussion and negotiations the bill was redrafted to reflect the concerns we raised. The result of these amendments is that the requirements of the bill mirror current best-practice. NYSVMS feels strongly that it is important for pet owners to be aware of the potential side effects of

medications. While many medications come from a veterinarian's office, pet owners also seek medication from online pharmacies and other vendors and disclosure requirements must apply to anyone providing pet medications.

Position Statement: NYSVMS will advocate to ensure that best practices adhered to by veterinarians also apply to all medication providers.

Increasing Opportunities for New York Veterinarians

- Acceptance of RACE-approved coursework to fill New York CE requirements is something that NYSVMS members have raised repeatedly. Allowing RACE coursework for credit in New York would afford licensed veterinarians flexibility and the opportunity to learn about topics not offered by a New York provider but relevant to overall practice.
- Preprofessional education requirements continue to cause delays in licensing for foreign-educated and non-New York educated veterinarians and to deter many individuals from practicing in New York and many veterinary hospitals from successful recruitment. NYSVMS continues to engage in conversations with the State Education Department about updating the professional education requirements to reflect the educational pathways offered out-of-state and outside the United States while still ensuring quality educational requirements.
- It is widely reported that veterinarians often carry a great deal of educational debt, and that there are difficulties in recruiting and retaining veterinarians in many areas of the state and among many specialties and sub-specialties. NYSVMS supports efforts by the legislature to create loan forgiveness opportunities and address veterinary shortages, and will work to ensure that these opportunities are created in a way that is most helpful to veterinarians and veterinary students.

Position Statement: NYSVMS supports legislative and regulatory efforts that will make it less administratively burdensome to become a veterinarian and to keep up with professional requirements.

Protecting Animal Welfare and Supporting Allied Welfare Organizations

- NYSVMS supports efforts to crack down on illegal horseracing activities like those seen at bush tracks around the country. While New York State currently has a strong regulatory structure surrounding horseracing, as practitioners we must be vigilant about disregard for these regulations and work to ensure that horses entering and leaving racing work in New York State are protected.
- NYSVMS looks forward to continue to support allied animal welfare organizations in their efforts to ensure protection for pets.

Position Statement: NYSVMS will continue to advocate for laws and regulations that protect animal welfare in New York State. ●