

ALASKA STATE HOUSE

Session:

State Capitol Building,
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REPRESENTATIVE DAVE TALERICO

Sponsor Statement for House Bill 184

HB 184 is proposed to exempt Veterinarians from Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs).

Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs) were designed for use in human medicine to identify doctor shopping by human patients and monitor trends in prescribing practices by health care providers. Veterinarians want to be part of the solution of the opioid crisis, but PDMPs have not been an effective mechanism to do this.

By mandating that veterinarians query and report the owner's name and date of birth, there are significant concerns about potential violations of privacy of human medical information. Veterinarians are not trained in privacy regulations concerning human medical data, nor are they trained in appropriate medications, doses, or prescribing practices for human medicine. As we have talked informally with pet owners and others in the general public, they are not aware that their veterinarian would have access to any part of their medical information and are dismayed to learn this.

Animal patients themselves cannot be effectively tracked through PDMPs. Animals do not have a unique identifier such as a social security number or even date of birth. The animal's name may be changed over time, the date of birth is often not known and the owner may change over time.

One national survey found that fewer than 10 cases of veterinary shopping occur annually in the United States and concluded that "veterinarians are a *de minimus* source of controlled substances." Even those few cases of veterinary shopping are typically identified by the veterinarians themselves, not through PDMPs. In 2017 veterinarians prescribed 0.34% of all of the opioids dispensed by retail pharmacies in the country (source IQVIA National Prescription Audit).

Exempting veterinarians from the PDMP will not diminish the judicious use of controlled substances that is already practiced by veterinarians and regulated by the Drug Enforcement Agency and the state licensing board. Exempting veterinarians from the PDMP will allow veterinarians to provide timely and appropriate medical management for each individual patient. It may actually save state funds, and increase the efficiency of the PDMP for its intended purpose by allowing for more accurate interpretation of prescription data and prescribing trends in human medicine.

Over 30 states currently exempt veterinarians from PDMP requirements. Several of those states originally required veterinarians to report to the PDMP, but have since exempted veterinarians for many of the same reasons described above.

Please call my staff at 907-465-4527 for any questions.