



Legislative Alert

Opportunity to Repeal Prescription Drug Monitoring Program for Veterinarians

ISSUE:

Alaska's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) requires that:

- Veterinarians who prescribe, administer, or dispense federally scheduled II or III controlled substances to review (or designated delegate) the PDMP database prior to prescribing, administering, or dispensing the medication.
- Veterinarians who are directly dispensing scheduled II - IV controlled substances must report this information to the PDMP on a daily basis (or designated delegate to report).

Exemptions to the PDMP include:

- Dispensing < 24 hour supply of controlled substances in an Emergency Department.
- Controlled substances administered to an inpatient admitted to a health care facility.
- Controlled substances administered at the scene of an emergency.
- Controlled substances administered immediately before, during, or within the first 48 hours after surgery or medical procedure.
- Writing a non-refillable prescription for a controlled substance to last no more than 3 days.

AKVMA POSITION:

Opioid Epidemic: Partner with other stakeholders on an effective strategy to fight opioid abuse that protects veterinarians' ability to access, prescribe, administer and dispense opioids without compromising patient care. This includes, but is not limited to:

Exempting veterinarians from accessing private health information and prescription data on a person prior to prescribing, administering or dispensing controlled substances for an animal.

Exempting veterinarians from mandatory reporting for controlled substances due to the lack of veterinary electronic medical record compatibility with electronic prescription programs. Remediation of this problem would require funding, resulting in an increased financial burden to taxpayers and clients.

Legislation (bill no. yet to be determined) will be introduced during the 2020 Alaska Legislative Session to provide an exemption for veterinarians from Alaska's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.

AKVMA is asking all veterinarians to discuss the PDMP with their legislators and ask for the support of the bill to provide an exemption for veterinarians. [Click here for legislation.](#)

TALKING POINTS WITH LEGISLATORS:

1. Limitations of PDMP in Veterinary Medicine

- PDMP reporting system software is designed for human patients, not animals.
- PDMP database requires patient name, address and date of birth for human and animal patients. The birth date of animals is often not known, and it is estimated.
- There is no permanent identifier for an animal. Animals can have different names and owners throughout its lifetime. The animal can also have different owner names from the same household.
- The intent of the PDMP is to allow practitioners to search the database prior to dispensing or prescribing controlled substances and identify humans who are seeking drugs from multiple medical providers. Veterinarians are not trained to evaluate the appropriateness of the quantity or doses of a medication for a human patient, prior to dispensing a controlled substance medication to an animal.
- Drug seeking through a veterinarian is not an easy or cheap process. A veterinarian-client-patient-relationship must be established, payment made for an exam and diagnostics, and a condition diagnosed that requires a controlled medication.

2. Veterinary Medicine Drug Utilization and Needs Are Significantly Different from Human Medicine

- Opioid prescriptions issued by veterinarians were **only 0.34%** of the total opioid prescriptions that were dispensed by U.S. retail pharmacies in 2017. Preliminary data shows that phenobarbital accounts for the majority of controlled substances dispensed by veterinarians. This medication is not of concern in the human opioid epidemic.
- Some drug dosages used in veterinary medicine may look like a large amount in comparison to dosages used in human medicine. Veterinarians care for a myriad of animals large and small that require many different doses of different medications that cannot be rightly compared to any prescribing or dispensing patterns in human medicine. For ex., it may take 3 mls of pentobarbital to euthanize a small dog while it may take over 100 mls to euthanize a horse.
- It is not reasonable to ask a human medical provider to assess the appropriateness of a quantity or dose of a medication for an animal patient. Similarly, veterinarians are not trained to evaluate the appropriateness of the quantity or doses of a medication for a human patient, prior to dispensing a medication to an animal.

TALKING POINTS WITH LEGISLATORS:

3. Potential Violation of Confidentiality and Privacy Regulations

- Searching the PDMP database by the owner of an animal's name could provide medical history information about the owner and veterinarians are not trained in the privacy practices surrounding human medical information.

4. Veterinarians Already Adhere to Controlled Substances Regulations

- Veterinarians who prescribe or dispense controlled substances are licensed through Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). There is already a significant level of accountability, record keeping, and medication storage requirements that these veterinarians adhere to.

5. PDMP Adds to Cost of Veterinary Business

- PDMP review and reporting constitutes a disproportionate impact on veterinarians as small business owners. Veterinary clinics lack the standardized software used in human health care facilities, so reporting is more labor-intensive.
- There is an increased impact on rural veterinarians and pet owners due to limited internet access and centralized human pharmacies.

6. PDMP for Veterinarians is Counterproductive and Trend Is to Undo Mandatory Reporting

- Thirty-two (32) states exempt veterinarians from participating in state prescription drug monitoring program.
- Kentucky initially mandated veterinary reporting but eventually eliminated the requirement after law enforcement indicated that controlled substances dispensed by veterinarians were not a significant source of abused or diverted drugs.
- Kansas mandated a task force to study the need for including veterinarians in the PDMP. The study report concluded that veterinarians should not be required to report to the prescription drug monitoring program.
- Illinois and Wyoming removed veterinarians from the reporting requirements last year.

PDMP Exemption for Veterinarians Makes Sense

- Will allow veterinarians to provide the appropriate, timely, medical management appropriate for each patient.
- Will not diminish the judicious use of controlled substances that is already practiced by veterinarians.
- Will increase the efficiency of the PDMP system for its intended purpose, by allowing for accurate interpretation of data and trends in human medicine.
- Will eliminate unnecessary and disproportionate business burdens for veterinarians.

Contact Your Legislators:

www.akleg.gov and click on senate and house sections

For PDMP Questions contact Jim Delker, AKVMA Legislative Liaison at jddelker@aol.com or 907.262.4581.

Alaska State Veterinary Medical Association Mission

"Promoting excellence and professionalism of Alaska Veterinarians in advancing the health and well-being of animals and the public. "