



Why It Makes *Sense* to **EXEMPT VETERINARIANS** from the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

Vote **YES** on **HB 91** and **SB 132**

The Issue

Facing an unprecedented opioid crisis in 2016, the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) was amended in 2017 via HB 159 to include all Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) holders, **including veterinarians**. The law requires veterinarians to query and/or report to the PDMP in some circumstances when prescribing, administering or directly dispensing certain controlled substances.



The Problem

- The PDMP is designed for tracking human prescriptions, **not animal prescriptions**.
- The information from the PDMP is **not useable** by the veterinarian.
- Viewing a pet owner's prescription information in the PDMP **raises privacy concerns**.
- The system **does not help identify** diversion and abuse of drugs.

Why Does an Exemption to the PDMP for Veterinarians Matter?

- ✓ The PDMP **is not compatible** with veterinary medicine. Querying of PDMP data for animals is **not possible** and reported drugs to the PDMP for an animal are **not visible**.
- ✓ Human data obtained from the PDMP query **is unusable**. Veterinarians are not trained in human medicine to understand what the dosages mean. PDMP query data **will not impact** the treatment of an animal.
- ✓ The PDMP **has not proven to be effective** for veterinarians in the protection of the public, increase the quality of care or efficiency of medical care or decrease costs. Viewing human data in the PDMP **raises privacy concerns** by clients.
- ✓ The PDMP is **creating additional unnecessary** and disproportionate business burdens for veterinarians with no identified benefit to the public.
- ✓ The Alaska Board of Veterinary Examiners has reported that the **PDMP is an unusable database** and the cost to investigate veterinarians who fail to use the PDMP database correctly is a **waste of limited resources**. Investigative costs as a result of the PDMP have **more than doubled investigative costs** from FY 18-19 to FY 20-21.

Veterinarians Have Not Been Shown to be a Significant Source for Diversion

- **34 other states have exemptions** of veterinarians from the PDMP—West Virginia was just added in 2021.
- Opioid medications prescribed by veterinarians were **only 0.34% of the total opioid prescriptions** that were dispensed by U.S. retail pharmacies in 2017. Veterinarians in Alaska from 2015-2018 prescribed **.3% - 1% of total Morphine Milligram Equivalents**.
- Veterinarians are monitored by the Drug Enforcement Agency and **already adhere** to controlled substance regulations.

AKVMA SUPPORTS THE OBJECTIVES OF AVMA IN ADDRESSING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and its members are gravely concerned about the national opioid epidemic. As healthcare providers who administer and prescribe controlled substances, we recognize our responsibility in contributing to solutions for this crisis. Many unique aspects of the practice of veterinary medicine must be considered in the development of laws and regulations that govern the use of opioids and controlled substances in animal patients. **The AVMA strongly recommends that veterinarians, legislators, state veterinary medical boards, and state pharmacy boards work together to create practical and effective solutions when considering opioid-related laws and regulations that impact the practice of veterinary medicine.**

In regard to veterinarians, the AVMA supports the following objectives and efforts to address the national opioid epidemic:

- Continuing education (CE) on judicious use, compliance, security, and prescribing of opioids and other controlled substances, with an emphasis on identifying and preventing human misuse and diversion. Veterinarians are not trained to evaluate the appropriateness of a human prescription and are not trained in the privacy practices surrounding human medical information.
 - ◊ Exemption of veterinarians from accessing private health information and prescription data on a person prior to prescribing or dispensing controlled substances for an animal.
- Options for reporting of suspected opioid and controlled substance drug shoppers and/or diversion, with immunity from prosecution for the reporter.
- Exemption of veterinarians from mandatory electronic prescribing 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.
- Research to determine the prevalence of veterinary drug shoppers and to clarify the degree to which veterinary prescriptions impact the human opioid epidemic.

If participation in a prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) is mandated:

- Develop software that captures accurate data from veterinary opioid prescriptions to benefit human health.
- Until veterinarians have effective prescription software equivalent to human healthcare (i.e. automatic PDMP reporting), regulations should be drafted with consideration for the burden of compliance.



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