

March 7, 2021
The Honorable Representative Wool
State Capitol Room 501
Juneau AK, 99801-1185

RE: Exempt Veterinarians from the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program - Vote YES on HB 91

Dear Representative, Wool:

As a practicing relief veterinarian, who travels between local veterinary hospitals in Fairbanks and Anchorage, the PDMP is a great hindrance in performing to my utmost capabilities for the practices I serve. In addition to seeing a full caseload at clinics, where I may not be familiar with staff, protocol, and clientele, it requires me to expend additional time, which is unnecessary, for the reasons listed below. As a relief veterinarian, I often do not have the luxury of carrying over patient care and record-keeping to subsequent days and must maximally utilize my time at the hospitals who engage my services.

I support the exemption for veterinarians from Alaska's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) for multiple reasons. First and foremost, the PDMP acts as a one size fits all program that animals do not fit into. Animals are lacking a permanent identifier, there are potential privacy violations against owners, veterinarians already adhere to controlled substance regulations, and the cost to the state.

- Animals are lacking a permanent identifier: There is no permanent identifier for an animal. Animals can have different names and owners throughout their lifetime. The animal can also have different owner names from within the same household.
- Potential privacy violations: Searching the PDMP database by the owner could provide medical information the owner is uncomfortable with their veterinarian knowing. Secondly, veterinarians are not trained in human medication doses much like physicians are not trained in the dose ranges for dogs, cats, birds, elephants, etc.
- Veterinarians already adhere to controlled substance 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 to which veterinarians adhere.
- Cost: 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 and costly. Additionally, the cost to investigate veterinarians who fail to use the database correctly is a waste of very limited resources.

As a medical provider it is important to me that the PDMP is used correctly to track trends of humans who may be opioid shopping. Thirty-two states have granted exemption for their veterinarians from participating in the PDMP. The exemption of veterinarians from the PDMP will increase the efficacy for the system's intended purpose, by allowing for accurate interpretation of data and trends in human medicine. Veterinarian exemption will allow continued deliverance of appropriate care and medical management for their patients.

Sincerely,

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