

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1271

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to dispensing and administration of drugs by registered or licensed veterinary personnel.

Brief Description: Regarding dispensing and administration of drugs to registered or licensed veterinary personnel.

Sponsors: Representatives Haigh, Finn, Crouse, Green, Lias, Springer, O'Brien, Goodman, Morris, Ormsby, Blake, Van De Wege, Moeller, Cody, Conway, Hurst, Walsh, McCune, Hinkle, Nelson and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/5/09, 2/12/09 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Adds controlled substances to a list of drugs that a licensed veterinary technician may dispense if a veterinarian legally prescribing drugs delegates the task to the technician and if the technician is under the veterinarian's indirect supervision.
- Allows a licensed veterinary technician to administer legend drugs and controlled substances while under the indirect supervision of a veterinarian.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Jacks, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Smith, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kretz, Lias, McCoy, Nelson, Ormsby, Pearson, Van De Wege and Warnick.

Staff: Anna Jackson (786-7190)

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Veterinary Personnel.

A veterinary technician is a person who is licensed by the Washington Veterinary Board of Governors (Board) after meeting certain statutory requirements. These requirements include passing an examination administered by the Board and completing a post-high school course approved by the Board, or having five years of practical experience, acceptable to the Board, with a licensed veterinarian.

A veterinary medication clerk is a person who has satisfactorily completed a Board-approved training program designed to teach certain nondiscretionary functions used in dispensing legend and nonlegend drugs, except controlled substances.

Currently, a veterinarian legally prescribing drugs may delegate certain nondiscretionary functions used in dispensing legend and nonlegend drugs, except controlled substances, to a licensed veterinary technician or a veterinary medication clerk while under the veterinarian's direct supervision. Direct supervision means the veterinarian is on the premises and is quickly and easily available, while indirect supervision means the veterinarian is not on the premises but has given written or oral instructions for the delegated task.

Legend Drugs and Controlled Substances.

Legend drugs are any drugs that are required by state law or by regulation of the Washington State Board of Pharmacy to be dispensed by prescription only or are restricted to use by practitioners only. Controlled substances are drugs, substances, or immediate precursors included in Schedules I through V in federal or state laws.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Controlled substances are added to an existing list of drugs that a veterinarian legally prescribing drugs is permitted to ask a licensed veterinary technician to dispense under the veterinarian's indirect supervision.

A licensed veterinary technician is allowed to administer legend drugs and controlled substances under the indirect supervision of a veterinarian.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill changes the word "dispensing" to "preparing" in the context of certain nondiscretionary functions that a veterinarian legally prescribing drugs may delegate to a veterinary medication clerk or a licensed veterinary technician under the veterinarian's indirect supervision.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill will assist in bringing current veterinary practices into compliance with the law. Veterinary technicians frequently dispense and administer controlled substances, so it is important to ensure that these practices are legal. Controlled substances are frequently used by veterinarians to treat animals in a variety of emergency care cases, such as giving Valium to a dog in the midst of a seizure or a pain reliever to a dog hit by a car. It is difficult for a veterinarian alone to administer these drugs; other veterinary personnel need to be able to assist the veterinarian for the benefit of both veterinarians and pet owners to provide better care and treatment of animals.

(With concerns) There is undoubtedly a strain on veterinarians' time and resources under the current law, but if veterinary technicians are permitted to dispense and administer controlled substances, veterinarians should be fully aware and assume all liability associated with permitting veterinary technicians to do so.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Haigh, prime sponsor; and Greg Hanon and Carrie La Jeunesse, Washington State Veterinary Medical Association.

(With concerns) Jack Field, Washington Cattlemen's Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.