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ENGROSSED SENATE BILL 5899

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State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Senators Short, Lias, Dozier, Lovelett, and Riccelli

Prefiled 12/16/25. Read first time 01/12/26. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a license endorsement to allow  
2 qualified licensed chiropractors to perform chiropractic diagnosis  
3 and adjustments on nonhuman animals; adding new sections to chapter  
4 18.25 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 18.92 RCW; providing an  
5 effective date; and providing expiration dates.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 18.25  
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 (1) Upon application, in a form and manner determined by the  
10 commission, the commission shall issue an initial license endorsement  
11 to practice animal chiropractic to a licensed chiropractor if the  
12 chiropractor:

13 (a) Currently holds a valid Washington state chiropractic  
14 license;

15 (b) (i) Provides proof of successful completion of an approved  
16 animal chiropractic educational program within the previous two years  
17 that includes a minimum of 210 curriculum hours; or

18 (ii) Provides proof the chiropractor holds a current animal  
19 chiropractic certification; and

20 (c) Pays fees as required by RCW 43.70.250 and 43.70.280.

1 (2) An animal chiropractic endorsement issued pursuant to  
2 subsection (1) of this section is valid for three years, at which  
3 time a chiropractor may apply for an endorsement renewal in a form  
4 and manner determined by the commission.

5 (3) An animal chiropractor is eligible for renewal of their  
6 animal chiropractic license endorsement if the animal chiropractor:

7 (a) Provides proof of a current certification from an approved  
8 animal chiropractic educational program and proof of a current animal  
9 chiropractic license endorsement;

10 (b) Provides an attestation that the animal chiropractor has  
11 completed all continuing education requirements as required in  
12 subsection (4) of this section; and

13 (c) Pays fees as required by RCW 43.70.250 and 43.70.280.

14 (4) An animal chiropractor holding an endorsement issued pursuant  
15 to subsection (1) of this section shall complete at least 30 hours  
16 every three years of approved continuing education focused on animal  
17 chiropractic.

18 (5) An animal chiropractor may practice animal chiropractic only  
19 if:

20 (a) The animal patient has been referred to the animal  
21 chiropractor in writing by a licensed veterinarian holding a license  
22 in Washington state and who has personally examined the animal  
23 receiving the animal chiropractic care before the animal chiropractic  
24 is performed;

25 (b) The animal chiropractor assumes liability for the quality of  
26 the animal chiropractic care performed; and

27 (c) The animal chiropractor has received training and education  
28 related to the animal type of the animal patient.

29 (6) An animal chiropractor may not order magnetic, roentgen, or  
30 sonographic imaging of animal patients. Animal chiropractors may  
31 engage in animal chiropractic consistent with RCW 18.25.005,  
32 including reviewing existing imaging reports of animal patients for  
33 diagnostic purposes.

34 (7) An animal chiropractor shall encourage clients to seek  
35 veterinary care for all nonchiropractic health issues.

36 (8) An animal chiropractor must maintain a separate written  
37 medical record of each animal patient receiving animal chiropractic  
38 care for at least five years. An animal chiropractor is required to  
39 provide a written medical record of the animal patient receiving care  
40 to the referring veterinarian within seven days of each visit by mail

1 or electronic transmission. The record must include, without  
2 limitation:

3 (a) The name, address, and telephone number of the client;

4 (b) The name or identifying number, or both, of the animal  
5 patient;

6 (c) The age, if known, sex, and breed of the animal patient;

7 (d) The dates of care, custody, or treatment of the animal  
8 patient;

9 (e) The results of a basic physical examination related to the  
10 animal chiropractic care provided to the animal patient;

11 (f) The diagnosis and treatment plan related to the animal  
12 chiropractic care recommended by the animal chiropractor for the  
13 animal patient; and

14 (g) The progress and disposition of the case.

15 (9)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, no person  
16 shall engage in the practice of animal chiropractic, imply or  
17 represent that they engage in the practice of animal chiropractic, or  
18 offer or advertise animal chiropractic services unless they hold a  
19 current animal chiropractic license endorsement issued pursuant to  
20 this section. Only an animal chiropractor may advertise animal  
21 chiropractic services to the public using such terms that include,  
22 but are not limited to, animal chiropractor, animal chiropractic, and  
23 animal chiropractic adjustments.

24 (b) A licensed chiropractor who is enrolled as a student in an  
25 approved animal chiropractic educational program may practice animal  
26 chiropractic as is required in the curriculum of the animal  
27 chiropractic educational program.

28 (10)(a) Whenever a facility treats both animal and human patients  
29 on the same clinical premises, appropriate signage must be posted on  
30 the facility as established in rule by the commission.

31 (b) Any facility offering services to both animal patients and  
32 human patients must observe all clinical and sanitary standards for  
33 veterinary facilities and chiropractic facilities required in rule,  
34 or as described in state law, or local ordinance.

35 (11) Any animal chiropractor lawfully licensed in this state to  
36 practice animal chiropractic who reports, in good faith and in the  
37 normal course of business, a suspected incident of animal cruelty  
38 that is punishable under chapter 16.52 RCW to the proper authorities  
39 is immune from liability in any civil or criminal action brought  
40 against such animal chiropractor for reporting the suspected

1 incident. The immunity provided in this section applies only if the  
2 animal chiropractor receives no financial benefit from the suspected  
3 incident of animal cruelty beyond charges for services rendered prior  
4 to the animal chiropractor making the initial report.

5 (12) An animal chiropractor providing animal chiropractic care to  
6 an animal patient shall develop a protocol for notifying the  
7 veterinarian of the animal patient in the event an animal patient  
8 needs emergency care during a chiropractic appointment.

9 (13) An animal chiropractor is responsible and accountable for  
10 services he or she provides to animal patients.

11 (14) The commission shall share information regarding complaints  
12 or disciplinary action against an animal chiropractor with the  
13 secretary and the veterinary board of governors quarterly.

14 (15) The commission may adopt any rules necessary to implement  
15 this section.

16 (16) For the purposes of this section:

17 (a) "Animal chiropractic" means the practice of chiropractic on  
18 nonhuman animals.

19 (b) "Animal chiropractic certification" means a current  
20 certification issued by certification agencies identified by the  
21 commission in rule.

22 (c) "Animal chiropractor" means a licensed chiropractor who holds  
23 an animal chiropractic endorsement.

24 (d) "Animal patient" means the animal receiving the chiropractic  
25 care.

26 (e) "Approved animal chiropractic educational program" means an  
27 animal chiropractic training program approved by the commission in  
28 rule.

29 (f) "Client" means the person presenting the animal patient for  
30 chiropractic evaluation, care, and adjustments.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 18.25  
32 RCW to read as follows:

33 (1) The commission and the veterinary board of governors shall  
34 convene a joint task force on animal chiropractic for the purpose of  
35 reviewing complaints, investigations, and disciplinary actions  
36 related to animal chiropractic care. Membership of the joint task  
37 force shall be comprised of an equal number of representatives from  
38 the commission and the veterinary board of governors.

1 (2) By October 30, 2030, the joint task force shall submit a  
2 report to the governor and the legislature on the animal chiropractic  
3 endorsement. The report shall include:

4 (a) The risks to public health, quality of care, or animal  
5 welfare identified through complaints submitted to the commission,  
6 investigations conducted by the commission, and disciplinary actions  
7 taken by the commission related to animal chiropractic;

8 (b) An assessment of the incident of veterinary denials of  
9 requests for referrals to chiropractors;

10 (c) A review of regulatory approaches to animal chiropractic in  
11 other jurisdictions, including referral requirements and veterinary  
12 supervision; and

13 (d) Recommendations for any changes to the rules or statutes  
14 governing the animal chiropractic endorsement.

15 (3) This section expires July 1, 2031.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 18.92  
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) The board shall participate in a joint task force on animal  
19 chiropractic created in section 2 of this act for the purpose of  
20 reviewing complaints, investigations, and disciplinary actions  
21 related to animal chiropractic care. Membership of the joint task  
22 force shall be comprised of an equal number of representatives from  
23 the board and the chiropractic quality assurance commission.

24 (2) By October 30, 2030, the joint task force shall submit a  
25 report to the governor and the legislature on the animal chiropractic  
26 endorsement. The report shall include:

27 (a) The risks to public health, quality of care, or animal  
28 welfare identified through complaints submitted to the chiropractic  
29 quality assurance commission, investigations conducted by the  
30 commission, and disciplinary actions taken by the commission related  
31 to animal chiropractic;

32 (b) An assessment of the incident of veterinary denials of  
33 requests for referrals to chiropractors;

34 (c) A review of regulatory approaches to animal chiropractic in  
35 other jurisdictions, including referral requirements and veterinary  
36 supervision; and

37 (d) Recommendations for any changes to the rules or statutes  
38 governing the animal chiropractic endorsement.

39 (3) This section expires July 1, 2031.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 4.**    A new section is added to chapter 18.92  
2    RCW to read as follows:

3        (1) A veterinarian who refers an animal patient to an animal  
4    chiropractor shall include the copy of the medical record received  
5    pursuant to section 1(8) of this act as part of the medical record of  
6    the animal patient.

7        (2) A veterinarian who refers an animal patient to an animal  
8    chiropractor is not:

9        (a) Required to supervise the animal chiropractor during the  
10    provision of animal chiropractic care; and

11        (b) Liable for the animal chiropractic care provided to the  
12    animal patient by an animal chiropractor.

13        (3) Within 14 days of denying an animal patient a referral for  
14    animal chiropractic care, a veterinarian shall provide the animal  
15    chiropractor and the client the contraindications of why the referral  
16    for animal chiropractor care was denied.

17        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 5.**    This act takes effect July 1, 2027.

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