



D.C. Board of Veterinary Examiners

★ ★ ★ District of Columbia
Department of Health
Vincent C. Gray, Mayor



Fall 2011

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YOUR MAILING ADDRESS

Changing your mailing address? Send your name, mailing address, and license number to:

DC Board of Veterinary Examiners
Processing Department
Address/Name Change
899 N. Capitol Street, NE
First Floor
Washington, DC 20002

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

It's fall again in our nation's capital and time for an update from your Board! I am pleased to announce that we have a new website up and running this year. Take a look at it and give us your feedback. We also have been working with DC Boards and Commissions to commission our last board member so that we finally will have a full slate of members.

This year, we have been working on several projects. We're finishing the veterinary regulations (yes, they take years!), improving the hospital inspection process to make it more educational and less punitive, working on writing the city's first vet tech regulations so we may be able to register technicians in the District, and of course, following up on client complaints and hospital issues. Take a look inside this edition of the newsletter and you'll find articles on rabies incidence in the city, recent changes to the vet oath, controlled drug requirements, dog licensing and, for the first time, a new feature—profiling a hospital—which will run in forthcoming editions of this newsletter. This quarter we're featuring CityPaws Animal Hospital on 14th Street.



Gary Weitzman, DVM, MPH, CAWA

The biggest push in the last half of 2011 will be to get our laws included under the Health Occupations Revision Act (HORA). Without this, we are not the equivalent of our human health peers. After thirty years of being tucked into the sidelines of the city's statutes, it's time for the veterinary profession to be recognized as a serious, self-regulating, professional body in Washington. The HORA is available online and will be the basis for the Vet Board's actions, guiding the legal underpinnings of our decisions. You can go to www.hpla.doh.dc.gov, under the "information" category to find the 2009 revised HORA. Hopefully, the veterinary profession will soon be included in the Act.

We also will be exploring best practice guidelines for the first time here in the city. We'll want your input for that. The Vet Board will be surveying other state boards, as well as the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) to determine best practices. Once our regulations are up to date, with an active board, and fully invested constituents, we finally will be able to acknowledge universally acceptable standards of care here in the nation's capital.

Further, the Board of Veterinary Examiners will be looking at some strategic planning for the remainder of the year—specifically, to discuss current programs and develop priorities for the coming year. To that end, we need your input to help us prioritize our work. Let us know what you want your board to help with. What priorities do you think we should concentrate on? Where do you think our city's veterinary profession should be headed? Please e-mail me at gweitzman@warl.org with your suggestions.

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Upcoming Board Meetings

THE BOARD MEETS ON THE
"THIRD THURSDAY"
OF EVERY MONTH

at 899 N. Capitol Street, NE
Second Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Open Session is at 10:00 am.

Verification of Licensure

Licensing authorities and some health facilities often require a letter of verification of the current or previously held licenses. These letters of verification are sometimes called "letters of good standing," even though the DC license may have expired.

To receive a letter of good standing:

If the jurisdiction or institution provides a form, forward the form, with a check or money order payable to "DC Treasurer" in the amount of twenty-six dollars (\$26.00) to:

DC Board of
Veterinary Examiners
899 N. Capitol Street, NE
First Floor
Washington, DC 20002

Be sure to include name and address where the form is to be sent.

If the jurisdiction or institution does not provide a form, please send a note requesting a letter of verification. The note should include both the name of the person requesting the verification and the name and address of the recipient. Please enclose a check or money order (for \$26.00) payable to "DC Treasurer."

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Finally, we seriously need peer reviewers. These are practicing clinicians, from general practice or the specialty fields, who would be willing to serve on ad hoc committees to review practice issues. Without these

advisors it will be very difficult to address public comments and complaints fairly. If you, or a colleague you know, would be willing to serve as a peer reviewer for the Board, let me know.

Have a great summer. And join us for a meeting if you can—10 am on the third Thursday of every month (except August) at 899 North Capitol Street.

Yours truly,



Gary Weitzman, DVM, MPH, CAWA
Chair, Board of Veterinary Examiners
Washington, DC

AVMA REVISES VETERINARIAN'S OATH TO EMPHASIZE ANIMAL WELFARE AND PREVENTION OF SUFFERING

The AVMA Veterinarian's Oath, first adopted in 1954, was recently amended to state (revisions in italics):

Being admitted to the profession of veterinary medicine, I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health *and welfare*, the *prevention and* relief of animal suffering, the conservation of animal resources, the promotion of public health, and the advancement of medical knowledge.

The AVMA's Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) recommended the revision explaining that it is designed to explicitly state a veterinarian's responsibility for protecting animal welfare and to extend focus from one of treatment only to one of prevention and treatment. The goal is for the oath to be more proactive rather than merely reactive.

Opposition to the revision expressed concern that there is no clear definition of the term "welfare." However, "animal welfare" has been defined in the scientific literature as "the state of an individual in relation to its environment." In fact the AVMA's own web site states: "The AVMA believes that animal welfare is a human responsibility that encompasses all aspects of animal well-being, including proper housing, management, nutrition, disease prevention and treatment, responsible care, humane handling, and, when necessary, humane euthanasia."

In response to the Executive Board's approval of the new oath, Dr. J. Bruce Nixon, AWC chair-elect, stated: "From today forward, every graduate entering our profession will swear an oath not only to protect animal health but also welfare; to not only relieve animal suffering but to prevent it. That's a powerful statement defining ourselves and our responsibilities, not a vague symbol. . . I believe our Association did the right thing at the right time for the right reasons. We can be proud of its leadership for having the wisdom to adjust our oath to reflect professional progression."

(For more information, go online at <http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/jan11/x110101a.asp>.)

ACCREDITATION CONCERNS

All accredited veterinarians must submit an application to NVAP (National Veterinary Accreditation Program). Accredited veterinarians must elect to participate and must select an accreditation Category or the accreditation that they currently hold will expire.

The NAVP Application form, VS form 1-36A, must be completed and submitted in order to prevent expiration of your current accreditation. The form, instructions, and further details are available online at:

www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/vet_accreditation

If you are applying for accreditation for the first time, you must meet the basic requirements including completion of the CORE ORIENTATION PROGRAM in addition to submission of VS form 1-36A. By completing the aforementioned, the veterinarian certifies that he/she is able to perform the tasks associated with the Category selected.

If you have questions about NVAP, you can contact NVAP in Riverdale, MD at (301) 734-6827.

VETERINARY BOARD DIRECTOR SPEAKS TO CHIROPRACTIC BOARD



Veterinary Board Executive Director Vito Del Vento, DVM, (pictured with Vet Board Legal Advisor Tonia Bair, Esq.) spoke with the DC Board of Chiropractic at that board's May meeting. Regarding that meeting, Dr. Del Vento says: "Recently the District of Columbia Board of Veterinary Examiners has been approached by District of Columbia chiropractors and acupuncturists regarding extending their professional services to animal clients. It has been brought to the [Veterinary] Board's attention that some of the schools for human chiropractic medicine and human acupuncture are including an animal module in their overall curriculum. The District of Columbia Board of Veterinary Examiners is currently working on addressing these issues with the District of Columbia Board of Chiropractors and the District of Columbia Board of Medicine (regarding acupuncture)."

APPLY TO SERVE ON THE BOARD

There is a vacancy on the DC Board of Veterinary Examiners. If you would like to apply to become a Board member, please submit your application to the DC Office of Boards and Commissions.

To apply, go online at: www.obc.dc.gov
and download an application, or call the Office of
Boards and Commissions at (202) 727-1372.

The Board of Veterinary Examiners regulates the practice of veterinarians and veterinary establishments. The Board evaluates applicants' qualifications, recommends regulations, standards and procedures, and issues licenses. The Board also requests investigations, conducts hearings, implements disciplinary and/or remedial action where indicated, and prepares an annual report for the Mayor.

THE BOARD OF VETERINARY EXAMINERS cordially encourages veterinarians to attend the Open Session of its monthly meetings! The Board meets on the third Thursday of every month, at 10:00 am, on the second floor of 899 N. Capitol Street, NE, Washington DC 20002 (a few blocks from the Union Station metro stop.)

For further information, please contact Karin Barron at (202) 724-8938.

RABIES – LET’S KEEP IT OUT OF THE DISTRICT!

Each year, the District of Columbia conducts a Rabies Surveillance and Prevention Program as part of its mission to promote public health within the District. This program provides rabies surveillance for humans, dogs, cats and wildlife. The program also provides prevention, control and response protocols for rabies in the District of Columbia. The DC Rabies program is part of a national rabies surveillance program to assist local and state public health officials in the planning of rabies control programs and to guide health professionals in evaluating the need for rabies post-exposure prophylaxis in patients who are exposed to animals that may be rabid. The DC Rabies program is a cooperative effort between the Department of Health Animal Disease Program, the Division of Epidemiology and the Public Health Laboratory.

Rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The vast majority of rabies cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) each year occur in wild animals like raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes.

The rabies virus infects the central nervous system, ultimately causing disease in the brain and death. The early symptoms of rabies in people are similar to that of many other illnesses, including fever, headache, and general weakness or discomfort. As the disease progresses, more specific symptoms appear and may include insomnia, anxiety, confusion, slight or partial paralysis, excitation, hallucinations, agitation, hypersalivation (increase in

saliva), difficulty swallowing, and hydrophobia (fear of water). Death usually occurs within days of the onset of these symptoms.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, detecting the true distribution of rabies in an area depends on the sensitivity of the surveillance system. The sensitivity of animal rabies surveillance varies among states because state health department laboratories have different criteria for accepting a specimen for testing. For example, many laboratories will test only those animals to which persons or domestic animals have been exposed. Many rabid animals, especially wildlife, never expose a human being or domestic animal and, therefore, remain undetected. The proportion of reported cases by species may not reflect the true distribution of rabies in animals, since certain animals are more likely to be captured for testing. For example, dogs are more likely to be captured and tested than wild animals such as bats.

During the past year (2010) in the District of Columbia, 90% of positive identified

rabies cases were found in wild animals, and 10% were in domestic animals. Raccoons, a fox, and bats accounted for 90% of all rabid animals with raccoons accounting for the majority of the cases (72%). The table below summarizes these findings by individual wards in the District. (Note: all rabies positive cats [4] identified in DC were found in unregulated feral cat colonies).

All cases of animal rabies detected in the District were reported to CDC and had been diagnosed by the DC Public Health Laboratory. Suspected rabid animals were submitted for a variety of reasons to health department laboratories by local health officials, veterinarians, animal-control officers, and the public. The main focus of surveillance was on the following scenarios:

- Human contact with broken skin from a wild or stray animal with unknown history
- Potential human exposure to bats
- Wild animals that have attacked an owned domestic animal
- Domestic animals with known history that have attacked a human

2010 RABIES CASES IN WASHINGTON DC

	Dog	Cat	Bat	Fox	Raccoon	Total
Ward 1					6	6
Ward 2			3		1	4
Ward 3				1	8	9
Ward 4					4	4
Ward 5		3	1		4	8
Ward 6			1			1
Ward 7					2	2
Ward 8		1	1		3	5
Total	0	4	6	1	28	39

- Sick or injured wildlife, regardless of known human or domestic animal contact
- Non-rabies vectors with contact to a human or domestic animal (very rare)
- Domestic animal bitten by a Domestic animal (very rare)

Monoclonal antibody analysis of rabies virus isolates from domestic animals has demonstrated that most domestic animals are infected by bites from the dominant terrestrial wildlife reservoir in the area. The similar distribution of rabid domestic animals to skunks and raccoons in the United States suggests that skunks are the main source of rabies for domestic animals in the north central and south central states and that raccoons are the primary source in the South Atlantic and Middle Atlantic states, including Washington DC.

If one encounters animals exhibiting signs of encephalitis, a diagnosis of rabies is a distinct possibility. Rabies is a critical diagnosis in regards to rapid provision of preventive treatment to persons exposed. If rabies is suspected and exposure has occurred, such as a

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SPOTLIGHT ON: CITYPAWS

What makes your hospital unique?

As fate or luck might have it, CityPaws Animal Hospital was opened in the spring of 2006, in an area of the city where small businesses have the opportunity to make a big impact in their community.

CityPaws sits in the middle of the neighborhoods of Shaw, Logan Circle, U Street, Adams Morgan and Dupont Circle. In a large urban city that is used to moving at a fast pace, where people are multiple-tasking and living full schedules, you can come to this area of the city and find a sense of belonging. The residents here slow down and get to know one another, they take a break to have a cup of coffee, go to the weekend street market on U street, or meet up at the local dog parks.

For Dr. Wendy Knight and Dr. Sarah Bowman, this was a perfect match. A veterinary hospital should automatically be expected to provide quality medical care and services no matter what, but what makes CityPaws unique is the way that the hospital sees itself as an important part of its community, an extended family to its pet owners. We want to provide that quality medical care that—in this day and age—most pet owners have come to expect, but we strive daily to provide it in such a way that we are giving back to others.

Whether it is supporting the local neighborhood dog park or daycare, donating veterinary care to local area rescue agencies, speaking at

local schools, or making visits to our patients' home—we are constantly making efforts to put ourselves out there to be accessible to our neighbors and to show our appreciation for the support that our neighbors have given us since our arrival to 14th St.

How are you surviving in this economy?

We are somewhat fortunate in our location, as the neighborhoods surrounding CityPaws are continuing to see a revitalization, although at a slower pace, with new apartments and condominiums coming on-line. This gives us more direct access to new potential patients than some of our suburban colleagues. But we can't depend on that alone; we really have to focus on the basics of being a successful business by providing quality goods and services, and providing exceptional customer care.

Word of mouth referrals are going to be the best source of new business, and if we work hard to focus on customer service, we will maintain our current base of customers. You also build trust and loyalty...two benefits, better patient care and a growing business.

We continue to provide access to basic services such as vaccinations, grooming, and spays and neuters, but we are also looking at other ways to grow during this down economy. Holistic care, senior wellness programs, etc.



What do you think has gotten better for veterinarians in the District?

We have a voice and we have professional support from our peers. This can be an invaluable resource for us. There is now an active board that provides support and oversight of the profession in the District. This will hopefully elevate the level of veterinary care and facilities for all pet owners seeking medical care in the city. As a business owner, it has become easier to arrange for license renewals, inspections, etc.

What would you like to see change as far as veterinary medicine in the District?

I would like to see more opportunities for shared involvement in veterinary medicine in the District. As a member of the Northern Virginia VMA (Northern Virginia Veterinary Medical Association), there were

regular monthly meetings that were held in the evenings and well advertised to local hospitals. The evening meetings allowed for more veterinarian participation in the concerns, goals, and vision of the Board.

I would also like to see more opportunities for learning/continuing education for the veterinarians licensed in the District. I feel that this would help to build camaraderie among associates at other hospitals and might help improve joint support for other local area pet-related organizations such as Washington Animal Rescue League (WARL), and Washington Humane Society (WHS), feral cat spay/neuter programs, etc.

CityPaws
Animal Hospital
1823 14th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 232-PAWS (7297)

FILING A COMPLAINT WITH THE BOARD

To file a complaint against a licensed DC Veterinarian, submit a letter of complaint that includes copies of the pertinent documents. The letter must also include the complainant's address and other contact information so that the complainant may be contacted as necessary and notified of any findings.

PLEASE NOTE: THE COMPLAINT FORM IS AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE AT WWW.HPLA.DOH.DC.GOV

Mail the complaint to:

DC Board of Veterinary Examiners
899 N. Capitol Street, NE
First Floor
Washington, DC 20002

If the complaint alleges unlicensed activity, mail the complaint to:

Supervisory Investigator
899 N. Capitol Street, NE
First Floor
Washington DC 20002

Or fax the complaint about unlicensed activity to (202) 724-8677.

Please be advised that the health professional licensing boards do not have jurisdiction over fee disputes, except for billing for services that were not provided. If there is a fee dispute with a health professional, seek redress through the civil courts.

ONLY THREE PERCENT OF DOGS LICENSED

Only 3,805 out of an estimated 130,170 dogs living in the District of Columbia are licensed in accordance with law. Only 3%.

Residents who do not license their dogs run a risk that their dog may not make it back home if lost. If Animal Control Officers find a dog too injured or sick to be humanely housed at the DC Animal Care and Control Facility until an owner comes forward, the unlicensed dog may be euthanized instead of receiving life-saving veterinary care. Additionally, a license means that lost dogs can avoid a trip to the shelter, which can be costly for both the pet and the owner. Owners of unlicensed dogs also run the risk of being issued citations by Police and Animal Control Officers, and unlicensed dogs can't use District-operated Dog Exercise Areas.

Veterinarians can help! DC Law allows veterinary facilities to sell dog licenses, and even allows them to charge an additional \$2 administrative fee for each license sold.

The Department of Health provides facilities with applications and licenses. All the clinic or hospital has to do is fill out the applications, issue the licenses, and mail the copies of the applications and the payment back to the Department. Facilities can either choose to sell only to their established clients, or they can sell the licenses to any dog owner in the District who is trying to comply with the law.

Some vets tell us that selling dog licenses just wouldn't fit into their program. That's okay! **If you can't sell the licenses, we ask that you partner with us to get the word out.** Make sure that the owner of every dog that you vaccinate knows that getting rabies and distemper vaccines aren't enough to protect their pet. They also need to get a license so the dog can be a legal resident of the District.

Please partner with the Department of Health by selling licenses or encouraging every owner to be a responsible pet owner by vaccinating, licensing, and leashing their dogs. Contact Molly Lunaris for more information at **(202) 535-2508**.

BOARD ORDERS

JUNE 2010 -
JUNE 2011

Darby Thornburgh, DVM

Dr. Darby Thornburgh was ordered to pay in the total amount of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for two violations of 17 DCMR 2811.

The entire final order can be viewed through the professional license search link:

<http://app.hpla.doh.dc.gov/weblookup/>



WHEN YOU MOVE...OR CHANGE YOUR NAME

Licenses sometimes forget to inform the Board of Veterinary Examiners of a move or name change. If the correct address is not on file, the renewal form may not be received. **All name and address changes must be submitted in writing to our office within 30 days of the change.** Please include name, address, email address, Social Security number, and license number, if known. For a name change, please enclose a copy of the certificate of marriage, divorce decree, or court order that authorizes the change. Fax the request to (202) 724-5145, or mail the request to:

DC Board of Veterinary Examiners
Attn: Address/Name Change
899 N. Capitol Street, NE
First Floor
Washington, DC 20002

To use our website to check and verify a license, go to: www.hpla.doh.dc.gov

Board website: www.hpla.doh.dc.gov.

Click on
Professional Licensing Boards/Registrations,
then on Veterinarians.



Government of the District of Columbia
Vincent C. Gray, Mayor



Health Professional
Licensing Administration

Address

DC Board of
Veterinary Examiners
899 N. Capitol Street, NE
First Floor
Washington, DC 20002

Phone

(202) 724-8938

Fax number

(202) 724-8677

Webpage

www.hpla.doh.dc.gov

DC Government website

www.dc.gov

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of The District of Columbia
Board of Veterinary Examiners

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Veterinary Member

Julie Teresa Garnier, DVM
Veterinary Member

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Consumer Member

Director, Department of Health
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