

HEALTH REGULATION AND LICENSING ADMINISTRATION
&
HEALTH PROFESSIONAL BOARDS

BOARD OF MEDICINE
AUTHORITY FOR GUIDANCE

JULY 2009
DATE OF POLICY

09-001
POLICY NO.

POLICY STATEMENT

PETS PERMITTED IN A PRIVATE PRACTICE PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE

Policy:

Private practice physicians may have pets in their medical offices, but they must ensure that patients are informed of the presence of the animal and what type of animal it is before the patients visit the office. Prior notice should be achieved by placing a sign on the door of the office, as well as by informing patients who call the office to make appointments to see the doctor. Additionally, doctors must ensure that the level of cleanliness in the office is appropriate for the practice of medicine, as well as that the animal does not interfere with the doctor's practice of medicine.

NOTE: Physicians in private practice have an obligation under the American with Disabilities Act to admit guide dogs. This policy statement does not purport to provide guidance in this respect. Please consult your attorney if you have questions regarding this issue.

Analysis:

This matter came before the Board by way of various complaints regarding private practice physicians having pets in their office. The complaints ranged from issues of cleanliness, to patients' discomfort in the presence of animals, to a patient's allergies to fur-bearing animals. The regulations governing the practice of medicine do not address animals in a medical office and this policy statement is intended to clarify the matter. The Board wanted to provide notice to private practice physicians that while they are permitted to have pets at work, they must notify patients as to allow those patients to make informed decisions about their healthcare.



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