

Model Regulations: Establishment and Maintenance of a VCPR

As recommended by the AAVSB Regulatory Policy Committee in May 2026



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24 Introduction

25 AAVSB Model Regulations are meant to support the statutory language that can be found in the
26 AAVSB Practice Act Model (PAM). They suggest regulatory language for complex emerging trends in
27 Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Technology. Each model regulation from the AAVSB is presented
28 separately from each other and from the PAM for ease of use for the AAVSB Member Boards to utilize
29 as a model in developing regulations or rules specific to targeted topics. AAVSB recognizes that
30 there is no single solution for the association's diverse group of Member Boards, and that these
31 models may not fit within the existing governance framework. AAVSB recognizes that jurisdictional
32 needs vary by the mission and scope of the governing agency, as well as the needs of the public and
33 the veterinarian community within its boundaries. The AAVSB respects the differing governance
34 structures within the regulation of the profession and encourages the use of language that best fits
35 each Jurisdiction's needs. The AAVSB will continue to develop Model Regulations for addressing
36 pressing issues in the regulation of Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Technology.

37 Revisions

38 Created 2023

39 Structure and Format

40 The AAVSB Model Regulations have been structured to assist Member Boards in developing new or
41 modifying existing regulations or bylaws. Each document has been formatted to include
42 corresponding commentary in blue comment boxes. This commentary serves multiple purposes,
43 providing insights into broader areas of discussion and rationale for recommended language. Member
44 Boards are strongly encouraged to read and discuss the commentary, including considerations
45 germane to the local jurisdiction.

46 Establishment and Maintenance of a 47 Veterinarian-Client-Patient-Relationship 48 (VCPR)

49 Model Regulation.

50 Pursuant to the authority granted in Article II, Section 212 of the Veterinary Medicine and
51 Veterinary Technology Practice Act Model (Act), the Board hereby promulgates the following:

52 ~~Article I, Section 105 (b) Practice of Veterinary Medicine states that "Subject to exceptions set-~~
53 ~~forth in law, a VCPR must be established prior to engaging in the practice of Veterinary~~
54 ~~Medicine."~~ A Veterinarian must shall employ sound professional judgment when establishing a
55 Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR), as defined **in section 104(dd)** of the PAM Act,
56 ~~whether via virtual or in-person examination or Premises visit.~~ A Veterinarian must shall take
57 appropriate steps to establish the VCPR, obtain Informed Consent from the Client, and
58 conduct all necessary Patient evaluations consistent with currently acceptable standards of
59 practice.

Commentary: Establishment and Maintenance of a VCPR. Model Regulation.

This document contains model language for member boards to use whether the VCPR is established in person or virtually.

The in-person VCPR as defined by the CFR under Title 21-Food and Drugs- applies only to the prescribing and dispensing of drugs and is not a federal requirement for the practice of veterinary medicine. Moreover, this requirement does not apply to any jurisdiction in Canada. Therefore, jurisdictions may or may not require it-an in-person VCPR and may modify it when requiring it to practice. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, state legislatures within the United States are either confirming the requirement for an in-person VCPR or are explicitly removing that requirement. For this reason, it was deemed important to continue to provide regulatory language for the establishment of a virtual VCPR. This regulatory language provides safeguards for jurisdictions to review, should that state legislature allow for a virtual VCPR.

However, in 2025, the AAVSB Delegate Assembly passed Resolution 2025-3. This resolution, available on AAVSB.org, indicates that AAVSB Member Boards do not support the establishment of a VCPR solely by virtual means. It further resolves that the practice of veterinary medicine is deemed to occur where the patient is located, and there must be enforceable requirements for access to in-person veterinary care. Accordingly, this model regulation Section 1(c) provides two options with differing requirements for Boards to consider, depending upon jurisdictional law.

There are additional safeguards Jurisdictions should consider when promulgating rules allowing for the virtual establishment of a VCPR, and these are addressed in section 2 of this Model Regulation. These safeguards require that the Client is informed of the limitations of Telemedicine and receives advice for when and how to receive an in-person follow-up, if necessary. Patient and public safety concerns exist when adapting regulations and standards historically intended for the hands-on provision of veterinary medical care for use in Telehealth. Challenges include determining when and where a VCPR is established, assuring confidentiality and privacy of Client and Patient data, proper diagnosis, and treatment of the Patient, and limiting the prescribing and dispensing of medications in accordance with federal law. For regulatory and disciplinary purposes, the AAVSB strongly recommends that the Jurisdiction requires the Veterinarian to be licensed in the same Jurisdiction as the Patient and to have a contractual relationship with a Veterinary Facility located within that Jurisdiction.

62 **Commentary: Establishment and Maintenance of a VCPR. Model Regulation. (cont.)**

A license shall be required for any Veterinarian or Veterinary Technician who provides veterinary medical services to a Patient or Client in this Jurisdiction through in-person, telephonic, electronic, or other means. Many factors, including technological advancements, increase the likelihood of the practice of Veterinary Medicine via electronic means and without physical presence, both intrastate and interstate. The AAVSB PAM and these regulations recognize that the practice of Veterinary Medicine takes place where the Patient is located when the VCPR is established. Because the Board’s central mission is to protect the public in its Jurisdiction, it must make every effort to regulate the practice of Veterinary Medicine being received in that Jurisdiction, regardless of the location of the Veterinarian providing the services. Resolution 2025-3 states: NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the practice of veterinary medicine is deemed to occur where the patient is located, and thus, the practitioner must hold a valid license in the jurisdiction where the veterinarian is practicing veterinary medicine. Section 108 of the PAM requires that tThe location of practice under ~~these virtual~~ circumstances occurs in both Jurisdictions; that is where the Patient is located and where the Veterinarian is located.

The American Veterinary Medical Association provides language for requiring an in-person examination of the patient. “Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) The veterinarian-client-patient relationship is the basis for veterinary care. To establish such a relationship all of the following are required: [...] The licensed veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the patient to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition(s) of the patient. This means that the licensed veterinarian is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the patient by virtue of: a timely in-person physical examination of the patient by the licensed veterinarian, and/or medically appropriate and timely visits by the licensed veterinarian to the operation where the patient is kept...”

In Canada, federal law requires Veterinarians to adhere to Provincial laws related to the VCPR to prescribe, dispense, and administer drugs. Under US federal law, there are certain restrictions that require an in-person establishment of a VCPR, pursuant to the Veterinary Feed Directive, Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act, and Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act. The federally-defined VCPR, published at 21 CFR Sec 530.3(i)(3) and referenced in the above laws, states, in part, that “[s]uch a relationship can exist only when the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal(s) by virtue of examination of the animals and/or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where animal(s) are kept.”

In Canada, federal law requires Veterinarians to adhere to Provincial laws related to the VCPR to prescribe, dispense, and administer drugs.

Section 1. Establishment and Maintenance of a VCPR

(a) A VCPR is established when:

- (1) Both the Veterinarian and Client agree for the Veterinarian to assume responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of the Patient(s);
- (2) The Veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the Patient(s) to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition; and
- (3) The Veterinarian has provided the Client with information for obtaining timely follow up care.

~~(a)~~(b) The Patient(s) is located within this Jurisdiction at the time the VCPR is established.

~~(b)~~(c) ~~In accordance with the definition of the VCPR in the Act, s~~Sufficient knowledge of a Patient(s) pursuant to ~~Section(a) 104(dd)(2) may shall~~ be obtained ~~by when the following conditions are met:~~

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A recent in-person physical examination of the Patient(s); or (2) Medically appropriate and timely visits to the Premises at which the Animal(s) or group of Animals are kept | <p>98</p> <p>99</p> <p>100</p> <p>101</p> <p>102</p> <p>103</p> <p>104</p> <p>105</p> <p>106</p> <p>107</p> <p>108</p> <p>109</p> <p>110</p> <p>111</p> <p>112</p> <p>113</p> <p>114</p> <p>115</p> <p>116</p> <p>117</p> <p>118</p> <p>119</p> <p>120</p> <p>121</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A recent examination of the Patient(s) either physically or by the use of appropriate virtual technology; or (2) Medically appropriate and timely visits to the Premises at which the Animal(s) or group of Animals are kept; (3) The Veterinarian provides the Client with information for obtaining timely in-person follow up care; and (4) The Client is informed of the Veterinarian’s location, Veterinary Facility registration number (if applicable), Jurisdiction’s license number and licensure status, and limitations involved in accessing Veterinary Medicine via Telemedicine. |
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~~(e)~~(b) Once a VCPR has been established:

- 123 (1) The Veterinarian shall maintain sufficient knowledge of the Patient(s) to make a
124 general or preliminary diagnosis, recommend treatment, or to prescribe, administer,
125 or dispense a drug;
- 126 (2) It extends to all Licensees employed by or affiliated with the same Veterinary Facility
127 pursuant to Section 309 of the Act; and
- 128 (3) The Client must be informed that other Licensees at the Veterinary Facility may
129 provide services within the VCPR.
- 130 ~~(d)~~(c) When a Veterinarian chooses to discontinue a VCPR for any reason, they ~~must~~ shall
131 communicate this decision with the Client to allow the Client a reasonable amount of time to
132 arrange care with another Veterinarian, including the appropriate transfer of medical
133 information.

134 **Commentary: Section 1. Establishment and Maintenance of a VCPR.**

Section 1(c)(1).

The AAVSB considered time periods regarding the duration and maintenance of a VCPR. However, it was determined that reliance on the professional judgement of the Veterinarian is sufficient to protect the Client and Patient. A time limit may prevent practitioners from using their professional authority to require a recheck examination for a disease process that requires an examination more frequently than Jurisdictional requirements.

135
136
137 ~~Section 2. Additional Requirements for the Establishment and Maintenance of a~~
138 ~~Virtual VCPR~~

139 ~~In addition to requirements outlined in section 1 above, a Veterinarian may establish and maintain a~~
140 ~~VCPR through virtual means if all the following apply:~~

141 ~~The Veterinarian provides the Client with information for obtaining timely in person follow up care;~~
142 ~~and~~

143 ~~The Client is informed of the Veterinarian's location, Veterinary Facility registration number (if~~
144 ~~applicable), Jurisdiction's license number and licensure status, and limitations involved in accessing~~
145 ~~Veterinary Medicine via Telemedicine.~~