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Guidelines for Complementary and Alternative Veterinary Medicine

Date: **April 10, 2008**

The Board of Registration of Veterinary Medicine ("the Board") voted today to adopt the following Policy Guideline. This policy guideline is intended as a recommended protocol for the profession to follow. The guideline set forth below does not have the full force and effect of law, as would a Massachusetts General Law or a Board rule or regulation. However, the Board uses policy guidelines as an internal management tool in formulating decisions that relate to issues in the practice of veterinary medicine.

Policy No. 08-04

Introduction

These guidelines are intended to help veterinarians make informed and judicious decisions regarding medical approaches known by several terms including "complementary," "alternative," and "integrative." Collectively, these approaches have been described as Complementary and Alternative Veterinary Medicine (CAVM). The Massachusetts Board of Registration in Veterinary Medicine ("The Board") recognizes the interest in and use of these modalities and is open to their consideration.

The Board finds the practice of CAVM as the practice of Veterinary Medicine, as defined in M.G.L. c. 112 Å§ 58. The practice of all veterinary medicine, including CAVM, should be held to the same standards.

Circumstances commonly require that veterinarians extrapolate information when formulating a course of therapy. Veterinarians should exercise caution in such circumstances. If they themselves are not qualified, veterinarians may incorporate individuals licensed in human alternative professions, only through referral and consultation.

Terminology

These guidelines identify CAVM as a heterogeneous group of preventive, diagnostic, and therapeutic philosophies and practices.

Current examples of CAVM include, but are not limited to, aromatherapy; Bach flower remedy therapy; energy therapy; low-energy photon therapy; magnetic field therapy; orthomolecular therapy; veterinary acupuncture, acutherapy, and acupressure; veterinary homeopathy; veterinary manual or manipulative therapy (similar to osteopathy, chiropractic, or physical medicine and therapy); veterinary nutraceutical therapy; and veterinary phytotherapy.

Responsibilities

M.G.L. ch. 112 Å§ 58 define and regulate the practice of veterinary medicine including many aspects of CAVM. These guidelines support the requisite interaction described in the definition of the veterinarian-client-patient relationship. Accordingly, a veterinarian shall examine an animal and establish a preliminary diagnosis before any treatment is initiated.

Diagnosis should be based on sound, accepted principles of veterinary medicine. Currently accepted treatment methods should be discussed with the owner or authorized agent when presenting the treatment options available. Owner consent should be obtained prior to initiating any treatment, including CAVM.

Medical records must meet statutory requirements. Information should be clear and complete. Records should contain documentation of client communications and owner consent.