

IAAOR POSITION PAPER

Oppose

HB5377 and SB3712

IL VETERINARY MEDICINE AND SURGERY PRACTICE ACT OF 2004

In 2004 it was agreed upon by all parties -- the IAAOR, The Illinois State Veterinary Association and the Illinois Department of Professional and Financial Regulation (IDFPR) , that the Vet. Practice Act shall allow an animal owner or the agent of the owner--without veterinary approval -- the right to choose licensed or unlicensed practitioners for their animals' health care needs.

Now the Illinois State Veterinary Association has caused two bills to be introduced that would delete the language we all agreed to and effectively prohibit practitioners of complementary and alternative therapies from practicing in Illinois without a referral from a veterinarian.

Specific Problems with these bills

Tucked within both of these bills is the complete removal of one exemption (8) and slight changes to exemption (15) in the 2004 Veterinarian Practice Act. IF these two exemptions are removed or modified the Veterinary Practice Act shall:

- ◆ Set more restrictive measures for animal health care than those that exist for humans!
- ◆ Increase costs to owners and create delays in animal care as a result of mandating veterinarian referral.
- ◆ Violate Illinois Right to Work laws for otherwise competent practitioners of alternative, complementary and integrative therapies.
- ◆ Allow veterinarians to practice modalities that are outside the scope of their normal training, but prevent persons trained in those modalities from practicing them.
- ◆ Infringe on the animal owner's freedom of health care choices. After all, who pays the bills?
- ◆ Jeopardize many acts of animal husbandry, e.g., hundreds of animal trainers would be in violation of this law per proposed exemption 8.5.
- ◆ Create a monopoly of one profession over another, harming the consumer.
- ◆ Infringe on the Freedom of Religion for spiritual healers.

Illinois has a thriving alternative natural healing community of professionals and lay practitioners. Passage of these bills will eliminate nutritionists, massage therapists, aromatherapists, homeopaths, behavior specialists, animal communicators, spiritual healers, TTtouch practitioners and physical therapists, to name a few. It will negatively impact farriers, trainers, equine dentists, animal handlers and wellness service providers. Animals throughout the state will be denied the compassionate and high-quality care these people now provide. Conceivably, a groomer recommending a change in diet or a trainer rewarding an animal for good behavior could be charged with the illegal practice of veterinary medicine under this overly-broad proposed legislation.

There are no statistics on record of any harm being done to animals in Illinois by providers of alternative, complementary and integrative therapies.

As an animal owner, you should not be FORCED to use a vet for chiropractic, massage therapy, acupuncture, teeth floating, saddle fitting or any other service that you feel would be best performed by someone else. You do not need an MD referral to see your dentist, get fitted for a pair of shoes or get a massage. Why do you need referral for your pet? It's your horse or dog or cat. It's your choice.

Illinois Alliance for Animal Owners Rights <http://iaaor.org>