

TENNESSEE VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION POSITION STATEMENT REGARDING VETERINARIAN-CLIENT-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP

The Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) is dedicated to protecting the health and well being of animals within the state of Tennessee and is committed to advancing the science and art of veterinary medicine. With this in mind, TVMA adopts the following position regarding the veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR).

A veterinarian-client-patient relationship exists when the veterinarian has assumed responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of the animal(s) and the need for medical treatment.

In addition, TVMA feels the following criteria must all be met in order to ensure a valid VCPR exists:

1. The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the animal and the need for medical treatment, and has obtained informed consent, and the client has agreed to follow the veterinarian's instructions.
2. The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal. This means that the veterinarian has seen the animal within the last 12 months and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal either by virtue of an examination of the animal, or by medically appropriate and at least annual visits to the premises where the animals are kept.
3. The veterinarian is readily available or has arranged for emergency coverage for follow-up evaluation in the event of adverse reactions or the failure of the treatment regimen.
4. The veterinarian must maintain medical records as set forth by the Rule and Regulations of the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners.
5. A veterinarian-client-patient relationship cannot be established nor maintained solely by telephone or other electronic means.