



**IDAHO STATE BOARD
OF VETERINARY MEDICINE
2270 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, Idaho 83712**

**AGENCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN
For Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2012 - June 30, 2016
Submitted this First day of July, 2011**

The Idaho Board of Veterinary Medicine created the following Strategic Plan for the people of Idaho and the Idaho veterinary community. By the signature of the President of the Idaho Board of Veterinary Medicine, the President and members of the Board commit themselves to the successful completion of this plan.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Dave Schulz, D.V.M.", written over a horizontal line.

**Dave Schulz, D.V.M.
President
Idaho Board of Veterinary Medicine**

IDAHO BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

MISSION

To promote the public health, safety and welfare by safeguarding the people and animals of Idaho by establishing and enforcing professional standards in the licensure and regulation of veterinary health professionals.

VISION

Over the next five years, the Board projects a small but steady increase in the number of veterinarians living and working in Idaho. In addition, the field of veterinary medicine will become more complex, specialized, and demanding; this complexity will carry over into complaints and disciplinary issues. As veterinary medical standards change over time, the Board must ensure its statutes and rules address the current standards to protect the public.

The Board envisions that the purchase and implementation of new licensing software, along with corresponding website enhancements and the ability to accept credit card payments, will provide many convenient self-service options for its licensees, certificants, and the public. These self-service options will empower users and reduce staff time, which will allow the Board to continue to operate its office operation with only two (2) employees. The Board's current licensing software is obsolete. Based on a 2010 survey, the vast majority of licensees want the ability to renew their licenses online; licensees will pay more for this convenience.

Due to economic and societal influences, the Board predicts there will be an increasing number of laypeople providing veterinary medical care to animals without benefit of a veterinary education or license. The Board will continue to address these unlicensed individuals as it is made aware of their actions, with the goal of protecting the public and their animals from treatments provided by unqualified individuals.

Veterinarians will continue to require the services of properly-educated and certified veterinary technicians to assist with the care and treatment of animals. The Board's prior decision to standardize the educational requirements for certified veterinary technicians will provide assurance to veterinarians that certified veterinary technicians hired to provide assistance have met an appropriate standard educational criteria.

The Board will support the efforts of the Certified Euthanasia Task Force to ensure that the certified euthanasia program remains under close scrutiny, and is a high-quality training and certification program. This program certifies laypersons at law enforcement agencies, animal control agencies, and animal shelters to perform humane euthanasia of ill, injured, and unwanted animals without a veterinarian present.

There will be even greater public awareness and demand for quality veterinary care and humane animal treatment as Idahoans continue to assign great emotional and financial value to their animals. The Board is committed to sustaining a conscientious program for the people of Idaho designed to protect the public's rights with regard to the care and treatment of their animals, and to maintain the dignity and esteem of the veterinary profession.

ISSUES/CHALLENGES

- ◆ New license applications, processed twice a year, produce an expanding database of licensed veterinarians and certified veterinary technicians. Records of continuing education, license and certification renewals and expirations, license and certification verifications, discipline, and inspections for disciplined veterinarians must be updated, maintained, processed, and reported for each individual.
- ◆ Certified euthanasia technician training and recertification workshops, as well as chemical capture training workshops must be provided, and certified euthanasia agency inspections conducted. As the certified euthanasia program grows, the euthanasia training and inspections create an increasing workload for Certified Euthanasia Task Force members and office staff.
- ◆ Criminal background checks are now required of all applicants. This has added an additional step to the licensing and certification process, but the background check allows the Board to ensure a person with an unacceptable criminal background is not issued a license.
- ◆ The veterinary technician testing, certification, and renewal program is now in its tenth year. As veterinarians realize the importance of well-trained support staff and give more responsibility to these individuals, the demand for qualified veterinary technicians will continue to grow. The certified veterinary technician database will increase, as well as the needed monitoring and disciplinary oversight.
- ◆ New jurisprudence examinations were written and implemented in 2010 for veterinarians and certified veterinary technicians. Once the 2011 statute changes become effective, these examinations will need revisions to address the changes.
- ◆ The computerized national veterinary examination, the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE), is also in its tenth year. Since the beginning of the program, 98 senior veterinary students have applied to Idaho to be qualified by the Board to sit for their national examination. Based on a 2011 statute change, the Board will no longer pre-approve candidates to take the NAVLE.
- ◆ The operating procedures of the Board office must continually be reevaluated, and adjustments made, in order to cut costs and still continue to provide quality service to the citizens of Idaho. The Board's ability to recoup investigation, legal, and oversight expenses involved with the settlement of complaints received by the Board has helped considerably with the expenses associated with the Board's regulatory functions.
- ◆ Board staff will begin the process of converting the paper renewal process to an online renewal process, with a goal of online renewals by May 2013. Based on an assessment of the Board's finances, it was determined that a fee increase must be levied prior to the purchase of new web-based licensing software. The Board will also need to complete the setup to allow credit card payments as part of this process.
- ◆ The Certified Euthanasia Task Force (CETF) developed a standard euthanasia training PowerPoint presentation to aid in consistency of the course between instructors. A certified euthanasia technician jurisprudence exam was developed in 2010; this exam will need to be revised based on 2011 rule changes.

- ◆ During the past year, the number of complaints received has significantly decreased in number. Of the fifteen (15) new complaints received so far this year and the carry-overs from last year, one (1) case is presently with the Board's enforcement attorney, one (1) case is with the Board's investigator/consultant; one (1) informal consent agreement has been signed; and ten (10) additional investigations have been finalized based on lack of jurisdiction, insufficient grounds for discipline, or through warning letters, letters of caution, and cease and desist letters.
- ◆ The representatives of the Board who handle the investigations of complaints must be competent in their field and receive the necessary training to be able to conduct systematic, impartial investigations that address all pertinent laws and rules. The Board members and staff must also be educated with regard to provisions of Idaho Code and Administrative Rule that affect the veterinary, veterinary technician, and euthanasia technician professions. The Board members must also be able to sit as an informed jury when an administrative hearing becomes necessary.
- ◆ It is difficult to recruit qualified individuals who have the time and can afford the expenses associated with serving on the State Board of Veterinary Medicine. The Board positions demand individuals who are familiar with the practice of veterinary medicine and the problems faced by veterinarians and the public in their interactions. Above all, individuals who possess a strong desire to serve the people of Idaho are needed. The amount of time that must be devoted to Board business, as well as the token reimbursement associated with the appointment, can be obstacles to the recruitment of qualified individuals.
- ◆ Weaknesses in the veterinary statutes and rules, enforcement powers, and insufficient funds and manpower hinder the Board's ability to promptly and effectively investigate and take action to enforce violations of the Veterinary Practice Act, particularly those related to unlicensed practice by laypersons. The Board successfully passed both statute and rule changes through the 2011 legislative session to address issues that arose over the past year.
- ◆ The Board must remain current with regard to the constantly changing federal and state requirements for veterinarians, veterinary technicians, euthanasia agencies, and euthanasia technicians.

FIVE-YEAR GOALS

1. Maintain a strong veterinary licensing and veterinary technician certification program for new applicants.
2. Implement a user-friendly online veterinary license and veterinary technician certification renewal program.
3. Maintain an effective euthanasia agency certification and euthanasia technician certification program for new applicants.
4. Implement a user-friendly online euthanasia agency certification and euthanasia technician certification renewal program.
5. Protect the public by sustaining and enforcing a complaint and disciplinary program for veterinarians, veterinary technicians, euthanasia agencies, and euthanasia technicians.

6. Encourage and support quality continuing education programs; verify continuing education requirement compliance by licensees.
7. Provide license and certification verifications for veterinarians and veterinary technicians who are applying for licensure in other jurisdictions, and provide license verifications to the public as requested.

KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Solicit, compile, verify, review, and approve new applications for veterinary licensure and veterinary technician certification by January 31 and again by June 30 of each year.
2. Complete and distribute in the first week of May each year, renewal notifications to all active and inactive veterinarians licensed in Idaho, as well as certified veterinary technicians (CVTs), certified euthanasia agencies (CEAs) and certified euthanasia technicians (CETs) that are certified to practice in Idaho. Complete and distribute after July 1 of each year, expiration notices to all veterinarians, CVTs, CEAs, and CETs that outline the time period in which these licenses or certifications may be reinstated, and the reinstatement requirements.
3. Provide a written acknowledgement within five days to formal written complaints received from the public. Final complaint resolution can take several months depending on severity and complexity of each individual case.
4. Provide Board approval for continuing education courses within five days of request and apply reported continuing education to appropriate accounts.
5. Provide license verifications to other jurisdictions within five days of request; provide immediate license verifications to callers by telephone; provide lists of licensed practitioners to requesters within three days of written request. Provide verification of currently licensed veterinarians, certified veterinary technicians, euthanasia technicians, and certified euthanasia agencies on the Board's website.
6. Conduct euthanasia and restraint drug training workshops for the purpose of certifying new euthanasia technicians by June 30 of each year. Conduct certification inspections as needed for the purpose of certifying new euthanasia agencies.
7. Complete recertification inspections for certified euthanasia agencies in the fall of each year, and conduct recertification workshops and examinations for renewing certified euthanasia technicians by June 30 of each year.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

1. Review new applications from prospective veterinary licensees and veterinary technician certificants and respond to applicants.
2. Review renewal applications from veterinary licensees and veterinary technician certificants and respond to applicants.

3. Triage all formal written complaints to be sure that information is sent to the appropriate person in the appropriate time frame.
4. Review and respond to all requests for continuing education course approval and review submitted continuing education for compliance with continuing education requirements.
5. Review and respond to all requests for license verifications and public requests for current lists of licensees.
6. Review new applications from prospective euthanasia technician and euthanasia agency certificants; provide new euthanasia technician training, restraint drug training, and new agency inspections.
7. Review renewal applications from certified euthanasia technicians and certified euthanasia agencies, provide recertifying euthanasia technician training, and provide annual recertifying euthanasia agency inspections.

BENCHMARKS

1. 100% of all applications received will be reviewed and a decision made on completion of veterinary licensing and veterinary technician certification requirements. Board members will vote on acceptance of reviewed applications in January and June of each year, as provided in statute.
2. 100% of all renewal applications are to be reviewed and processed daily as received.
3. 100% of written complaints received by the Board will be reviewed and responded to. Time frame for response is dependent on nature and severity of complaint.
4. 100% of all requests for continuing education approval will be responded to within five (5) business days.
5. 100% of all requests for license verifications and public lists of licensees will be responded to within five (5) business days. Public records requests for lists of licensees will be responded to within three (3) business days.
6. 100% of all new applicants for certification as euthanasia technicians will be provided approved euthanasia training, and prospective euthanasia agencies will be provided with a pre-certification inspection.
7. 100% of renewal applications for certified euthanasia technicians and euthanasia agencies will be processed daily as received, and recertification inspections and recertification workshops and examinations will be provided to recertifying technicians and agencies.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

The Board must increase its licensing fees to generate the funds needed to purchase new web-based licensing software. If the fee increase is approved, the Board will be able to upgrade its licensing software, providing online renewals and many other online features. If the fee increase is not granted, the Board will not have enough funds to upgrade the software. This could greatly affect the Board's licensees, certificants, and staff. The Board's current licensing software is considerably outdated, is starting to experience frequent malfunctions, and has only one IT support professional who knows the software. This creates a single point of failure should this individual find other employment.

The increasing involvement of attorneys on behalf of veterinarians extends the time and costs involved in negotiating informal disciplinary settlements. The American Veterinary Medical Association also provides \$25,000 in License Defense Insurance to veterinarians for an annual fee of \$69. This insurance enables veterinarians to hire an attorney to represent their interests in the event of a potential Board disciplinary action. If the Board were to be involved in any prolonged administrative hearings, the litigation costs could affect the Board's ability to meet its financial obligations, and a request for a supplemental appropriation could result.

The number of license and certification applications and renewals received each year, and the spending authority given to the Board by JFAC, dictate the amount of revenue and available funding for the Board's veterinary licensing program, veterinary technician certification program, and the humane animal euthanasia program. Realistic evaluations of the need for the programs, the costs associated with maintaining the existing programs, fees to be assessed, and appropriate spending authority must be continually performed.