

**IDAHO BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICINE
STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FY2017-FY2020**

MISSION

The Idaho Board of Veterinary Medicine is charged with promoting 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 the continuance of a small but steady increase in the number of veterinarians and certified veterinary technicians living and working in Idaho. In addition, the field of veterinary medicine continues to become more complex, specialized, and demanding; this complexity has resulted in an increased number of complaints and disciplinary issues – we expect that trend to continue. Statutes and Rules must be constantly scrutinized to assure that enforceable professional standards are clearly stated and updated to reflect new technology and social change. The Veterinary Practice Act functions as a living document: as veterinary medical standards change over time, the Board must ensure its Statutes and Rules address current minimum practice standards, towards filling its mission of protecting the Idaho public.

Because the BOVM office's workload has steadily increased over the last few years, the Board added a 0.6 FT position in FY2016. The support provided by this new employee has greatly increased the fulltime staff's ability to perform their duties in a timely manner and address several projects that they have not, for lack of time, been able to begin or complete in the last few years, such as reorganization of electronic and paper files and completion of desk manuals. The part-time employee has provided support to the Executive Director in projects that the Board requests and greatly facilitated processing annual license renewals and new license and certificate applications during the BOVM office's busiest times. In addition, the part-time employee has helped ensure continuity in the function of the office, allowing the BOVM office to better provide uninterrupted service to our licensees in the event that one of the full-time staff is temporarily unable to work. The Board has decided that, pending approval of an increase in renewal fees, it will work towards changing the 0.6 FT position to a 1.0 FT position within the next two years. This will allow the Board three FT positions – an Executive Director, a TRSII, and an Office Assistant I, which will allow continuity of service to the Idaho public and to veterinary licensees and certificants.

During the next five years, Board staff will continue to work with the Information Technology (IT) Division of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) to update and improve its licensing software. The most economical and effective way for the Board to upgrade its licensing software is to work with the staff of ISDA's Information Technology Division in designing and implementing improvements. Over the next five years, the Board will work with ISDA to create software that will gradually allow licensees, certificants, and the public to perform several functions online, including routine license and certificate renewal, payment of all fees, self-updating of demographic information, and self-maintenance of continuing education

credits. These self-service options will empower licensees and certificants, and allow more efficient use of staff time, resulting in better service to our licensees and the public. In addition, Board staff will work with the Idaho Department of Administration to develop and enhance the BOVM website to reflect its ever-increasing importance to our constituents.

Due to economic and societal influences, the Board anticipates that the number of laypeople providing veterinary medical care to animals without benefit of a veterinary education or professional license will continue to increase. Over the next five years, the Board will continue to expand its efforts to address these unlicensed individuals, actively seeking the assistance of the public and veterinary professionals in identifying those who practice veterinary medicine without a license. The Board will take all reasonable actions to stop illegal practice, thus fulfilling its mission to protect the public and their animals from procedures rendered by unqualified individuals.

The Board anticipates that the number of certified veterinary technicians (CVTs) in the state will continue to increase. As veterinary medicine becomes more technically-oriented, veterinarians will seek the services of formally-educated CVTs to assist with the care and treatment of animals. As veterinarians come to rely more on skilled CVTs in their practices, the Board will continue to carefully review the roles of professionally-regulated CVTs.

The Board will continue to support the efforts of the Committee on Humane Euthanasia (COHE) to ensure that necessary euthanasia of shelter animals in Idaho is conducted with safety and compassion through COHE's exceptional training and certification program. This program certifies laypersons at law enforcement agencies, animal control agencies, and animal shelters to perform humane euthanasia of sick, injured, and unwanted animals, without a veterinarian present.

Citizens of Idaho assign great emotional and financial value to their animals. The Board will remain 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 its animals, and to maintain the dignity and esteem of the veterinary profession.

ISSUES/CHALLENGES

- The BOVM prides itself on its ability to be effective and efficient with a relatively small budget. However, the BOVM also concedes that, in order to maintain and improve its service to the people and animals of Idaho, it is necessary to seek increases in funding from time to time. During the 2017 Legislative Session, the BOVM will seek to negotiate a fee increase for original license and certificate renewals to increase our annual budget by approximately \$80,000.
- Working with ISDA's IT Division is an economical way to maximize the Board's online capabilities. It appears that the best way for the BOVM to move ahead with new software given the inherent restrictions of ISDA's internal system is to hire an ISDA-approved programmer to write a web-based program. The estimated cost is \$125,000, so the Board will have to put aside savings for at least two years before it can proceed (assuming that

the proposed renewal fee increase is approved).

- New license applications, which are reviewed twice a year by the Board members, produce an ever expanding database of licensed veterinarians and certified veterinary technicians. Records must be created, updated, maintained, processed, reported, and eventually stored for each individual, including, but not limited to:
 1. Continuing education
 2. Veterinary license applications and renewals
 3. Certification applications and renewals
 4. Expirations
 5. License and certification verifications to other states
 6. Discipline
 7. Clinic inspections for disciplined veterinarians
 8. Annual clinic inspections for certified euthanasia agencies

Management of this large amount of sensitive data, including organization and storage of both paper and electronic files, is time-consuming and challenging because of the Board's current software capabilities and its small (although recently increased) staff. The Board has an MOA with ISDA's Administrative Support Services, which provides financial management, human resources, and information technology services. This arrangement works well, but, because of ISDA's needs and workload, it sometimes takes longer for our issues to be addressed.

- The slow but steady increase in the number of certified veterinary technicians will increase the BOVM office's workload over the next few years as the need for monitoring and disciplinary oversight also grows. There are currently two (2) Idaho veterinary technology programs that have been accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association; participation in the veterinary technology programs for all three institutions has increased during the last few years..
- New questions for jurisprudence examinations must be written and implemented for veterinarians, certified veterinary technicians, and certified euthanasia technicians; these examinations will be updated to include rule changes incorporated in 2016.
- The operating procedures of the Board office must continually be reevaluated, and adjustments made, in order to cut costs while still providing 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.
- As the urban population of Idaho grows and awareness of the Board increases, Idaho citizens are becoming more likely to file complaints with the BOVM against licensees and certificants, increasing the time commitment of the Board officers, and the workload of the Executive Director and the Board's investigator. The Board and its staff must become even more efficient as they address an increased number of complaints, creating and maintaining

open channels of communication between all those involved.

- Recruiting qualified individuals who can spare the time and afford the expenses associated with serving on the State Board of Veterinary Medicine is always challenging. 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 understandably be obstacles to the recruitment of suitable individuals.
- Inconsistencies and weaknesses in the veterinary statutes and rules, enforcement powers, limited funds, and inadequate staffing impede the Board's ability to promptly and effectively investigate and take action to enforce violations of the Veterinary Practice Act related to unlicensed practice by laypersons.

FIVE YEAR GOALS

1. Increase fees for license and certification renewals to ensure that the Board has sufficient resources to continue its service to the people and animals of Idaho and to its licensees and certificants.
2. Maintain a rigorous veterinary licensing and veterinary technician certification program for new applicants.
3. Hire an ISDA-approved programmer to design and implement a user-friendly online veterinary license and veterinary technician certification renewal program.
4. Maintain and improve effective euthanasia agency certification and euthanasia technician certification program for new applicants.
5. Expand the 0.6 FT staff position (Office Assistant I) into a 1.0 FT position in the Board office, which will facilitate more efficient service to our licensees and members of the Idaho public.
6. Protect the public by sustaining and enforcing a complaint and disciplinary program for veterinarians, veterinary technicians, euthanasia agencies, euthanasia technicians, and illegal practice by unlicensed individuals.
7. Encourage and support high quality continuing education programs; verify continuing education requirement compliance by licensees and certificants in the most efficient way possible without losing integrity.
8. 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.

9. Respond to requests for Public Records according to the timelines codified in Idaho Statutes (Title 74 – Transparent and Ethical Government).

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 veterinarian licenses in Idaho, as well as certified veterinary technicians (CVTs), certified euthanasia agencies (CEAs), and certified euthanasia technicians (CETs) 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 credits 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 as requested within three days of receipt of written requests. Provide verification of currently licensed veterinarians, certified veterinary technicians, euthanasia technicians, and certified euthanasia technicians on the Board's website.
6. Conduct euthanasia training workshops in which to certify new euthanasia technicians by June 30 of each year. Conduct annual agency inspections. Facilitate remote chemical capture training for law-enforcement certified euthanasia technicians.
7. Complete recertification inspections for CEAs in the fall of each year prior to December 31, and conduct recertification workshops and examinations for renewing CETs by June 30 of each year.
8. Generate adequate funding to support the activities of the BOVM through a fee increase in 2017 for annual renewals. The last fee increase went into effect in 2012. A fee increase will allow the Board to eventually increase its office staff; purchase web-based software to replace an outdated and antiquated system; build an appropriate emergency fund; and offset increased costs of conducting its business as the number of licensees and complaints increase.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

1. Review new applications from prospective veterinarians and veterinary technician certificants, and respond to all 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 CETs and CEAs, provide recertifying euthanasia technician retraining, and provide annual recertifying euthanasia agency inspections.

BENCHMARKS

1. All applications received (100%) 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 during each January and June Board meeting, as provided in statute.
2. All renewal applications (100%) will be reviewed and processed daily as received.
3. The Board will review and respond to all written complaints (100%).
4. The Board staff will respond to all requests (100%) submitted for continuing education approval within five business days.
5. The Board staff will fulfill all requests for license verifications and public lists of licensees (100%) within three business days.
6. The Board staff will provide approved euthanasia training for all new applicants for certification as euthanasia technicians (100%), and all prospective euthanasia agencies (100%) will be provided a pre-certification inspections.
7. All renewal applications (100%) for certified euthanasia technicians and euthanasia agencies will be reviewed and processed daily as received, and all recertification inspections and recertification workshops and examinations will be provided to recertifying technicians (100%) and agencies (100%).

EXTERNAL FACTORS

Although the Board contracted for new database software in October 2012, the contracting company was unable to fulfill its agreement, and work stopped in early 2014. Some of the other independent Idaho Boards who also contracted with the company have also withdrawn from the contract because of dissatisfaction with the product. To date, no one, including the BOVM, has achieved official cancellation of the contract or been granted a refund. After this incident, the

Board has determined that the most prudent path to provide online services to its licensees and certificants is to work with an ISDA-approved independent programmer to develop web-based services that will facilitate timely payment of fees and license/certificate renewals. We will be unable to rely on ISDA's programmers directly as the ISDA IT Division serves all of ISDA's agencies, and progress on the Board's projects is always dependent on ISDA's workload and available time. The Board has determined, however, that since we are bound to ISDA by statute, it is in the long run better to work within their guidelines rather than bringing commercial outside software in, which will most likely not be given necessary permissions to interact with ISDA's fiscal services. This prolonged development period is not ideal, but is necessary to providing trouble-free and reliable service to our constituents in the long term.

Incidences of laypersons illegally practicing veterinary medicine, particularly in the area of equine dentistry, continue to be brought to the Board's attention. In 2015, the Board took its first actions to correct this situation, and, over the next few years, the Board will increasingly expend time and resources on managing this problem, bringing violators into compliance with Idaho statute. Since this is an ongoing problem, the Board will need to work through several "generations" of board members, maintaining focus and intensity until the goal is met. This will challenge the Board's staff and members for several years.

The number of license and certification applications and renewals received each year, and the spending authority granted to the Board by JFAC, dictate the amount of funds available to the Board for its veterinary licensing program, veterinary technician certification program, and humane animal euthanasia program. Realistic evaluations of the need for the programs, the costs associated with maintaining the programs, assessed fees, and appropriate spending authority must be constantly evaluated and scrutinized.

The Certified Euthanasia program does not generate enough revenue to be self-sustaining. Veterinarians subsidize the program through their licensing fees. This necessary program provides instruction, certification, inspections, and oversight that allow trained laypersons to humanely euthanize animals, without veterinarian participation, at law enforcement and animal control agencies, as well as at non-profit animal shelters. Although cities and counties derive direct benefit from this program, all citizens of Idaho ultimately benefit. For this reason, the Board will most likely eventually seek funding from the State's General Fund.

Increasingly, veterinarians in Idaho engage attorneys when complaints that could result in disciplinary action are brought against them. This tends to prolong investigations and raise costs for the Board. There is always the possibility that the Board could become involved in prolonged administrative hearings, greatly increasing the amount of fees for the Board's attorneys, and putting the Board's ability to meet its financial obligations at risk. If this were to occur, The Board would most likely be forced to request a supplemental appropriation to help cover its expenses. A modest increase in licensing fees, as is being proposed in FY2017, would help allay this possibility.