



Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship

Youth Agriculture VCPR Tool\*



The California Veterinary Medical Board defines what must be satisfied to establish a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) and for treatment to be provided to an animal through a valid VCPR. California Code of Regulations Title 16, Section 2032.1:

- (a) It is unprofessional conduct for a veterinarian to administer, prescribe, dispense or furnish a drug, medicine, appliance, or treatment of whatever nature for the prevention, cure, or relief of a wound, fracture or bodily injury or disease of an animal without having first established a VCPR with the animal patient or patients and the client, except where the patient is a wild animal or the owner is unknown.
  - (b) A veterinarian-client-patient relationship shall be established by the following:
    - (1) The client has authorized the veterinarian to assume responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of the animal, including the need for medical treatment.
    - (2) The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal(s).
    - (3) The veterinarian has assumed responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of the animal and has communicated with the client a course of treatment appropriate to the circumstance.
  - (c) A drug shall not be prescribed for a duration inconsistent with the medical condition of the animal(s) or type of drug prescribed. The veterinarian shall not prescribe a drug for a duration longer than one year from the date the veterinarian examined the animal(s) and prescribed the drug. A veterinarian may not prescribe for longer than 6 months when VCPR was established through telehealth\*\* appointments (11 BPC §4826.6 (i)(4)). Antimicrobial prescriptions issued through the establishment of a VCPR using telehealth\*\* appointments cannot be authorized for a period longer than 14 days of treatment. No additional antimicrobial drug prescription, including refills, can be issued unless the veterinarian has conducted an in-person examination of the animal patient.
- In addition, effective January 1, 2024, California Business and Professions Code (BPC) § 4826.6, subdivision (b), defined that a veterinarian possesses sufficient knowledge of an animal patient if they have recently seen, or are personally acquainted with, the care of the animal patient by doing any of the following:
- (1) Examining the animal patient in person.
  - (2) Examining the animal patient by use of synchronous audio-video communication (telehealth\*\*).
  - (3) Making medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises in which the animal patient is kept.

Please note: federal law (21 CFR 530.3(i)) does not recognize telehealth\*\* as a valid method for establishing a new VCPR but does allow an existing VCPR to be maintained electronically. Federal and state VCPR and telehealth\*\* definitions may conflict in certain situations, such as when issuing veterinary feed directive (VFD) drugs or prescribing extra-label drug use (ELDU). In these situations, the veterinarian must follow the federal VCPR guidelines, as defined in 21 CFR 530.3(i).

I acknowledge that I have read the above statement pertaining to the California Veterinary Medical Board and federal definition of a veterinarian-client-patient relationship.

As the parent / guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, who are youth keeping their animal in association with \_\_\_\_\_, under the instruction of \_\_\_\_\_,

Project, Chapter, or Club Youth Agriculture Leader

we agree to the following:

We authorize the agent (above-designated leader) to act on behalf of our youth member, as the Client in the above defined VCPR.

We consent the agent will be the authorized Client with which to treat livestock pursuant to a valid VCPR.

Signature of Parent / Guardian Date

Signature of Designated Youth Agriculture Leader Date

Please note: In signing this agreement, this does not authorize the agent to diagnose or treat the animal exclusively. Treatment must be done under direct guidance of a California-licensed veterinarian.

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\*This document is designed to assist with the decision making and management of a livestock animal or herd. It is not an official or legal document but rather one of many ways by which you may make a VCPR work with your veterinarian. Please consult with your veterinarian directly to discuss how to make a VCPR work.

\*\*Throughout this document, the term telehealth or telemedicine is used as it may be more familiar to readers. In order to be compliant with California code, synchronous audio-video communication is required for establishing a telehealth VCPR.