

# PET TALK

## Veterinary Mobility Act:

January/February 2014

What Do Pet Owners Need to Know?

Vol. 17 No. 1

### What is H.R. 1528?

#### The Veterinary Mobility Act of 2014!

H.R. 1528 was introduced in the House of Representatives on April 12, 2013.



After being amended for the last time on May 20, 2014, it was passed to the House of Representatives on July 8, 2014 and received unanimous support.



In Senate 8 days later, the bill again received unanimous support.



It was finally signed into law by President Barack Obama on August 1, 2014.



### What does H.R. 1528 Mean for Pet Owners?

**Now veterinarians can legally provide care to their patients outside of their registered clinics and across state lines.**

**Additionally, veterinarians are now allowed to transport, dispense, and administer controlled substances outside of their registered clinics!**

Veterinarians are now afforded the right to practice in ways that they once couldn't in order to provide the best care possible for your pet, whether it is a horse or a hamster.

Before this bill was passed into law, veterinarians could not administer, dispense, transfer, or generally use controlled substances (*See Box on page 2*) for patient care outside of their DEA registered practice sites according to the controlled substance act. What if ambulances were not allowed to carry pain medications? It would be difficult for EMT's to perform their job. The same is true for mobile veterinarians.

The Veterinary Mobility Act amended the Controlled Substance Act in such a way that now allows veterinarians to practice with controlled substances when clinically necessary and as they deem appropriate outside of their one primary registered location. This is monumental in expanding the veterinary medicine practice for many reasons!



(Continued on Page 2)

(continued from page 1)



## What is a controlled Substance?

A: Medications that are potentially dangerous and are deemed necessary to be regulated by the government, specifically the Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

Controlled substances are categorized into different “classes” or “schedules” based on their inherent danger. For Example:

- Schedule 1: No accepted medical use, Very high potential for abuse (such as Heroin, Marijuana)
- Schedule 2: Accepted medical uses, high potential for abuse (such as OxyContin or Adderall)
- Schedule 3: Accepted medical use, potential for abuse, but less than that of Schedule 2 (such as Codeine or anabolic steroids)
- Schedule 4: Accepted Medical Use, Low potential for abuse, less than that of schedule 3 (such as Ativan or Ambien)
- Schedule 5: Accepted medical use, very low potential for abuse (such as Lyrica)

Controlled substances are regulated and dispensed for use under stricter guidelines than uncontrolled substances. For example, prescriptions for schedule 2 drugs are not allowed to be refilled, must be stored more securely in pharmacies and clinics, cannot be transferred to anyone other than the patient for which they are prescribed, and in many cases require patient identification before being dispensed.

1. Veterinary mobile practices can travel to, and appropriately treat, their patients that cannot feasibly be brought into clinics, such as farm animals, without fear of breaking the law.

2. Mobile Veterinary practices will be able to broaden their spectrum of care with the freedom to utilize controlled substances. This could be especially useful to patients in emergency situations.

3. Veterinarians can provide pain relief, end of life care, or even euthanasia to their small companion animal patients in the comfort of their homes when pain and suffering is too great for them to travel to their veterinarian’s clinic.

4. Veterinary patients with severe anxiety or stress during clinic visits can be treated appropriately from home.

5. Wildlife or stray animals can be rescued or relocated safely via sedation with controlled substances.

6. Field and wildlife research can be expanded upon and more advances can be made through the use of controlled substances.

Ultimately-the most basic yet vital duties of a veterinarian; (pain control, sedation and analgesia to perform surgical procedures, emergency care, and euthanasia) require the administration of controlled substances and can legally be accomplished in all settings with the passage of the **Veterinary Mobility Act of 2014**.

### References:

- American Veterinary Medical Law Association ([www.avmla.org](http://www.avmla.org))
- US Drug Enforcement Administration ([www.justice.gov/DEA](http://www.justice.gov/DEA))
- H.R. 1528 (<https://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/1528>)

Emily Sorah

Clinical Veterinary Pharmacy Resident  
North Carolina State University College of  
Veterinary Medicine