

Animal Rehabilitation Task Force Orientation Letter

Thank you for agreeing to serve on this task force.

The Mission: The charge of this task force is 1) to review the role of physical therapists and others trained or certified in animal physical rehabilitation and 2) to develop language regarding animal physical rehabilitation for submission to the Veterinary Medical Board as proposed regulation in the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act.

Our Process: First, please familiarize yourself with the enclosed material prior to the meeting. This background information is provided to ensure that we will have a productive discussion from the outset.

In the morning, guest speakers will provide an overview of the issues. There will be an opportunity for you to ask questions and seek further clarification and information.

In the afternoon, the task force will discuss the issues (no guest speakers present) and develop language that will be submitted to the Board of Governors (for their review, revision, acceptance and/or rejection.)

Issues: I've identified two Primary Issues (with a number of secondary concerns) but you will undoubtedly have other issues and perspectives that need to be brought to the table.

Primary Issue #1: What is Animal Rehabilitation and what isn't? Does AR include or not include: massage, stretching, exercise (active, passive, resistance), hydrotherapy, application of heat or cold, physical, chemical and other properties of heat, light, water, electricity, sound, stimulation (via laser, electrical, magnetic field, or ultrasound?)

Secondary Issue: Are there any modalities or interventions that would fit under the heading of 'Wellness' and not constitute the science and art of Animal Rehabilitation and/or Physical Therapy?

Primary Issue #2: What type of supervision is appropriate for those who perform AR?

Current regulations require that all Physical Therapy and Animal Rehabilitation either be performed by a veterinarian or under the *direct supervision* of a veterinarian (in the same building.)

There is pressure by some Physical Therapists to allow for AR via *indirect supervision*, and there are a number of animal 'massage therapists' who believe that there should be no supervision for their activities (i.e. that animal massage should not fall under any sort of regulation or constitute the practice of physical therapy, animal rehabilitation or veterinary medicine.)

- When it comes to indirect supervision (or no supervision), some of the concerns include:
 - Who inspects their facilities? – The VMB has authority over veterinary premises but doesn't have authority over physical therapists.
 - Who would hold the premise permit? – The PT Board executive officer

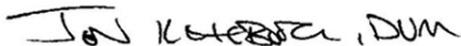
publicly stated at a recent VMB meeting that the VMB should retain all authority.

- Who would have the liability?
 - Who would ultimately be responsible if something happened to the animal?
 - If there is no veterinarian on site, what would the PT do if something went wrong?
- What would the curriculum look like for a PT to be qualified to open their own practice?
 - What would the veterinarian's role be in follow up assessment?
 - Would the PT/PR be required to follow a treatment protocol agreed to in advance with the DVM or change the plan as they want?
 - Currently there is no provision in the Practice Act for diagnosis by a non-veterinarian or to allow referral to non-veterinarians.
- Should there be different standards for Physical Therapists vs. Animal Rehabilitationists?
 - Currently, both PTs and ARs are considered unregistered assistants in California.
 - PTs are only licensed to care for humans. There is no provision in their practice act for PTs to provide animal care.
 - There is no current license for an "animal rehabilitationist".

Included in your packet is

- 1) the proposed language approved by the CVMA Board of Governors in 2006.
- 2) The California B&P Code that defines Physical Therapy and the scope of a Physical Therapist's practice.
- 3) The California Veterinary Medicine Practice Act language regarding Chiropractic in animals.
- 4) Nevada's "Animal Physical Therapy" language.
- 5) Examples of some Animal Physical Therapy Certification programs.
- 6) The APTA's position on Animal Rehabilitation

I look forward to working with you and having a productive day,



Jon Klingborg, DVM