

## Animal Rehabilitation: Statement of Current Law

In California, the overall procedure of animal physical rehabilitation is considered the practice of veterinary medicine. (Bus. & Prof. Code § 4826(c).) The practice of veterinary medicine may only be performed by a California licensed veterinarian. (Bus. & Prof. Code § 4825.) Anyone other than a California licensed veterinarian who wishes to perform such therapy on animals shall do so only under the supervision of a California licensed veterinarian who has established a valid, current veterinarian-client-patient relationship. (Bus. & Prof. Code § 4826(c).)

Under no circumstances may animal rehabilitation therapy be performed independent of a licensed California veterinarian.

Musculoskeletal manipulation (MSM) is an example of prior Board action to define the parameters under which a licensee in another profession may practice veterinarian medicine. MSM the system of application of mechanical forces applied manually through the hands or through any mechanical device to enhance physical performance, prevent, cure, or relieve impaired or altered function of related components of the musculoskeletal system of animals. MSM when performed upon animals constitutes the practice of veterinary medicine. (16 CCR § 2038(a).)

Although MSM performed upon animals constitutes the practice of veterinary medicine, it may be performed by a veterinarian or a chiropractor under specific conditions. For the chiropractor to perform MSM, there must be a supervising veterinarian working in consultation with the chiropractor and on the premises or in the general vicinity of the treatment. (16 CCR § 2038(b)(2)(A-C).)

The board may adopt regulations establishing animal health care tasks that may be performed by an unregistered assistant, a registered veterinary technician, or a licensed veterinarian. The board shall establish an appropriate degree of supervision by a registered veterinary technician or a licensed veterinarian over an unregistered assistant for any tasks established, and that degree of supervision shall be at least as high as is required for an RVT performing the task. (Bus. & Prof. Code § 4836(b).)