

Executive Officer's Report

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The mission of the Veterinary Medical Board is to protect consumers and animals through development and maintenance of professional standards, licensing of veterinarians, registered veterinary technicians, and registered veterinary premises and diligent enforcement of the California Veterinary Medicine Practice Act.

There is a lot happening at the Veterinary Medical Board (Board) these days with the transition to a new Governor and all the behind the scenes activities that are related to such a transition, e.g., changing all the letterhead to reflect the new Governor, counting cell phones (we have 4 phones and will give up 2 to meet the 50%), wrapping up projects from the last Board meeting and exploring possibilities for legislation for the coming year. It has been a busy time even through the holidays, but we managed to do a bit of celebrating in-between juggling the workload. So Happy New Year and Best Wishes for a Joy-Filled Year!

Veterinary Medical Board. The breaking news is that the outgoing Governor made three appointments at the end of December and we now have a full board for the first time in six years – Hallelujah! Our newest members on the Board are Richard Johnson, DVM, formerly on the MDC; Kim Williams, RVT, formerly on the RVTC, and Patti Aquiar, Public Member and new to the Board and the Committees. We welcome our newest members and are excited about what is happening in the coming year!

Unlicensed Activity. The issue of unlicensed activity is a major topic of discussion these days because of the impact on consumers and their animals. The DCA has focused over the last year on trying to streamline the enforcement process and on dedicating more energy on investigating unlicensed activity. This support from the DCA is important because traditionally, licensing boards were created to regulate activity in licensed professionals; therefore, there is more legal authority for taking disciplinary action against the members of a profession rather than taking action against persons who are not licensed by the board. The Veterinary Medical Board has seen a dramatic increase in unlicensed activity in veterinary medicine involving treatment of animals in areas of dentistry, chiropractic, physical therapy, etc. The reality is that it is difficult for the Board to prosecute such cases because of the low legal priority assigned to unlicensed activity. One of the things that the Board is considering this year is exploring ways to increase its authority over persons working on animals illegally so it can more effectively protect consumers against negligent, unlicensed persons who can harm their animals.

Registered Veterinary Technician Committee (RVTC). The RVTC has existed since 1976 and has served the registered veterinary technician (RVT) profession well over the last thirty-four (34) years. AB 1980, passed last year and effective on January 1, 2011, added an RVT as a voting member of the Veterinary Medical Board and, at the same time, sunsetted the separate RVT Committee and included an additional RVT on the Board's Multidisciplinary Committee. So the RVTC sunsets on June 30, 2011, and it is the end of one era and the beginning of another. Many people have worked very hard to create and promote the RVT profession and RVTs are now recognized as being fully vested members on the veterinary health care team. After the RVTC meeting in January, there will be two additional meetings, one in March and one in June to wrap up the tasks of the RVTC. The end of an era is always bittersweet in that it is sad to say goodbye, but very exciting to enter into the challenge of a new era. Congratulations to the current members of the RVTC for their dedication and hard work and thank you for all that has been accomplished on behalf of the profession and for consumers and their pets. Well done!

Multidisciplinary Committee (MDC). The MDC has been very active in working on the hospital inspection checklist and updating the minimum standards of practice. The documents are close to being final and are on the agenda for Board review at the January meeting. Way to go MDC! The next project that got started in November is working on new guidelines for the Board's Citation and Fine program.

Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA). The DCA has been conducting conference calls for Board Chair persons and Executive Officers on a monthly basis to keep the Boards in the loop of issues facing the DCA today and issues that effect how the Boards operate. A copy of the agenda for the January meeting is in the Board's binder for review. One of the recent events at the DCA is that its Office of Human Resources was audited by an outside firm and deficiencies found. In response to that audit, the DCA has formed a task force to develop recommendations for improvement. I volunteered for the task force and will be participating on a regular basis at meetings held at the DCA.

AAVSB. Dr. Tom Kendall and I attended the annual AAVSB Conference in Baltimore, MD, on September 15-19, 2010. There was a variety of topics including a panel discussion on enforcement issues and two presentations on the AVMA's Disaster Preparedness program. The request for a change in the bylaws to have designated public and RVT board members on the AAVSB Board of Governors was resubmitted with an amendment to allow flexibility of appointment for the times when no public or RVT member is nominated. The AAVSB Board will be considering it at their mid year meeting at the end of January. Dr. Kendall volunteered and was selected to serve on the AAVSB Finance Committee and on the committee that reviews continuing education proposals – the Registry of Approved Continuing Education (RACE). Thank you to Dr. Kendall for being willing to serve.

CVMA Meeting. Linda Starr and I are attending the meeting of the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) Board of Governors on Saturday, January 22, 2011, in Orange County. Discussion items include the license plate, the hospital inspection checklist, the minimum standards, and unlicensed, illegal veterinary practice activity in California.