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California Veterinary Medical Board
2005 Evergreen Street
Suite 2250
Sacramento, CA 95815-3831
ATTN: Susan Geranen-Executive Officer

Dear Veterinary Medical Board members,

Per my conversation with your Executive Officer Ms. Geranen, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to include an informational statement within your next newsletter to the licensed professionals you oversee.

This request is prompted by a very unfortunate experience I, my husband, and our dog Sally endured at the UC Davis Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (UCD VMTH). I am **now** quite aware that your Board is not legally authorized to provide oversight over this facility, and it is precisely that issue I would suggest you address.

This request is not intended to benefit us--in fact our experience with UCD VMTH is over. However, through our experience we ultimately became painfully aware that a consumer accessing services at UCD VMTH has no consumer protections and no recourse with respect to a bad outcome. Further, our referring hometown veterinarian was unaware of this circumstance, even though he is a graduate of UC Davis' veterinary program. As a licensed dentist here in California, I understand the importance of appropriate referrals for specialized care, and I can say from personal experience that a general care provider is judged by the quality of their referral. If a client/patient has a bad experience upon referral, this reflects badly upon the referring provider and can damage the relationship irreparably.

It is for these reasons I respectfully suggest your next newsletter inform licensed, practicing veterinarians under your purview of the following: when referring clients and their pets to UCD VMTH, they need to advise the client that the care they receive there will not be subject to the consumer protections they enjoy everywhere else in the state. Most important, I would suggest you outline for the veterinarian how this exemption is interpreted at UCD VMTH:

- UCD VMTH veterinarians caring for your pet do not have to be licensed in the State of California.
- UCD VMTH is not held to cost estimates they provide you—they can exceed those estimates without limit and without notice to you
- UCD VMTH is not bound by the provision of the *California Veterinary Medicine Practice Act* that describes the minimum standard of care that must be met by a veterinarian treating your pet.

- UCD VMTH can recommend a surgery or other invasive procedure and never tell you about the risks involved in the surgery/invasive procedure.
- UCD VMTH can recommend a treatment or procedure that does not provide a medical benefit to your pet.
- UCD VMTH is not required to follow the recordkeeping regulations that bind every other veterinarian in the State of California. UCD VMTH procedure routinely allows the alteration of records up to two weeks after a patient is discharged, or later if desired.

Executive Officer Geranen and I agree ultimately UCD VMTH should be obligated to reveal this information to the prospective client. Additionally, it would be a laudable goal for the Veterinary Medical Board to eventually exercise oversight over UCD VMTH. But until these goals can be reached, I think it is to the benefit of the consumer *and* the referring veterinarian to be fully apprised as to how business is conducted at UCD VMTH.

What is outlined above seems incredulous, but is taken directly from sworn testimony by UCD VMTH faculty and legal counsel. The transcripts of our proceeding have been made available to Executive Officer Susan Geranen. I want to emphasize that I have intentionally left out details of our experience because it is clear from the record this was not an isolated incident, but exemplary of the way business is routinely conducted at UCD VMTH to this day. I am quite willing to answer any questions you may have, or provide you any documents you may need to help you in your decision-making process.

Sincerely,

Suzanne M. Valente, D.D.S.

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