California Veterinary Medicine Timeline

1840s – 1880s
- 1848 Gold discovered at Sutter's Mill.
- 1850 California becomes a state.
- 1871 First graduate of a veterinary medical school arrives in California.
- 1875 First research program conducted at University of California (U.C.), Berkeley, College of Agriculture. Eventually, numerous animal diseases studied.
- 1886 First veterinarian arrives in Los Angeles.
- 1888 California Veterinary Medical Association founded and begins setting standards for practice in California.

1890s
- 1891 First graduated veterinarian opens practice, exclusively devoted to treating pets instead of livestock.
- 1893 Latting’s Bill signed to regulate practice of veterinary medicine, establishing the State Board of Veterinary Examiners (board) and the Practice Act.
- 1893 Board holds its first meeting. Twelve applicants who had not earned degrees, but had experience, were tested and only five passed.
- 1894 First California veterinary school opens: U.C. Veterinary College in San Francisco. Tuition is $100 per year.
- 1898 San Francisco Veterinary College founded.
- 1899 State Legislature appoints first state veterinarian to tackle Texas fever epidemic.

1900s
- 1900 U.C. Veterinary College closes due to lack of funds.
- 1903 California has 110 licensed veterinarians.
- 1903 Language added to the Practice Act allowing livestock owners to treat their own animals as long as they do not call themselves veterinarians.
- 1903 Sheep Scab Act passed.
- 1906 Fire after the Great San Francisco Earthquake destroys all records of licensed veterinarians. Licensees sign an affidavit stating the date they were licensed and pay a $1 fee to re-register.
- 1907 New Practice Act signed into law. It was then challenged as unconstitutional.
- 1907 The Practice Act establishes that a veterinarian could only lose his license because of three things: fraud, chronic inebriety, or a conviction for moral turpitude.
- 1908 First veterinary hospital opens: Berkeley Dog & Cat Hospital, a former horse stable that included a working blacksmith and is still open today (www.berkeleydogandcat.com).
- 1909 Law passed requiring sheep to be dipped (a liquid formulation of insecticide and fungicide, which shepherds and farmers use to protect their sheep from infestation against external parasites) by state veterinarian if owner refuses.

1910s
- 1917 Dr. Clara Lamplugh becomes first woman licensed to practice veterinary medicine in the state.
- 1917 Law passed requiring tuberculosis testing and examination for herds, and a system for grading milk.
- 1917 California’s first meat inspection program begins at slaughterhouses and for meat and meat by-products meant for human consumption.
- 1918 San Francisco Veterinary College closes.
- 1919 First veterinary pathologist appointed.

1920s
- 1924 Foot-and-mouth disease epidemic infects more than 300 herds statewide.

1930s – 1940s
- 1932 Newcastle disease (an acute, infectious viral fever affecting birds, especially poultry) destroys thousands of infected birds.
- 1936 New Practice Act signed into law. Ensures vacant, unexpired board positions filled within 60 days after an ex-governor failed to make appointments on the board and California could not make a quorum. This Practice Act has been updated over the years, but remains the definitive voice of veterinary medicine.
- 1938 Office visit charge was $2.50 and $2.50 per day for hospitalization.
- 1940 California finally wins fight against bovine tuberculos.
- 1942 Marine Corps veterinarian from California organizes first War Dog School for the Marines.
- 1948 License testing did not include a practical exam. Written exam done in Boonville followed by a personal interview.
- 1948 U.C. Davis School of Veterinary Medicine opens.

1950s – 1960s
- 1950 Newcastle disease infects thousands of unwanted pets to be abandoned, spaying and neutering promoted.
- 1952 First case of scrapie (a fatal, degenerative disease affecting the central nervous system of sheep and goats) diagnosed in California.
- 1953 Burns Act authorizes California Department of Public Health to provide for appropriate care of animals used by state for diagnostic, demonstration, and research.
- 1963 Veterinary hospital inspection program initiated.

1970s – 1980s
- 1971 Pet overpopulation causes thousands of unwanted pets to be abandoned, spaying and neutering promoted.
- 1972 Second two-year course of study for animal health technicians offered at Conners River College in Sacramento.
- 1972 Hog cholera (swine fever that is a contagious, often fatal, disease of pigs) eradicated.
- 1973 State begins licensing animal health technicians.

1990s – 2000s
- 1995 “Animal health technicians” name changed to “registered veterinary technician.”
- 1996 State Board of Examiners in Veterinary Medicine changes name to California Veterinary Medical Board (VMB).
- 2002 VMB begins requiring continuing education for veterinary licensees.
- 2009 VMB’s Multidisciplinary Advisory Committee established in statute to assist, advise, and make recommendations for the implementation of rules and regulations necessary to ensure proper administration of veterinary medicine.

2010s
- 2011 “Registered veterinary technician” established in statute as a protected title and begins requiring continuing education for registered veterinary technicians.
- 2012 Registered Veterinary Technician Committee sunset.
- 2016 Veterinary Assistant Controlled Substances Permit established to allow veterinary assistants to administer controlled substances.
- 2018 University Veterinary License established to license U.C. Davis and Western University veterinarians (who were previously exempt from licensure).
- 2018 VMB celebrates 125th anniversary.

Sources:
A Caring Profession: The Story of Veterinary Medicine in California, published by the California Veterinary Medical Association; California Veterinary Medical Board.