



UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2016 Resolution
120th Annual Meeting
October 13-19, 2016 ~ Greensboro, NC

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 1

APPROVED

SOURCE: USAHA/AAVLD COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT MATTER: Veterinary License Reciprocity in Emergencies

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Large-scale animal emergency disasters can occur during events such as hurricanes, floods, fires, and disease outbreaks. These events have often exhausted in-state resources requiring states to reach out to other states and national organizations to assist in response and recovery efforts. The veterinary community has organized itself sufficiently in recent years to respond to such requests for assistance. A limiting factor in fulfilling requests for assistance is the lack of a standardized means of addressing reciprocal licensure during emergencies. Inconsistencies in states' licensing board processes as well as refusal of some boards to recognize out-of-state licenses during emergencies has led to delays in providing assistance when critically needed.

Nationally, there are two professional and legal means for addressing this issue. First, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) is a congressionally ratified mutual aid compact that legally establishes a national system to facilitate the deployment of resources across state lines during an emergency or disaster. To date, all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the United States Virgin Islands are EMAC members. EMAC is state law; therefore, in most cases, a licensing board does not supersede state law. The state emergency management agencies (EMAs) within the EMAC Member States are responsible for the implementation of EMAC. Second, request of licensed veterinary professionals via non-EMAC processes such as Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) between state emergency management and recognized entities or organizations allows for specific requirements for deployment to be outlined in advance which streamlines the license reciprocity processes. These means are both effective and protective due to the national veterinary licensure examination and continuing education requirements in place to ensure continuity and standardization of the practice of veterinary medicine in the United States. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Model Veterinary Practice Act has a provision allowing for emergency licensing of out-of-state veterinarians. This language could be adapted for state use.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the American Association of Veterinary State Boards to develop and distribute to veterinary state boards a position statement supporting processes that enable veterinary medical personnel to operate under reciprocal veterinary medical licensure when emergency assistance is requested by their state and is in accordance with state emergency management laws, regulations, and guidelines.

TO: State Boards of Veterinary Medicine

FROM: The American Association of Veterinary State Boards

RE: Veterinary License Reciprocity in Disasters

The American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) has received a Resolution from the US Animal Health Association (USAHA) requesting us to issue a statement to our members in support of veterinary license reciprocity in disaster situations. Through USAHA, it has come to our attention that the process of enabling veterinarians to practice across state lines in response to a disaster is a concern for state veterinary licensing boards, veterinary responders, state emergency management officials, and state animal health officials. They shared that in recent disasters, inconsistencies in states' licensing board processes as well as refusal of some boards to recognize out-of-state licenses during emergencies have led to delays in providing critical assistance to animals and animal owners.

The USAHA is an organization of personnel from State and Federal governments, universities, industry, and other concerned groups that addresses issues of animal health and disease control, animal welfare, food safety and public health. It is a clearinghouse for new information and methods, which may be incorporated into laws, regulations, policy, and programs. It develops solutions of animal health-related issues based on science, new information and methods, public policy, risk/benefit analysis and the ability to develop a consensus for changing laws, regulations, policies, and programs. The mission of USAHA is to develop and promote sound animal health solutions for public good. Since 1897, USAHA science-based committees have deliberated each year regarding current issues to create "Resolutions" which are recommendations aimed at solving critical animal and public health problems.

AAVSB received the Resolution about license reciprocity in disasters from the USAHA Committee on Animal Emergency Management (CAEM). It includes the language excerpted below where CAEM describes two "professional and legal means" which they believe support, along with national veterinary licensure examination and continuing education requirements in each state, the concept that effective protections are already in place to allow consideration for states to develop processes to allow temporary licensure for invited veterinary professionals.

First, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) is a congressionally ratified mutual aid compact that legally establishes a national system to facilitate the deployment of resources across state lines during an emergency or disaster. To date, all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are EMAC members. EMAC is state law; therefore, in most cases, a licensing board does not supersede state law. The state emergency management agencies (EMAs) within the EMAC Member States are responsible for the implementation of EMAC. Second, request of licensed veterinary professionals via non-EMAC processes such as Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) between state emergency management and recognized entities or organizations allows for specific requirements for deployment to be outlined in advance which streamlines the license reciprocity processes."

It may also be noted that the AVMA Model Veterinary Practice Act has a provision allowing for emergency licensing of out of state veterinarians. The language is found in Section 6 paragraph 15:

15. A veterinarian licensed or a veterinary technician credentialed in another state may practice in the State during an emergency or natural disaster within the scope and location of assigned veterinary medical duties of the response efforts without written examination or other qualification if:
 1. an official declaration of the disaster or emergency has been made by the Governor or the delegated State official; and

2. an official invitation has been extended to the veterinarian or veterinary technician for a specified time by the authority that has jurisdiction for coordinating the animal/agricultural issues in the State during emergencies either within or outside the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

While the AAVSB is not in a position to comply with state law requirements, it is understood that many state veterinary boards may be compelled to do so. Therefore, we have decided to support the recommendation of the USAHA CAEM and we encourage state boards of veterinary medicine to identify stakeholder groups in your states to identify mutually-beneficial processes for enabling the practice of veterinary medical personnel by reciprocity as requested.

This encouragement is made with the understanding that veterinary professionals licensed in other states who are seeking temporary licensure to practice in a disaster-affected state have been invited by state animal officials to assist for disaster response purposes only and are working within the outline of the law and the state's veterinary practice act. The AAVSB does not support self-deployment of veterinarians into disaster situations.