

**SCBVME STATEMENT ON INSPECTIONS
OF
VETERINARY SERVICES and FACILITIES IN
CONNECTION WITH ANIMAL SHELTERS**

Recent discussions with the SC Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, the veterinary community, and the public have revealed that significant misunderstanding exists over the Veterinary Board's authority in the area of animal shelters.

The **South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 40-69-70 (11)** authorizes the South Carolina Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners to establish and enforce standards for ALL facilities in which veterinary medicine is practiced, whether private practice or shelters. In addition, **Chapter 120 of Regulations** governing the Practice of Veterinary Medicine clearly defines the responsibilities of veterinarians providing services to animals, regardless of whether those animals are privately owned or being cared for by an animal shelter. The only difference in responsibilities for veterinarians treating animals in shelters is that shelter veterinarians are not required to keep the same records, as otherwise required.

SCBVME/LLR **DOES** have authority over the veterinary services provided by any licensee, and that authority includes the manner and the facilities in which those services are performed. Veterinarians practicing Veterinary Medicine in conjunction with a shelter are included in this authority. SCBVME directs that facility inspections of shelters in which licensed veterinarians are performing veterinary services be included in their periodic inspection schedule.

The SCBVME does **NOT** regulate shelter owners; however, this does not interfere with its regulation of licensees practicing in shelter situations.

From an administrative and regulatory standpoint, this position is consistent with current statutes and regulations; and it requires no legislative action. Implementation will add additional facilities on the periodic inspection schedule.

On a practical basis, the requirements for all veterinary facilities are so basic and important that they pose no undue burden on shelters or the veterinarians who practice there. Proper storage of drugs and controlled substances, proper HVAC, sanitation, and waste disposal, appropriate exam and surgery area requirements, proper anesthesia methods, and the very basic laboratory capability requirements are essential to protecting the public.

Any veterinarian practicing in a public or private facility is ultimately responsible for doing so in an appropriate manner.