

POSITION STATEMENT
TENNESSEE BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS

RELEASE OF PRESCRIPTIONS UPON CLIENT REQUEST

The Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners hereby adopts the following position statement:

1. Drug therapy, when medically indicated, should be initiated by the attending veterinarian in the context of veterinarian-client-patient relationship. Clients that wish to purchase their prescription drugs from a pharmacy rather than their veterinarian should be advised to first obtain a prescription from their veterinarian before contacting a pharmacy. The veterinarian may choose to either issue the prescription in writing for the client, or contact the pharmacy electronically or by phone.
2. It is a violation of Rule 1730-01-.13 for a veterinarian to refuse to honor a client's request to prescribe, rather than dispense, a drug (AVMA Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics). The client has the option of filling a prescription at any pharmacy.
3. One factor in evaluating the quality of an Internet pharmacy is accreditation by a recognized organization such as the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP). The NABP has developed the Vet-VIPPS program to ensure that Internet pharmacies that sell veterinary drugs are properly licensed and meet other program requirements. Further information is available at www.nabp.net.
4. Veterinarians asked by pharmacies to approve prescriptions they have not initiated should do so only if the prescription is appropriate and a veterinarian-client-patient relationship exists.
5. It is within the veterinarian's (not the pharmacy's) purview to determine the medical criteria whereby a drug is indicated.
6. As with any prescription, a written record should be maintained.
7. Prescribing veterinarians should ensure that information regarding the proper use and dosage of the prescribed drug and the risks associated with its use are communicated to the client, regardless of the drug source.
8. If a client asks about obtaining drugs from a foreign country through an Internet source, the client should be aware that the importation of drugs not approved by the FDA—including foreign-made versions of U.S. approved drugs—is illegal.
9. It is not unethical for a veterinarian to charge a reasonable professional fee for a prescription.

Adopted by the Tennessee Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners on December 9, 2014.