



RI Department of Health
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TTY: 771
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April 24, 2025

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr., Chair
House Committee on Corporations
State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 5555 – An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions – Veterinary Practice

Dear Chair Solomon:

Please accept this letter of conceptual support regarding H 5555, legislation that would authorize a veterinarian to establish a client-patient relationship in Rhode Island through electronic means, subject to certain limitations and requirements such as by first establishing a veterinarian client-patient relationship in-person and making a good faith effort to determine whether care should be provided through telemedicine instead of in-person. The act would also provide that the veterinarian shall be licensed in Rhode Island, obtain client consent to establish the veterinarian client-patient relationship through electronic means, and maintain such documentation for at least one year.

The proposed legislation would codify telemedicine for veterinarians in Rhode Island, which may increase access at a time where there is a veterinary shortage, and it may even result in some reduced prices for veterinary care. The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) recognizes, however, that telemedicine is not the same as an in-person examination or consultation and supports that the bill requires the initial establishment of a veterinary client-patient relationship, and then only allows for subsequent telemedicine care. H 5555 requires services provided through veterinary telemedicine to be subject to the State's laws and regulations governing the veterinary provider's scope of practice.

RIDOH supports the proposed legislation with assurances through regulations promulgated by RIDOH that the same rules will apply to veterinarians prescribing controlled substances via telemedicine as they do for physicians with human patients.

I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerome M. Larkin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jerome M. Larkin, MD
Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Corporations
The Honorable Jon D. Brien
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel
Lyne Urbani, Director of House Policy
