



## Alabama State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners

### **Information on ASBVME's Response to COVID-19**

In the wake of the Governor's Emergency Declaration, the ASBVME will be following all directives and guidance in which Governor Ivey has issued related to COVID-19, including those related to travel and public gatherings. We want to make you aware of what steps the Alabama State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners is taking to keep our staff as well as our licensees as safe as possible.

As of March 23, 2020:

- The ASBVME will be postponing all veterinary hospital inspections until further notice.
- The ASBVME will also be working with the bare minimum of staff at the ASBVME Office.
- We also understand that due to cancellation of conferences and meetings, the requisite number of hours may be difficult to obtain. As you know, ten (10) hours of race approved continuing education credits may be earned by veterinarians and eight (8) hours for licensed veterinary technicians online. The ASBVME encourages you to obtain this online continuing education during this time of the COVID-19 national emergency. As of now the continuing education requirements for all license renewals remain in effect.

US Department of Homeland Security's Cyber-Security and Infrastructure Security Agency has deemed that veterinary facilities **are essential**.

The ASBVME is actively monitoring the effects of the recent COVID-19 outbreak. The Board is dedicated to fulfilling its primary mission of protecting the public during this time, while continuing to ensure that Alabama has the veterinary care workforce it needs to treat and care for animals throughout the state. In addition, to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus and based on the latest recommendations from the Alabama Department of Health, the ASBVME has moved to remote operations. Our office will be closed to the public, and we will not be offering in-person scheduled or walk-in appointments. Our staff will work diligently to ensure that operation of the agency continues uninterrupted during this period of remote operation. You may contact the board office at 334-395-5112 with any questions.

As part of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's ongoing commitment to combatting the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and providing flexibility across FDA-regulated industries, the agency announced today that it intends to temporarily suspend enforcement of certain requirements in order to allow veterinarians to better utilize telemedicine to address animal health needs during the pandemic. The agency intends to temporarily suspend enforcement of portions of the federal veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) requirements relevant to certain FDA regulations.

**[Please read the entire press release from the FDA here](#)**

The Board recognizes that during this state of emergency telehealth technologies, in lieu of hands-on medical care, may be useful in some situations where a VCPR has already been established. The Veterinarian must employ sound professional judgment to determine whether using Telehealth is suitable each time veterinary services are provided and only furnish medical advice or treatment via Telemedicine when it is medically appropriate.

The Veterinarian must conduct all appropriate evaluations and history of the patient consistent with traditional standards of care for the particular patient presented.

Evidence of the permission by the Client to use telehealth technologies must be maintained in the medical record. Medical records must contain sufficient information for continued veterinary medical care

For your safety and that of our staff, the ASBVME Board and executive leadership will continually assess the COVID-19 situation before determining when to reopen the agency to the public and resume normal daily activities.

The COVID-19 situation continues to evolve rapidly, and we encourage our licensees to use their best judgment for unique circumstances that arise during these times of quarantine and resource conservation. We encourage our members to stay up to date on the latest news about the virus and necessary safety precautions by visiting trusted information sources some which are listed below.

Veterinary COVID-19 Resources

AVMA

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19VMA>

Alabama Department of Public Health

<http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases/2019-coronavirus.html>

Centers for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

World Health Organization

<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

WSAVA

[https://wsava.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19\\_WSAVA-Advisory-Document-Mar-19-2020.pdf](https://wsava.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19_WSAVA-Advisory-Document-Mar-19-2020.pdf)

[Step-by-step COVID-19 protocol for receiving patients in a small-animal veterinary hospital](#)

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Stay safe!

Dr. Thomas C. Branch, President

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