

## IDAHO BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

Policy Number: **2018-2**

Policy Name: **TELEMEDICINE**

Adoption Date: June 8, 2018

Revision Date:

Purpose: To create a Telemedicine statement from the Board.

Policy: Definitions:

1. Client means an entity, person, group or corporation that has entered into an agreement with a Veterinarian for the purposes of obtaining veterinary medical services.
2. Consultation means when a Veterinarian receives advice or assistance in person, telephonically, electronically, or by any other method of communication, from a veterinarian or other person whose expertise, in the opinion of the Veterinarian, would benefit an Animal. Under any circumstance, the responsibility for the welfare of the Animal remains with the Veterinarian receiving consultation.
3. Informed consent means the veterinarian has informed the client or the clients authorized representative, in a manner understood by the client or representative, of the diagnostic and treatment options, risk assessment, prognosis, and the client has consented to the recommended treatment.
4. Telehealth is the overarching term that encompasses all uses of technology geared to remotely deliver health information or education.
5. Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) exists when both the veterinarian and client agree for the veterinarian to assume responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of the patient(s).

Guidelines:

A veterinarian or veterinary Technician must be licensed, or under the jurisdiction, of the Board of Veterinary Medicine in the state or province where the patient is located. The practice of veterinary medicine occurs where the patient(s) or client is located at the time Telehealth is

used. Veterinarians who treat through online service sites are practicing veterinary medicine and must possess appropriate licensure in all jurisdictions where patients receive care. Should a veterinary technician be utilized in the delivery of animal care, the veterinarian and veterinary technician must possess appropriate licensure in the jurisdiction where the patient(s) is receiving care.

The veterinarian must employ sound profession judgment to determine whether using Telehealth is appropriate in particular circumstances each and every time animal care is provided and only provide medical advice or treatment via Telehealth to the extent that it is possible without a hands on examination. A veterinarian using Telehealth must take appropriate steps to obtain Informed Consent, establish the VCPR and conduct all appropriate evaluations and history of the patient consistent with traditional standards of care for the particular patient presentation. As such, some situations and patient presentations are appropriate for the utilization of Telehealth as a component of, or in lieu of, hands on medical care, while others are not.

The veterinarian must ensure that he or she safeguards a client's privacy when practicing via Telehealth by taking appropriate precautions and confirming that the technology and physical setting being used by the veterinarian and the client have adequate security protocols in place to ensure compliance with the Veterinarian's legal and professional obligations to protect clients' privacy and confidentiality.

Evidence documenting appropriate consent for the use of Telehealth must be obtained and maintained. The veterinarian must ensure that the client is aware of the Veterinarian's identity, location, licensure state or province, number and status, and the privacy and security issues involved in accessing veterinary care via Telehealth.

Appropriate medical records must be maintained in a secure and confidential manner. The medical record should include, but not be limited to, if applicable, copies of all patient related electronic communications, including prescriptions, laboratory and test results, imaging, evaluations and consultations, and instructions obtained or produced in connection with the utilization of Telehealth. Informed Consents obtained in connection with an encounter involving Telehealth should also be filed in the medical record.

In order to prescribe medication when practicing via Telehealth, the veterinarian must have sufficient knowledge of the animal or group of animals by virtue of a history and inquiry and either physical examination or medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal or group of animals is kept. Prescribing medications, in-person or via Telehealth, is at the professional discretion of the veterinarian. The indication, appropriateness, and safety considerations for each Telehealth visit prescription must be evaluated by the veterinarian in accordance with current laws and standards of care and consequently carry the same professional accountability as prescriptions delivered during an encounter in person.