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Montana Veterinary Medical Association voices strong opposition to proposed mid-level veterinary practitioner position

In light of Colorado creating a new midlevel veterinary practitioner (MLP) position last year, the Montana Veterinary Medical Association is calling such a position both unneeded and dangerous.

The MVMA joins the more than 100 national and local organizations who recognize the risks of having non-veterinarians perform veterinary tasks like diagnosing, treating, prescribing, and performing surgery—tasks that require a veterinarian’s unique and thorough training and skills.

MVMA President Dr. Barr Gustafson, a veterinarian from Glacier County, expressed concerns for patient safety while supporting licensed veterinary technicians who are a key component of veterinary clinics throughout Montana.

“Veterinary technicians already fill a key role in patient care, while diagnosing and surgery is appropriately left to veterinarians who have received advanced medical education,” said Dr. Gustafson. “We are concerned that individuals who receive rudimentary training such as the proposed mid-level veterinary practitioner would compromise standards of care while doing nothing to address the workforce shortages in rural Montana.”

At its recent Summer Meeting, the MVMA adopted the following position statement to shed light on the dangers of establishing a mid-level veterinary practitioner:

“The Montana Veterinary Medical Association strongly opposes the creation of a mid-level veterinary practitioner as a new professional, as there are more efficient and sustainable solutions to addressing veterinary workforce shortages without compromising standards of care.

“Therefore, MVMA opposes legislative initiatives that would authorize a midlevel position or other non-veterinarian to diagnose, prognose, develop treatment plans, prescribe, and/or perform surgery, as such legislation poses a significant risk to the health and safety of animal health and welfare, food safety, and public health. Veterinary healthcare is enhanced through appropriate delegation of tasks and responsibilities by a licensed veterinarian, ensuring both high-quality care and efficient utilization of each member of the team.”

MVMA will continue to work with the American Veterinary Medical Association and state and local veterinary organizations to ensure safe and innovative care of both pets and food animals. MVMA will continue to advocate that all veterinary professionals meet rigorous standards.

MVMA's mission is to advance the science and art of veterinary medicine, including its relationship to public health and agriculture in the state of Montana. The Association represents nearly 600 small, large, and exotic animal veterinarians across Montana.

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