



Board of Veterinary Examiners

Alaska Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing
July 9, 2025 9:00 AM AKST via Zoom

These minutes have not yet been viewed or approved by the board

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM.

Members Absent: Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

Staff Present: Tami Bowman, Occupational Licensing Examiner II; Keri Mell, Occupational Licensing Examiner III, Rachel Billiet, Program Coordinator I; Reid Bowman, Program Coordinator II; Glenn Saviers, Deputy Director; Greg Gober, Investigator 3; Stephanie Davis Regulations Specialist 2.

Members Absent: Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

Call to Order

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM.

Members Absent: Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 AM by Chair Dr. Gerlach and a quorum was established; he then read the board's mission statement onto the record. When asked if any board members had any conflicts of interest to declare, none were heard.

Review and Approve Agenda

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the agenda as written.

Motion moved by Dr. Albert and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

Investigations

Investigative Report

Investigator Greg Gober presented the investigative report for the period April 23rd, 2025, through July 8th, 2025. He explained that there are 34 open cases and one closed. Many open cases have been ongoing for a while, and he hopes to work through the backlog and have several more closed by the next meeting. Board members should expect to hear from Mr. Gober for conflict checks as he brings these cases to reviewable status.

After inquiry from the board, he further explained that it is the result of staff changes, not the hiring freeze implemented under Emergency Administrative Order 358 (AO 358) that has caused a lull in cases being sent to board members for review. The board's long-term investigator left and now Mr. Gober is working to find all documents and missing information to get the backlogged cases in order.

Consent Agreements

Since Paralegal Kim Lilly was unable to attend the meeting, Program Coordinator Rachel Billiet presented the following consent agreements to the board.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE that the Alaska State Board of Veterinary Examiners enter into executive session in accordance with AS 44.62.310(c), and Alaska Constitutional Right to Privacy Provisions, for the purpose of discussing subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion. I request that the chair allow board staff to remain during the session.

Motion moved by Dr. Geiger and motion seconded by Dr. Albert. The motion passed unanimously.

The board entered executive session at 9:12 am and returned on the record at 9:23 am. A quorum was maintained.

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM.

Members Absent : Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

Consent Agreement - L.W.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the consent agreement for case number 2025-0000509.

Motion moved by Dr Johnson and motion seconded by Dr. Albert. The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agreement - J.G.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the consent agreement for case number 2025-0000503.

Motion moved by Dr. Albert and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agreement - S.W.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the consent agreement for case number 2025-000505.

Motion moved by Dr. Johnson and motion seconded by Dr. Albert. The motion passed unanimously.

Division Update

Licensing Report- Examiner Update

Licensing Examiner Keri Mell provided her licensing report. She informed the board that the fiscal year 2025 was equivalent to fiscal year 2024 except for a decrease in student permits and an increase in temporary permits. Since it was a renewal year random audits per department policy were performed. There were 38 veterinarians and 22 veterinary technicians that were audited, and all but one responded. Five licensees were sent to paralegal for not have completed all there CE's. Ms. Mell gave active license numbers through the last 5 years that showed active licenses are increasing. The board wanted to know about 2024 late renewals since they recently have been seeing a lot of late renewal CE exemption requests, and Ms. Mell did not have that number off hand.

Regulations

The meeting was ahead of schedule, so Ms. Billiet shared with the board additional guidance from Director Robb regarding AO 358. The board has already been informed that the AO puts a hold on travel, regulations projects, and implements a hiring freeze, but the updated guidance says that state employees will not be working on regulation projects at all. Since board members are not employees of the state, they are welcome to work on regulation projects, but a lot of that work is done with the support of department staff. For staff to participate in most regulation-related work, they will require a waiver, but in the meantime, staff can keep track of regulations that need to be worked on at a later date and answer questions from the board. She further explained that today's agenda originally had a space for discussion of the Veterinary-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR) regulation project because Ms. Davis found there were a number of questions that the previously regulation specialist Alison Osborne hadn't covered or could not find documentation of, but due to this guidance, this would fall under drafting regulations which is not allowed, and it had to be pulled from the agenda. Ms. Billiet does not know the procedure for requesting a waiver and knows waivers are hard to come by with this order but can work with superiors if the board requests a waiver to make any progress with VCPR. Dr. Geiger would like a waiver for VCPR because this was drug on, and it was a mistake that was out of the board's hands. The board stressed the importance of being able to make progress with this project, not only to improve the regulation but to correct the mistakes that left the board in this state.

Motions:

RESOLVED to APPROVE staff beginning the process of requesting a waiver to allow the board to continue working on and advancing VCPR regulations.

Motion moved by Dr. Geiger and seconded by Dr. Albert. The motion passed unanimously.

The board asked Ms. Billiet how a waiver can be obtained and what questions were still lingering for the VCPR project. She informed the board that the questions were from LAW and that Ms. Davis couldn't find a record of Ms. Osborne going over them previously, and that she will need to work with her supervisor to find out what the procedure is to request a waiver and will be in touch with Dr. Gerlach once she has more information. The length of the freeze is unknown, but staff are working under the assumption that it will remain in place at least until the governor's term is up.

12 AAC 68.230 (Presenters: Stefanie Davis)

Regulations Specialist Stephanie Davis presented the regulation project proposing amendments to regulation 12 AAC 68.230. She informed the board that the project was approved by law and went out to public notice which closed at 4:30 pm on May 16, 2025, with no public comments received. The board has already reviewed and approved these regulations and had no questions for Ms. Davis.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE adopting the proposed amendments to regulation 12 AAC 68.230, relating to approved medical and non-medical subject areas for the purposes of continuing education for licensees, in their entirety as proposed and publicly noticed.

Motion moved by Dr. Albert and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

Rachel will get the certification order to Dr. Gerlach by Monday, July 13th, and then send the completed order to Ms. Davis.

12 AAC 68.910, 12 AAC 68.080, 12 AAC 68.140

Dr. Albert presented the updated proposed changes to 12AAC 68.910, 12 AAC 68.080, and 12 AAC 68.140 that she and Dr. Vollaro have been working on in collaboration with the board via reviews at board meetings. Since the last meeting, Dr. Albert stated that very little has changed with the draft outside of formatting changes done with the assistance of Licensing Examiner Tami Bowman. There was a change to e.g. instead of i.e. to ensure the intent of the language in the regulation is maintained, and it was ultimately decided not to change the herd health definition, all of which the board was agreeable to. Dr. Gerlach did ask about why there is an exception written in for livestock under the treatment of patients section. The section states that before providing medical service that clients are provided with an estimate of cost for veterinarian services, except in the case of livestock, and Dr. Albert explained that this is more realistic in an office setting, but when you go out to a herd or dog kennel you may not know exactly what is going to be involved prior to the treatment. She stated that this was written in accordance with guidance from the AAVSB.

She added that due to some recent guidance on Artificial Intelligence (AI) from the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB), which she is slated to talk to the board about later in the meeting, they will need to further amend the regulations to include a section on written consent

The board meeting is running early so Dr. Gerlach agreed to move to the AI topic introduction from Dr. Albert now as it relates to our current discussion.

Board Administrative Business

AI and Veterinary Medicine - Introduction of Topic Only (Presenters: Denise Albert)

Dr. Albert presented on AI in veterinary medicine and the findings of a committee created by the AAVSB to investigate the use of it. At the College of Veterinary Medicine meeting she virtually attended, the committee discussed aspects of AI and presented what to expect when dealing with the liabilities of the blossoming AI culture. They determined that liability will be on the individual veterinarian that is using the AI, any aspect of it. Dr. Albert also reported that of the 4 days allotted for the meeting, attendees had a full day of panels and discussed where AI is it now. There is concern that numerous companies are producing products (software) for veterinary professionals and there isn't currently any regulation in veterinary medicine to not allow it. Professionals are reportedly using AI for medical dictation, diagnostics, and even reading radiographs. The importance of the necessity of veterinarians to use AI as a complementary method and to not rely on it as the only answer to things like radiology, laboratory interpretations, or cytology, was stressed.

Board members were surprised by the widespread use of AI and concerned about the lack of safeguards in place, agreeing that they should work on their own regulations to address the issue. They recognize that there is a potential for AI to improve efficiency in veterinary medicine, but it needs to be used as a secondary or complementary tool, not relied on without human interpretation, and full consent from patients is a must. Dr. Albert and Dr. Vollaro will edit the current draft to include AI to present to the board at their next meeting for review.

12 AAC 68.310(b)(4)(A)

At the April 23rd meeting the board discussed adding language to 12 AAC 68.310(b)(4)(A) that might allow students, specifically the students of the current UAA cohort, to qualify for a license. Drafted by Dr. Vollaro and presented by Ms. Billiet, is a regulation change to add one sentence that says "or another certification process approved by the board" to the existing regulation. There was some confusion by the board about being vague or specific about statutes and regulation language. Mr. Bowman joined the conversation stating you want to keep statutes very general, but regulations should clarify statutes and if it is intentionally muddy it doesn't clarify the requirements for potential applicants. It is not so much the language in regulation that is the problem specifically as is what the board would be looking at to certify these "other programs". There needs to be some transparency in the application process for what the board will expect so it is not a case-by-case approval. Ms. Davis agrees that

the board would need to spell out the parameters that they would be using for approval and that there needs to be a level of equivalency throughout everything. If the board wants to pursue a regulation change that includes this, there will have to be further discussion and creation of what that other certification process is, such as how a licensee can pursue it.

Some board members agreed that a process of some sort does need to be created, but that they weren't immediately sure of what that process would look like. It was suggested that "another training certification process" might work for language to add specificity, but Mr. Bowman reiterated that it is not the exact language, that is the issue, but the contents of what the approval process is; what exactly would the board be looking for to approve another program. The board then suggested "another equivalent certification process" (i.e. equivalent to AVMA or CVMA accredited programs) and it was agreed that using equivalency has some standard of a benchmark to look at and generally there is no way to be the same as the AVMA.

Dr. Geiger stated that with another certification process by the board we would not be authorizing one individual to come forward with an alternative plan and then authorizing another individual with a different alternative plan. If Ireland has some process that they went through to certify a veterinary technician, the board in the future might find that process as equivalent and the way the wording is right now it is vague enough that we are leaving it to the discretion of the future board, but by using the word "process" we are not opening up approval to every individual who thinks they have the equivalent training. As long as the word "process" is there the future board has the flexibility it needs to make the process approvable, if the process is appropriate. Using the word equivalent would also serve the same purpose. Mr. Bowman stated that this is a great point, but this still doesn't solve the UAA issue. The concern was that UAA students don't have the pathway because the school hasn't been accredited yet. Dr. Geiger states there we have a group of individuals who have undergone a process, and he would like to leave it to a future board to judge that process, because the board of experts in this state would judge if that process should be approved. Ms. Billiet asked whether the board wanted to move on and revisit the topic in October due to today's time constraints or continue discussion today. Given the regulation freeze the board can't pursue any sort of regulation project now but can work on language or keep discussing. The chair determined that the topic should be tabled for further discussion in October.

Break

The board went off the record at 10:23 am and returned at 10:34 am.

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM.

Members Absent : Ciara Vollaro, DVM

Review Euthanasia Questions

Ms. Bowman presented the responses to the questionnaire sent to all agencies in Alaska that hold active permits to administer euthanasia drugs to domestic animals. The questionnaire was sent with the intent of learning about the permit holder's practice of euthanasia by injection, so that the board may give regulation recommendations to the division. Seven of the fifteen active agencies queried provided responses, and while the responses to the questions were mostly positive, the agencies wanted to know how the Board of Veterinary Examiners might be able to get involved in better regulating them. In reviewing the responses, the board was impressed by how many trained and certified techs there were, despite the recent feedback that training for certification was inaccessible. Responses revealed that a few technicians in Kenai were certified through the University of Florida program, which the board finds both reputable and accessible, so they believe certification isn't something that is difficult to obtain. In addition to this, the department also had two individuals reach out to let us know they are certified euthanasia trainers, furthering accessibility. Respondants also asked whether licensed veterinary technicians, especially those that have been in practice for many years, should be required to go through additional certification to administer euthanasia as they have already received extensive training to obtain their license, but Dr. Albert stated that technicians do not have enough training in administering IV's, the drugs being used, etc., and believe that additional training in euthanasia is a must. Ms. Bowman stated that Deputy Director Saviers is eager to get some guidance on how to make this program better going forward, and the board was advised by Ms. Billiet that the Euthanasia program has only statutes with no regulations, and are completely separate from the veterinary program, so if the board wanted to take any actions it would be statutory first and then likely involve regulations second, so we would be looking at next legislative session if this is something the board wants to pursue. The board had prior discussions of whether the board needed to get involved to expand the statutes and create regulations to specify what "other drugs" referenced can be used by permit holders, if any, as the statute states that there are "other drugs" defined in regulation, but no such regulation exists. Moving forward with responses of the questions, Ms. Billiet will compile past conversations from board minutes as a refresher on what the board has considered for the program, and then send out a compilation document to the board post meeting. Members will be able to use this for review before revisiting this topic at the October meeting to discuss how they may like to proceed and what guidance they can provide the division to better oversee euthanasia technicians.

At the conclusion of this agenda item, Ms. Bowman announced that this would be her final meeting with the board. The board thanked her for her years of hardwork and wished her well.

Statute Changes 2026

The board reviewed the Sponsorship Request Letter drafted to support pursuing statute changes identified by the board. Division staff edited the original draft from Dr. Gerlach and Dr. Albert to clean up some language and remove one unneeded section, but otherwise didn't change the content of the letter. No additional edits were heard from board members, but the board agrees that the letter may need editing if need for additional statute changes happens between now and next legislative session.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the request for legislative sponsorship letter subject to future revisions.

Motion moved by Dr. Geiger and motion seconded by Dr. Albert. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting is ahead of schedule so the chair would like to move on to the correspondence agenda items.

Correspondence

Courtesy License

Licensing staff have been receiving questions regarding the scope of practice for courtesy license holders and the definition of a "special event" under 12 AAC 68.041(f). As there is a Christian Veterinarian Mission going out to Hoonah to provide general veterinary services to the community, and the applicants are struggling to identify where their services fit into the courtesy license requirements. The issue is the regulations defines a special event which is a sporting event or emergency situation recognized by the board, specialty clinic, a spay and neuter clinic, or a job interview. As it is currently defined, applicants that list their purpose on the courtesy license as a spay and neuter clinic would be limited to spay and neuters and not be able to provide any sick call or medical services in the community they are in. It was stated that this is like the recommendation the board made to the Iditarod race organizers last year because the description they were using stated that the veterinarians would be working on sled dogs only, and to change it because in the race communities the vets are seeing community animals brought to them. If the board clears up the intent of the definition in regulation that should clear up the issue for staff. Where staff has been getting stuck is the

description of the courtesy license it says it does not authorize a licensee to conduct general veterinary practice. The board agrees that the interpretation of regulations about courtesy licenses is that they can do more than spay and neuter, they can do veterinary care during the event time period but cannot advertise as a general veterinary practice and it is not a matter of regulation change needed.

Active Practice and Teaching

Licensing staff were recently contacted by a veterinarian hoping to use teaching hours to meet one of the requirements for licensure by credentials under 08.98.184 which states that an applicant must have been engaged in the active practice of veterinary medicine for at least five of the seven years before filing the application. Staff believe that the practice of veterinary medicine as defined under 08.98.250(6) may allow teaching to count as active practice but are asking the board for their interpretation of the intent of the law.

Dr. Geiger stated that a similar issue came to the board early on in his tenure with the board, and that he recalls it was decided that if the individual did not have a veterinary license in any state or jurisdiction while teaching, the teaching hours could not qualify as active practice. The board agreed today that an individual needs to have a veterinary license or an academic veterinary license and be teaching veterinary medicine, not just courses at a veterinary college, to claim teaching hours as active practice. Staff thought the veterinarian that reached out may have indicated he held an academic license at one point but were unable to find evidence of this during the meeting. Dr. Albert gave a refresher on the information she provided to the board at the April 2025 meeting regarding her research into other states' laws and whether they have similar requirements for licensure, which she found they did.

Ms. Billiet informed the board that the individual who has been teaching did reach out to the International Council for Veterinary Assessment (ICVA) and arrange to retake the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) given the possibility that he may not meet the requirements for licensure by credentials, and that she had to provide the ICVA with the statutory reason for requiring someone to retake the examination as it is not best practice under the ICVA standards. She explained that the ICVA suggested that a candidate should not retake a licensing examination once they have passed, as permitting candidates to do so raises concerns about whether the test score can be used to draw a valid inference of the candidates' knowledge and may cause threats to the exam security. The ICVA accepted Ms. Billiet's explanation as to why this individual will

need to retake the examination and are allowing the retake, but she wanted the board to have the information.

HB 70 EMS/Veterinary Advisory Panel

Following the passage of House Bill 70 (HB 70), Brian Webb created an advisory panel in hopes of collaborating with Veterinary and EMS professionals during the bills implementation process. He is aiming to have the panel meet online for 1-2 hours a month and has asked for a member of the board to join the panel. The board agrees that they should have a member on the panel, as they have several items they want to discuss before the bill goes into effect, such as continuing education requirements, client patient confidentiality, consent forms, quality assessment insurance and oversight for significant events, and time frame of training. The board was unable to select a member for the panel during discussion due to scheduling conflicts, but the topic will be revisited at the end of the meeting before adjourning.

Application Reviews

Ms. Billiet explained the continuing education (CE) exemption request process needs to be changed. As staff recently received guidance from investigations that they should not be reinstating licenses while CE exemption requests are in process as it removes incentive for licensees to comply with any discipline should their exemption not be granted. Moving forward, if an exemption receives a no vote in OnBoard it automatically fails and goes straight to investigations instead of being tabled for discussion at the next board meeting. Sending the failed exemption to investigations at this stage expedites the process of reinstating the licensing instead of making the licensee wait until a meeting which may not take place for several months.

Veterinarian renewal- J.L Failure to complete CE's

Ms. Mell explained this license is still in lapsed status as the renewal was received after staff received the above guidance. The licensee filled out the renewal application attested that her CE's were done after Dec. 31, 2024 but before time of her submitted renewal application and staff confirmed this. Later in the meeting, the licensee joined and was brought in to address the board at 12:48 pm during a different executive session and left at 12:55 pm.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE that the Alaska State Board of Veterinary Examiners enter into executive session in accordance with AS 44.62.310(c), and Alaska Constitutional Right to Privacy Provisions, for the purpose of discussing subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion. I request that the chair allow board staff to remain during the session.

Motion moved by Dr. Geiger and seconded by Dr. Albert. The motion passed unanimously.

The board entered into executive session at 11:48 am and returned on the record at 11:58 am. A quorum was maintained.

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM.

Members Absent : Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the continuing education exemption for J.L. under 12 AAC 68.047(e) and (f).

Motion moved by Dr. Geiger and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. Roll call vote was taken. Dr. Geiger, yes. Dr. Gerlach, yes. Dr. Albert, no. Dr. Johnson, no. The motion failed due to lack of majority vote.

Lunch Break

The board went off the record for lunch at 12:01 pm and returned on the record at 12:33 pm.

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM.

Members Absent : Ciara Vollaro, DVM

Public Comment

There was no one online at the start of public comment period. Dr. Ladd joined and Ms. Billiet let her know the board had already reviewed her CE exemption before lunch and she would be in contact with her post meeting to let her know the outcome. The board decided to move on to the next agenda item but any members of the public that join during the allotted period to speak will be allowed to do so.

Application Reviews

The board went into executive session for the rest of the CE exemptions.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE that the Alaska State Board of Veterinary Examiners enter into executive session in accordance with AS 44.62.310(c), and Alaska Constitutional Right to Privacy Provisions, for the purpose of discussing subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion. I request that the chair allow board staff to remain during the session.

Motion moved by Dr. Johnson and seconded by Dr. Albert. The motion passed unanimously.

The board entered into executive session at 12:38 pm and returned on the record at 1:01 pm. A quorum was maintained.

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM.

Members Absent : Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

Veterinary Technician Renewal -M.B. Failure to Complete CE

Applicant was asked into executive session at 12:42 pm to address the board and left at 12:45 pm.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the continuing education exemption for M.B. under 12 AAC 68.047(e) and (f).

Motion moved by Dr. Geiger and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion failed via roll call vote. Dr. Gerlach, no. Dr. Geiger, no. Dr. Johnson, no. Dr. Albert, no.

Veterinarian renewal - A.M. Failure to complete CE's

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the continuing education exemption for A.M. under 12 AAC 68.047(e) and (f).

Motion moved by Dr. Geiger and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion failed via roll call vote. Dr. Gerlach, no. Dr. Geiger, no. Dr. Johnson, no. Dr. Albert, no.

Veterinarian renewal - T.W Failure to Complete CE's

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE the continuing education exemption for T.W. under 12 AAC 68.047(e) and (f).

Motion moved by Dr. Geiger and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion failed via roll call vote. Dr. Gerlach, no. Dr. Geiger, no. Dr. Johnson, no. Dr. Albert, no.

Next Meeting Date

The board would like to keep the next meeting date of October 10th, 2025, and transition it to being via zoom.

Travel Freeze

AAVSB - Annual Meeting Online and Delegates

Since AO 358 restricts travel, Ms. Billiet asked if the board members previously selected to attend the AAVSB annual meeting September 17th – September 20th as voting delegates, Dr. Gerlach and Dr. Johnson, wish to attend the virtual options for the

meeting. Dr. Gerlach plans to attend virtually, but Dr. Johnson will need to wait until closer to the meeting dates to confirm. Dr. Albert asked if whether the travel ban will restrict her from traveling to Juneau during the 2026 legislative session, and staff indicated that there is a high possibility she won't be permitted to travel. She said she will begin contacting legislators now using the request for sponsorship letter approved earlier in the meeting.

Break

The board was ahead of schedule and went off the record at 1:30 pm to wait for their next guest to join the meeting and returned at 1:37 pm.

Attendance

Members Present: Denise Albert, DVM; Hal Geiger, PhD; Robert Gerlach, VMD; Sarah Johnson, DVM.

Members Absent : Ciara Vollaro, DVM.

Physician Health Committee - Q&A for Safe Haven Project

Guest Pam Ventgen from the Physician Health Committee spoke on the Physician Health Committee to give the board an idea of how they might create something similar for Alaskan veterinary professionals. She explained that Physicians have had what was originally an impaired physician program since the late 1980's and at that time she was with the state medical board as the first executive director to create this program. It has evolved as have other states to now include a federation of state physician programs, and she indicated that most states have a similar program for physicians. In Alaska, the program is for physicians, physician assistants and podiatrists. Some states, like Florida, provide services to other licensed health professions, but in Alaska the state medical board has a memorandum of agreement so they can only serve state medical board licensees and it is not likely the Board of Veterinary Examiners could be included. She is aware that currently, the pharmacy board is looking at some sort of health program for pharmacists, and that the nursing board is working on their own as well, but it may be something that smaller boards like the veterinary board, physical therapy board, or occupational therapy board might want to consider collaborating on as a group to create a program. In 2018 they had 4-6 participants, but they've seen up at 19, and it varies. Ms. Ventgen explained to the board the makeup of

the committee in Alaska, as well as how it functions and what requirements exist for physicians that enter into it. There is typically an initial evaluation followed by a referral for treatment if certain criteria are met, or a monitoring period if their substance use is not determined to meet the level of needing treatment. The committee rigorously follows the requirements of the Federation of State Physician Health Programs (FSPHP), and those who do not comply with committee requirements are reported to the Alaska Medical Board which takes over next actions. If necessary, monitoring can be transferred state to state as well should a professional move out of Alaska or move to Alaska while under monitoring.

The board expressed concerns of confidentiality with any sort of similar program, as well as cost. Ms. Ventgen stated that her committee is \$200 a month for each licensee covered under the program, and that this is billed quarterly to the licensee. She also clarified that seeking assistance via the committee is confidential to them only, and the Medical Board is not involved unless the situation escalates.

Statutes allow the Board of Veterinary Examiners to contact public agencies and private professional organizations to provide assistance and treatment to persons licensed by the board who abuse alcohol, other drugs, or other substances. Ms. Ventgen recommends taking this to the AKVMA and get their support and then keep in touch with her. If the board, AKVMA, and department approach the medical association it will be a stronger movement. The agreement is up for renewal/ renegotiation in a year with the medical association. If the veterinary association can partner with the medical association that would help the physician health committee feel more comfortable with renegotiating the agreement as a professional association and not just a medical association. Ms. Billiet will provide the board with Ms. Ventgen's contact information so the board can keep in touch, and will also work with Mr. Bowman to explore possibilities for creating a program on the division side. Dr. Albert will contact the AKVMA about a possible collaboration.

Board Administrative Business

SCRA Application Approvals (Presenters: Deputy Director Glenn Saviers)

Deputy Director Glenn Saviers spoke to the board about SCRA application approvals. Stating that some boards are uneasy issuing licenses under SCRA because there isn't substantial equivalent requirement yet federal law requires approval of the license if it meets federal law. The Department of Law has ruled that the division can approve the SCRA application and once issued the licensee will be subject to the requirements of title eight of Alaska statutes subject to the boards' authority and will be under the same requirements as anyone else licensed under the board. She clarified for the board that having the division issue these licenses is only an option, not a requirement, and the

board is free to make their own decision here. Ms. Saviers explained that the SCRA law says we will issue a full license if applicants meet the requirements put in federal law. If the board chooses to have the division approve these applications, she said that the system will show license basis is under SCRA and a public note will be made. A person will not qualify for SCRA if they have a disciplinary action on any license in another state or jurisdiction. Board members agreed that if the board isn't making a judgement on the license, they don't need to see them.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE allowing licenses applied for under the Federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act's (or "SCRA") licensure portability laws to be reviewed, approved, and issued by the division, rather than by the board, in order to comply with federal law requiring expediency and due to the fact that the board's authority and requirement to approve and issue licenses is under Alaska Statute Title 8, rather than federal law. Once licensed is issued pursuant to the SCRA, these licensees will be subject to the requirements of Title 8 of Alaska Statutes and subject to the board's authority, same as all other Alaska professional licensees under the board's jurisdiction.

Motion moved by Dr. Geiger and motion seconded by Dr. Albert. The motion passed via roll call vote Dr. Gerlach, yes. Dr. Geiger, yes. Dr. Albert, yes. Dr. Johnson, yes.

Before adjourning the meeting, the board revisited the discussion on selecting a board member for the HB 70 Advisory Panel.

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE that the Alaska State Board of Veterinary Examiners appoint Dr. Robert Gerlach as the Board of Veterinary Examiners representative on the House Bill 70 Advisory Panel.

Motion moved by Dr. Geiger and seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Motion:

RESOLVED to APPROVE adjourning the July 9th, 2025, meeting of the Board of Veterinary Examiners.

Motion moved by Dr. Albert and motion seconded by Dr. Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

The board went off the record at 2:42 PM.

DRAFT