**Code of Ethics for Board Members**

***Goal:*** To establish a set of principles and practices of the Pride Veterinary Medical Community, formally known as LGVMA and hereafter referred to as PRIDE VMC, Board of Directors that will set parameters and provide guidance and direction for board conduct and decision-making.

**Code:** Members of the Board of Directors of the PRIDE VMC are committed to observing and promoting the highest standards of ethical conduct in the performance of their responsibilities on the board of PRIDE VMC. Board members pledge to accept this code as a minimum guideline for ethical conduct and shall:

# Accountability

1. Faithfully abide by the Articles of Incorporation, constitution, by-laws and policies of PRIDE VMC.
2. Exercise reasonable care, good faith, and due diligence in organizational affairs.
3. Fully disclose, at the earliest opportunity, information that may result in a perceived or actual conflict of interest.
4. Fully disclose, at the earliest opportunity, information of fact that would have significance in board decision-making.
5. Remain accountable for prudent fiscal management to association members, the board, and nonprofit sector, and where applicable, to government and funding bodies.

# Professional Excellence

1. Maintain a professional level of courtesy, respect, and objectivity in all PRIDE VMC activities.
2. Strive to uphold those practices and assist other PRIDE VMC members of the board in upholding the highest standards of conduct.

# Personal Gain

8. Exercise the powers invested for the good of all members of the organization rather than for his or her personal benefit, or that of the nonprofit they represent.

# Equal Opportunity

1. Ensure the right of all association members to appropriate and effective services without discrimination on the basis of geography, political, religious, or socioeconomical characteristics of the state or region represented.
2. Ensure the right of all association members to appropriate and effective services without discrimination on the basis of the organization’s volunteer or staff makeup in respect to gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, race, religion, age, political affiliation or disability, in accordance with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

**Confidential Information**

1. Respect the confidentiality of sensitive information known due to board service. Abide by the Confidentiality Agreement for PRIDE VMC.

# Collaboration and Cooperation

1. Respect the diversity of opinions as expressed or acted upon by the PRIDE VMC board, committees and membership, and formally register dissent as appropriate.
2. Promote collaboration, cooperation, and partnership among association members.

# AVMA and NAVTA Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics

1. Adhere to the AVMA and NAVTA Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics.

# Acknowledgment and Acceptance

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, board member of PRIDE VMC acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to abide by this code of ethics as established and approved by the PRIDE VMC Board of Directors on May 14, 2018.

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Signature [Note: if this is completed electronically, by typing your name you agree that this is valid as your signature]

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Attachments: AVMA and NAVTA Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics

Approved: PRIDE VMC Board of Directors, 05/14/2018

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**AVMA Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics**

# Introduction

Veterinarians are members of a scholarly profession who have earned academic degrees from comprehensive universities or similar educational institutions. Veterinarians practice veterinary medicine in a variety of situations and circumstances. Exemplary professional conduct upholds the dignity of the veterinary profession. All veterinarians are expected to adhere to a progressive code of ethical conduct known as the Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics (PVME). The PVME comprises the following Principles, the Supporting Annotations, and Useful Terms.

The AVMA Judicial Council is charged to advise on all questions relating to veterinary medical ethics and to review the Principles periodically to ensure that they remain current and appropriate.

# The Principles

1. A veterinarian shall be influenced only by the welfare of the patient, the needs of the client, the safety of the public, and the need to uphold the public trust vested in the veterinary profession, and shall avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof.
2. A veterinarian shall provide competent veterinary medical clinical care under the terms of a veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR), with compassion and respect for animal welfare and human health.
3. A veterinarian shall uphold the standards of professionalism, be honest in all professional interactions, and report veterinarians who are deficient in character or competence to the appropriate entities.
4. A veterinarian shall respect the law and also recognize a responsibility to seek changes to laws and regulations which are contrary to the best interests of the patient and public health.
5. A veterinarian shall respect the rights of clients, colleagues, and other health professionals, and shall safeguard medical information within the confines of the law.
6. A veterinarian shall continue to study, apply, and advance scientific knowledge, maintain a commitment to veterinary medical education, make relevant information available to clients, colleagues, the public, and obtain consultation or referral when indicated.
7. A veterinarian shall, in the provision of appropriate patient care, except in emergencies, be free to choose whom to serve, with whom to associate, and the environment in which to provide veterinary medical care.
8. A veterinarian shall recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to the improvement of the community and the betterment of public health.
9. A veterinarian should view, evaluate, and treat all persons in any professional activity or circumstance in which they may be involved, solely as individuals on the basis of their own personal abilities, qualifications, and other relevant characteristics.

# The Principles with Supporting Annotations

1. A veterinarian shall be influenced only by the welfare of the patient, the needs of the client, the safety of the public, and the need to uphold the public trust vested in the veterinary profession; and shall avoid conflict of interest or the appearance thereof.
	1. A veterinarian shall not allow any interests, especially financial interests, other than those mentioned above to influence the choice of treatment or animal care.
		* + 1. A veterinarian should consider the potential for creating a conflict of interest (or the appearance thereof) when deciding whether to participate in vendor incentive programs or other arrangements where the veterinarian receives a benefit for using or prescribing a particular product.
				2. The medical judgment of a veterinarian shall not be influenced by contracts or agreements made by their associations or societies.
				3. A veterinarian shall not offer or receive any financial incentive solely for the referral of a patient (fee-splitting).
		1. Performance of surgical or other procedures in any species for the purpose of concealing genetic defects in animals to be shown, raced, bred, or sold as breeding animals is misleading to the public and is unethical. However, should the health or welfare of the individual patient require correction of such genetic defects, it is recommended that the patient be rendered incapable of reproduction.
		2. Veterinarians shall not promote, sell, prescribe, dispense, or use secret remedies or any other product for which they do not know the ingredients.
2. A veterinarian shall provide competent veterinary medical care under the terms of a veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR), with compassion and respect for animal welfare and human health.
	1. A veterinarian should first consider the needs of the patient to prevent and relieve disease, suffering, or disability while minimizing pain or fear.
	2. Regardless of practice ownership, the interests of the patient, client, and public require that all decisions that affect diagnosis and treatment of patients are made by veterinarians in the context of a VCPR.
		* 1. It is unethical to engage in the practice of veterinary medicine without a VCPR.
			2. When an attending veterinarian assumes responsibility for primary care of a patient, a VCPR is established with the attending veterinarian. iii. Clients may terminate the VCPR at any time.
			3. If there is no ongoing medical or surgical condition, veterinarians may terminate a VCPR by notifying the client that they no longer wish to serve that patient and client.
			4. If there is an ongoing medical or surgical condition, the patient shall be referred to another veterinarian for diagnosis, care, and treatment. The former attending veterinarian shall continue to provide care, as needed, during the transition.
	3. Attending veterinarians are responsible for choosing the treatment regimen for their patients. It is the attending veterinarian's responsibility to inform the client of the expected results and costs, and the related risks of each treatment regimen.
	4. Humane euthanasia of animals is an ethical veterinary procedure.
3. A veterinarian shall uphold the standards of professionalism, be honest in all professional interactions, and report veterinarians who are deficient in character or competence to the appropriate entities.
	1. Complaints about behavior that may violate the Principles should be addressed in an appropriate and timely manner.
	2. Local or state veterinary associations have a responsibility to monitor and guide the professional conduct of their members. Members of local and state committees are familiar with local customs and circumstances, and those committees are in the best position to confer with all parties involved. Local and state veterinary associations should consider adopting the Principles or a similar code as a guide for their activities and include discussions of ethical issues in their continuing education programs. The AVMA Judicial Council may address complaints prior to, concurrent with, or subsequent to review at the state or local level, as it deems appropriate.
	3. Veterinary Medical educators should stress the teaching of ethical issues as part of the professional veterinary curriculum for all veterinary students. Concomitantly, veterinary medical examiners are encouraged to prepare and include questions regarding professional ethics on examinations.
	4. Veterinarians must not defame or injure the professional standing or reputation of other veterinarians in a false or misleading manner. Veterinarians must be honest and fair in their relations with others, and they shall not engage in fraud, misrepresentation, or deceit.
	5. Veterinarians should use only the title of the professional degree that was awarded by the school of veterinary medicine where the degree was earned. All veterinarians may use the courtesy titles Doctor or Veterinarian.
	6. It is unethical for veterinarians to identify themselves as members of an AVMA-recognized specialty organization if such certification has not been awarded and maintained. Only those veterinarians who have been certified by an AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization should refer to themselves as specialists.
	7. A veterinarian having supervisory authority over another veterinarian should make reasonable efforts to ensure that the other veterinarian conforms to the Principles.
	8. A veterinarian may be responsible for another veterinarian's violation of the Principles if the veterinarian orders or, with knowledge of the specific conduct, approves the conduct involved; or if the veterinarian has supervisory authority over another veterinarian and knows of the conduct at a time when its consequences can be avoided or mitigated, but fails to take reasonable remedial action.
	9. Veterinarians who are impaired must not act in the capacity of a veterinarian and shall seek assistance from qualified organizations or individuals. Colleagues of impaired veterinarians should encourage those individuals to seek assistance and to overcome their impairment.
	10. Veterinarians shall disclose to clients potential conflicts of interest.
	11. Advertising by veterinarians is ethical when there are no false, deceptive, or misleading statements or claims. A false, deceptive, or misleading statement or claim is one which communicates false information or is intended, through a material omission, to leave a false impression. Testimonials or endorsements are advertising, and they should comply with applicable law and guidelines, such as the Federal Trade Commission guide and regulations relating to testimonials, endorsements, and other forms of advertising.
4. A veterinarian shall respect the law and also recognize a responsibility to seek changes to laws and regulations which are contrary to the best interests of the patient and public health.
	1. A veterinarian should obey all laws of the jurisdictions in which they reside and practice veterinary medicine.
	2. The AVMA Judicial Council may choose to report alleged infractions by members and nonmembers of the AVMA to the appropriate agencies.
	3. It is unethical to place professional knowledge, credentials, or services at the disposal of any nonprofessional organization, group, or individual to promote or lend credibility to the illegal practice of veterinary medicine.
5. A veterinarian shall respect the privacy rights of clients, colleagues, and other health professionals and shall safeguard medical information within the confines of the law.
	1. Veterinarians and their associates must protect the personal privacy of clients, and veterinarians must not reveal confidences unless required to by law or unless it becomes necessary to protect the health and welfare of other individuals or animals.
	2. Veterinary medical records are an integral part of veterinary care. The records must comply with the standards established by state and federal law.
		1. Medical records are the property of the practice and the practice owner. The original records must be retained by the practice for the period required by law.
		2. The information within veterinary medical records is confidential. It must not be released except as required or allowed by law, or by consent of the owner of the patient.
		3. Veterinarians are obligated to provide copies or summaries of medical records when requested by the client. Veterinarians should secure a written consent to document that provision.
		4. Without the express permission of the practice owner, it is unethical for a veterinarian to remove, copy, or use the medical records or any part of any record for personal or professional gain.
6. A veterinarian shall continue to study, apply, and advance scientific knowledge; maintain a commitment to veterinary medical education; make relevant information available to clients, colleagues, and the public; and obtain consultation or referral when indicated.
	1. Veterinarians should strive to enhance their image with respect to their colleagues, clients, other health professionals, and the general public. Veterinarians should present a professional appearance and follow acceptable professional procedures using current professional and scientific knowledge.
	2. Veterinarians should strive to improve their veterinary knowledge and skills, and they are encouraged to collaborate with other professionals in the quest for knowledge and professional development.
	3. When appropriate, attending veterinarians are encouraged to seek assistance in the form of consultations and/or referrals. A decision to consult or refer is made jointly by the attending veterinarian and the client. Attending veterinarians must honor a client's request for referral.
		1. When a private clinical consultation occurs, the attending veterinarian continues to be primarily responsible for the case and maintaining the VCPR.
		2. Consultations usually involve the exchange of information or interpretation of test results. However, it may be appropriate or necessary for consultants to examine patients. When advanced or invasive techniques are required to gather information or substantiate diagnoses, attending veterinarians may refer the patients. A new VCPR is established with the veterinarian to whom a case is referred.
	4. Referral is the transfer of responsibility of diagnosis and treatment from a referring veterinarian to a receiving veterinarian. The referring and receiving veterinarians should communicate.
		1. The referring veterinarian should provide the receiving veterinarian with all the appropriate information pertinent to the case before or at the time of the receiving veterinarian's first contact with the patient or the client.
		2. When the referred patient has been examined, the receiving veterinarian should promptly inform the referring veterinarian. Information provided should include diagnosis, proposed treatment, and other recommendations.
		3. Upon discharge of the patient, the receiving veterinarian should give the referring veterinarian a written report advising the referring veterinarian as to continuing care of the patient or termination of the case. A detailed and complete written report should follow as soon as possible.
	5. When a client seeks professional services or opinions from a different veterinarian without a referral, a new VCPR is established with the new attending veterinarian. When contacted, the veterinarian who was formerly involved in the diagnosis, care, and treatment of the patient should communicate with the new attending veterinarian as if the patient and client had been referred.
		1. With the client's consent, the new attending veterinarian should contact the former veterinarian to learn the original diagnosis, care, and treatment and clarify any issues before proceeding with a new treatment plan.
		2. If there is evidence that the actions of the former attending veterinarian have clearly and significantly endangered the health or safety of the patient, the new attending veterinarian has a responsibility to report the matter to the appropriate authorities of the local and state association or professional regulatory agency.
7. In keeping with applicable law, a veterinarian shall, in the provision of appropriate patient care, except in emergencies, be free to choose whom to serve, with whom to associate, and the environment in which to provide veterinary medical care.
	1. Veterinarians may choose whom they will serve. Both the veterinarian and the client have the right to establish or decline a Veterinarian Client-Patient Relationship and to decide on treatment. The decision to accept or decline treatment and related cost should be based on adequate discussion of clinical findings, diagnostic techniques, treatment, likely outcome, estimated cost, and reasonable assurance of payment. Once the veterinarian and the client have agreed, and the veterinarian has begun patient care, they may not neglect their patient and must continue to provide professional services related to that injury or illness within the previously agreed limits. As subsequent needs and costs for patient care are identified, the veterinarian and client must confer and reach agreement on the continued care and responsibility for fees. If the informed client declines further care or declines to assume responsibility for the fees, the VCPR may be terminated by either party.
	2. In emergencies, veterinarians have an ethical responsibility to provide essential services for animals when necessary to save life or relieve suffering, subsequent to client agreement (or until such agreement can be obtained when no client is present). Such emergency care may be limited to euthanasia to relieve suffering, or to stabilization of the patient for transport to another source of animal care.
	3. When veterinarians cannot be available to provide services, they should provide readily accessible information to assist clients in obtaining emergency services, consistent with the needs of the locality.
	4. Veterinarians who believe that they haven't the experience or equipment to manage and treat certain emergencies in the best manner, should advise the client that more qualified or specialized services are available elsewhere and offer to expedite referral to those services.
	5. Veterinarians who provide emergency services should send patients and continuation of care information back to the original veterinarians and/or other veterinarians of the owners' choice, as soon as practical.
	6. Veterinarians (to include those attending, consulting, receiving and referring) are entitled to charge fees for their professional services.
		1. Regardless of the fees that are charged or received, the quality of service must be maintained at the usual professional standard.
		2. A veterinarian may charge a fee for the services the veterinarian provides in conjunction with the use of third-party providers such as laboratories, pharmacies, and consulting veterinarians.
		3. A veterinarian shall honor a client's request for a prescription or veterinary feed directive in lieu of dispensing, but may charge a fee for this service.
		4. It is unethical for a group or association of veterinarians to take any action which coerces, pressures, or achieves agreement among veterinarians to conform to a fee schedule or fixed fees.
8. A veterinarian shall recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to the improvement of the community and the betterment of public health.
	1. The responsibilities of the veterinary profession extend beyond individual patients and clients to society in general. Veterinarians are encouraged to make their knowledge available to their communities and to provide their services for activities that protect public health.
9. A veterinarian should view, evaluate, and treat all persons in any professional activity or circumstance in which they may be involved, solely as individuals on the basis of their own personal abilities, qualifications, and other relevant characteristics.

a. As health professionals seeking to advance animal and public health, veterinarians should strive to confront and reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination that may lead to impediments to access of quality animal and public health care for clients/patients or lack of educational, training, and employment opportunities for veterinary colleagues/students and other members of the animal health care team. These forms of prejudice and discrimination include, but are not limited to, race; ethnicity; physical and mental abilities; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity; parental status; religious beliefs; military or veteran status; political beliefs; geographic, socioeconomic, and educational background; and any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law.

Source [05/14/18]: https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/Principles-of-Veterinary-Medical-Ethics-of-the-AVMA.aspx

**NAVTA Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics**

Veterinary technicians/nurses manage nursing care to animals in a conscientious and knowledgeable fashion. They assess each patient's health and subsequently develop, enact and/or carry out the own nursing plan to address the patient's reaction to illness, the patient's risk for future problems, and the owner's knowledge-deficits and limitations in coping at home with pet care.

The veterinary technician practice model provides an organized approach to patient assessment, critical thinking and analysis of patient data, and the development of individual patient care plans that are distinctively tailored to each patient. This organization delivers a method for ensuring consistently excellent patient care and a mechanism for reevaluation and adjustment of nursing plans based on observation, analysis, and reason. For the veterinary technician student, this structure allows for a systematic approach to critical thinking and problem solving.

The practice model of the veterinary technician consists of five steps. These steps are performed cyclically throughout a patient's hospitalization period:

1. Gather data about the patient.
2. Identify and prioritize patient evaluations.
3. Develop and implement a plan for patient care by establishing a series of technician interventions.
4. Evaluate the patient's response to the plan of care.
5. Gather additional data (go back to Step 1 and reevaluate the patient).

**# 1: Data Gathering**

When patients are admitted for hospitalization, veterinary technicians assist the veterinarian in gathering an initial database - composed of subjective and objective information. The subjective information includes observable information such as the patient's history and nonmeasurable physical examination findings.

**# 2: Identify and Prioritize Patient Evaluations**

Once the database is collected, the veterinary technician uses reasoning to develop a list of patient evaluations. These evaluations reflect the animal's response to physiologic and psychological changes due to a particular disease process. Evaluations fall into one of three categories:

1. Assessments which relate to actual physical and psychological problems of the patient, such as “hypovolemia,” “abnormal eating behavior,” and “fear.”

2. Assessments which relate to the risk of or potential for problems in the future, such as “risk for infection” and “risk of aspiration.”

3. Assessments which relate to the owner/client, such as “client knowledge deficit” and “noncompliant owner.”

Next, the veterinary technician triages the evaluations so that the most life-threatening problems are addressed first. The most critical problems are considered foundation issues because if they are not addressed first, the animal may not live.

**# 3: Plan of Care Development and Implementation of Interventions**

After the evaluations have been prioritized, the veterinary technician develops a written plan of care. The veterinary technician uses critical thinking and creativity to develop a unique series of technician interventions for the patient.

**# 4: Evaluation of Patient Response**

Reevaluation of the patient and of the technician care plan ensures that the patient's condition is monitored as it improves or worsens with treatment. Evaluations and interventions can subsequently be adjusted to address changes in patient status. The technician may examine and reevaluate the patient numerous times throughout the day.

**# 5: Add Data**

As the patient's condition changes with treatment and hospitalization, additional tests, laboratory studies, and physical examinations may be needed. These processes yield additional data for the technician to analyze and evaluate. In this way, this step is similar to Step 1, because it includes the continued collection of new or additional data that could influence the patient's recovery.

**Scope of Practice**

As the sophistication of veterinary medicine has increased, the responsibilities of the veterinary technician in clinical practice have broadened. In a well-managed practice, veterinary technicians perform all duties associated with the care and treatment of animal patients except those tasks that by law can be performed only by the veterinarian. Furthermore, they are empowered to delegate appropriate tasks to veterinary assistants. Although state laws differ, it is widely accepted and has been proposed by both the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) that only veterinarians may do the following:

1. Prescribe.
2. Diagnose.
3. Prognose.
4. Perform surgery.
5. Attest to health status.

**Professional Ethics**

1. As legal agents for veterinary employers, technicians must “accept [their] obligations to practice [their] profession conscientiously and with sensitivity, adhering to the profession's Code of Ethics” as established by NAVTA.
2. Veterinarians are held liable for the actions of veterinary technician.
3. Veterinary technicians are under supervision and control of a veterinarian and must never engage in practices reserved for the veterinarian (as described above).
4. Technicians must never complain about veterinarians or other employees to or in the presence of a client
5. As professionals the actions of technicians must be based on the best interests of patients and clients
6. The veterinary technician code of ethics
	1. Communicates the profession's ideals to the public and members of the profession
	2. Is a general guide for professional ethical conduct
	3. Provides disciplinary procedures to members who are not operating at an acceptable level of conduct

**Veterinary Technician’s Oath**

I solemnly dedicate myself to aiding animals and society by providing excellent care and services for animals, by alleviating animal suffering, and by promoting public health.

I accept my obligations to practice my profession conscientiously and with sensitivity, adhering to the profession's Code of Ethics and furthering my knowledge and competence through a commitment to lifelong learning.