



Maryland Veterinary Medical Association

Wednesday January 26, 2022

SB 70 - Emergency Medical System Plan - Guidelines for Emergency Medical Services - Law Enforcement Canines

SUPPORT

Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee,

Established in 1886, the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association (MDVMA) is a community of dynamic professionals who are passionate about veterinary medicine and improving the lives of those it touches. MDVMA's mission is to serve as a leading resource for the veterinary community through communication, education, representation, and support for the advancement of animal and public health in Maryland.

Senate Bill 70 adds a requirement to the Emergency Medical System plan for guidelines that authorize emergency medical services personnel to provide emergency medical services to canines injured in the line of duty that is owned by, or whose services are employed by certain law enforcement agencies.

Working canines give their lives for us every day. It is important for us to ensure their health and wellbeing on a daily basis as well as in an emergency situation. It's important we give these companions the chance to live and not preclude any human from being punished for trying to help save their life.

MDVMA members have worked closely with multiple government agencies to properly train their canine handlers as well as the emergency response medical personnel they work with on how to triage a canine medical emergency in the field. In most cases these canines will be in situations where immediate veterinary care is not feasible, whether they are overseas, in an active crime scene in a remote area, natural disaster or manmade disaster, these canines deserve immediate lifesaving medical attention. While the handlers are trained in how to respond and treat their working canine, they may be debilitated or injured themselves or require the assistance of more professionally trained medical personnel.

It is important that any Good Samaritan or trained medical professional is allowed to provide basic life saving measures for injured working canines. Other states have defined these basic lifesaving acts as "establishing an airway, providing oxygen support if available, controlling hemorrhage, and administering Naloxone if appropriate and trained in doing so." EMS and emergency providers should not be intimidated into not doing the right thing and helping a dying animal if they act within the established protocols.

Please do not limit human nature to try and help a severely injured or dying animal by further defining who can and can't help an animal in dire need of life saving support.

The Maryland Veterinary Medical Association Respectfully Urges a Favorable Report

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