

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 322

(Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Agriculture)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners - Registered Veterinary Technician

This departmental bill alters the definition of “practice of veterinary medicine” by repealing a specified list of procedures registered veterinary technicians may perform under the responsible direct supervision of a veterinary practitioner without being considered to be practicing veterinary medicine. The bill further modifies that definition to allow registered veterinary technicians to perform procedures under the responsible direct supervision of a veterinary practitioner as specified by regulations adopted by the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (SBVME).

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law: A person may not practice veterinary medicine unless he or she is licensed, registered, and authorized to engage in the practice under State law. Statute specifies various actions that the “practice of veterinary medicine” is defined to include as well as specified exclusions that the term “practice of veterinary medicine” does not include or apply to, including, except as otherwise provided by SBVME regulations, a

registered veterinary technician when performing specified procedures under the responsible direct supervision of a veterinary practitioner. The authorized procedures include anesthesia induction by specified methods, application of casts and splints, dental extractions, and suturing of existing surgical skin incisions.

Background: Veterinary technicians are not licensed by SBVME, but a person may register with the board as a veterinary technician through an application process similar to that applicable to veterinarians for licensure. The National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America identifies veterinary technicians/technologists as “educated to be the veterinarian’s nurse, laboratory technician, radiography technician, anesthetist, surgical nurse and client educator.”

The five tasks that a veterinary technician is authorized to perform under the responsible direct supervision of a veterinary practitioner without being considered to be practicing veterinary medicine were established in statute by Chapter 209 of 1994. MDA indicates that the field of veterinary medicine is evolving, and the vast majority of registered veterinary technicians are capable, through a combination of education, skill, and experience, of performing more than these five procedures. According to MDA, individuals who graduate from veterinary technology programs accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association are taught additional procedures. The authority established in the bill would allow SBVME to broaden the scope of procedures registered veterinary technicians would be authorized to perform under the supervision of a veterinary practitioner and make revisions when deemed necessary.

The Department of Legislative Services, in its 2008 preliminary sunset evaluation report on SBVME, noted that the procedures registered veterinary technicians are specifically authorized to perform under State law had been in place since 1994. The report asked SBVME to discuss in a follow-up report the extent to which the procedures encompass the procedures registered veterinary technicians are trained to perform and whether it would be appropriate to add other procedures to the list. SBVME, in response, indicated the possibility of considering other procedures as acceptable for registered veterinary technicians to perform.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Agriculture, National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 10, 2011
ncs/lgc

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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners – Veterinary Technician

BILL NUMBER: SB 322

PREPARED BY: Maryland Department of Agriculture

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESS

OR

WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

The proposed legislation will have no impact on small business in Maryland.