



August 18, 2014

To the Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee Committee

We recently became aware of the item on your agenda for Tuesday, August 19, 2014. It is agenda item number one and reads:

Department of Animal Services (DAS) report in response to Adopted Budget Recommendation relative to proposed requirement for veterinarians to notify the DAS whenever a veterinarian has treated an unlicensed dog.

It goes on to say:

INSTRUCT the Department of Animal Services to report to the Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee regarding the proposed requirement for veterinarians to notify the Department whenever a veterinarian has treated an unlicensed dog. The report should include other locations where this practice is in place, possible implications on spay and neuter exemptions from the license requirement and other concerns.

As the professional association for veterinarians in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, we are extremely concerned as to the unintended consequences any requirement of this nature may have.

Here are our concerns:

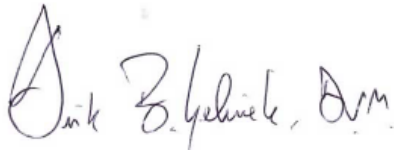
- Pet owners, of both licensed and unlicensed dogs, residing in LA City will lose trust in the veterinary profession who will be perceived as being a police working on behalf of the Department of Animal Services. This may lead to a loss of business as pet owners will seek veterinary care in other jurisdictions or a decision not to seek veterinary care at all leading to increased suffering by pets.
- Most veterinarians do NOT keep track if a pet is licensed or not. It is not required information for the provision of veterinary care. Without this information, a pet may be turned in to the Department of Animal Services that is fully licensed but for which the veterinarian doesn't have this information. Additionally, pets frequently reside in one city and receive care in another. Would a veterinarian outside of LA City be required to report to the Department of Animal Services dogs from LA City that receive care in their practices?
- Pet owners will avoid veterinary care at all, including spay, neuter, rabies from LA City veterinarians to avoid being turned in
- Veterinary privacy laws, which are enforced by the Veterinary Medical Board, part of the statewide Department of Consumer Affairs, preclude veterinarians from releasing personal information about a pet or client without the authority of the client. The

- exemption for this is the requirement to provide the Department of Animal Services a list of those pets that are rabies vaccinated. Would a veterinarian who released information on an unlicensed pet be in violation of the practice act and run the risk of losing their license or refuse to provide information and run the risk of enforcement by LAPD?

We would be very eager to meet with you and identify alternatives to help with the budget shortfall that don't require the veterinary profession to compromise the relationship that they work so hard to develop with the pet owning community of the city of Los Angeles. This discussion should include both the voucher system and sale of dog licenses that are also mentioned in your agenda.

Please defer action on this discussion until we can all get together and address both the intended and more significantly the unintended consequences of this discussion

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dirk Yelinek, DVM". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely".

Dirk Yelinek, DVM
President, SCVMA