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March 6th, 2023

Attn: Oregon Senate Committee on Health Care

Subject: Proposed SB 559

Position: **OPPOSE**

On behalf of: Salem Friends of Felines, 501(c)3 non-profit organization

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Committee Members:

Please accept this written testimony in opposition to SB 559.

This proposed bill will have multiple harmful implications regarding the profession of veterinary medicine. The most egregious being the massive HIPAA violation that will occur every single time a veterinarian is required to log into the PDMP and is allowed access to the pet owner's personal prescription history. I would like to maintain my privacy when it comes to my personal medical history and not have a physician who is not my doctor, having access to my records. Is a pet owner going to be notified each time their personal information is accessed?!

Let's now move to the veterinarian who is just trying to do right by their patient and do their job. A job that includes treating pain in animals who are suffering from debilitating chronic arthritis, or for an acute trauma such as a dog being hit by a car and suffering a compound fracture to their femur. To provide adequate comfort levels to these patients, it imperative they prescribe opioids, along with a multimodal pain control approach that includes the following when deemed appropriate; physical therapy, cold laser treatment, acupuncture, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS), massage, hydrotherapy and many other modalities. Veterinarians don't only reach for opioids, they are licensed medical doctors, who weigh the risk vs benefit for each medication, each time they prescribe said medications.

The veterinarian who is treating a sick or injured animal patient and is prescribing controlled substances for that animal patient should not have to make a very subjective and on-the-spot decision to prescribe (or not prescribe) a controlled substance to go home with their patient. SB 559 will cause veterinarians to stop prescribing opioids. Simple as that. They won't want to jump through the PDMP hoops to do it and without opioids being prescribed, which is what will happen, animals will suffer to achieve adequate analgesia using other non-controlled drugs and they may suffer a decrease in quality and length of life directly from it.

This bill does not take into consideration that veterinarians prescribe a very small amount of opioids annually for their patients and these opioids are NOT the illicit street drugs that are adding to the drug problem in Oregon, and across the nation. Veterinarians are already under the oversight of the DEA, the OVMEB and the Oregon Board of Pharmacy. Our facilities maintain licenses with all of those agencies and pay additional fees for that "oversight".

This bill is brought forward by people who are not in veterinary medicine and are not licensed medical professionals, they don't know firsthand how this will impact our daily lives. In a time where the veterinary field is already struggling with burnout due to short-staffing and employee turnover, verbal abuse from clients and increased medication and treatment costs due to inflation, we can't afford to have SB 559 pass and cause unintentional damage to our field and our patients.

We would like to help stop the opioid crisis as much as the next person, but this bill is not the way to go about that. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ch. Marks", with a long, sweeping underline.

Chelsey Marks, CVT
Executive Director
Salem Friends of Felines
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