

21 February, 2025

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash and Members of the Committee;

My name is Barb Crabbe and I am a veterinarian with over 35 years of experience as both an equine practitioner and practice owner of a 3-doctor practice serving the Portland metropolitan area. I recently retired from clinical practice, and am currently serving on the Council on Veterinary Services for the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Professional Conduct and Ethics Committee of the American Association for Equine Practitioners while concurrently completing a doctoral degree in Bioethics.

I am writing to express my opposition to proposed Senate Bill 976 that would allow non-licensed individuals to provide equine dental services in the State of Oregon. Adoption of this bill would create a number of significant animal welfare concerns.

Equine dentistry is a veterinary procedure that requires intravenous sedation in order to be performed effectively. This requires knowledge and skills related to dosing, administration and potential complications that are often under-estimated by lay practitioners. It would put horses at risk to allow these intravenous medications to be administered by a lay-practitioner who does not have adequate training.

Additionally, it is not uncommon for a routine dental procedure to reveal problems with dentition or soft tissue structures in the mouth including fractures, loose teeth, masses or lacerations that require advanced care. It is in the horse's best interest for the practitioner to have the skills and knowledge necessary to address these often painful problems at the time they are discovered. Addressing these problems often requires surgery, which clearly falls under the practice of veterinary medicine and should only be performed by a licensed veterinarian.

Finally, when a dental procedure is performed by a licensed veterinarian, the veterinarian is available to provide follow up care for the patient, which is particularly important if a horse were to experience complications. Lay-practitioners typically travel to an area, perform procedures, and leave the same day. Even if they do live in an area where they provide services, rarely are they available after hours to care for a patient should an emergency arise, leaving the horse at risk of not having access to needed care.

Individuals providing lay-dentistry services are not required to be licensed, and training programs are not standardized or regulated. They have no accountability, and mechanisms are not in place to provide oversight. The horse owning public is often not aware of the risks posed to their horse's welfare when lay-practitioners provide dental procedures. They are depending on your committee to protect them. Please vote no on SB976 to protect the welfare of horses in Oregon.

Please feel free to contact me if I can answer any further questions,

Sincerely,

Barb Crabbe, DVM
MA Bioethics