

Submitter: Katherine Connell  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and  
Wildfire  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB976

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

My name is Katherine Connell and I have practiced equine medicine for over thirty years. I currently work as a veterinarian at Del Oeste Equine Hospital in Junction City, OR. I have concerns about SB976, specifically about allowing lay people to perform equine dentistry.

My primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of my patients and clients. The training programs for lay dentists are not standardized nor vetted. Who is policing these people and ensuring they are applying best practices to their work? I have personally witnessed cases where the teeth were not adequately floated (the practice of filing sharp points off the edges of horses' teeth to keep them comfortable and able to masticate their food correctly) as well as the opposite extreme where all occlusal surfaces were floated so smoothly the horse literally could not eat hay any longer. It is inherently dangerous to stick your hand into a horse's mouth to feel their teeth so the average horse owner may not know if an acceptable job was done (unless food is falling out of the horse's mouth).

Part of performing safe and effective dental work on horses involves sedation, in fact it is standard of care. Many of these drugs are controlled substances and much in the news lately. My understanding of the law is that only a licensed veterinarian can legally possess and administer these agents to an animal. Are these lay dentists going to be allowed to give intravenous drugs? If so where does this stop? Can they prescribe antibiotics and pain medication after an extraction? Are they allowed to trephinate a sinus that is infected secondary to a tooth root abscess? How would a lay person even know if it's safe to administer sedation to a horse?

In short, I believe that SB976 is unsafe for my patients. I thank the committee for their time and urge them to vote NO on this bill.

Katherine Connell, DVM  
Del Oeste Equine Hospital  
Junction City, Oregon