

Submitter: Steve Sundholm
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 Steve Sundholm, DVM, and I have been practicing equine veterinary medicine for 47 years. I have owned and operated Equus Veterinary Service in Oregon City, OR, for the past 42 years. After being certified in equine dentistry, I was involved in the administration of equine dental certification exams to veterinarians and lay individuals for many years. I do not support SB976.

The ability to eat properly is one of the most important aspects in maintaining a horse's health. Dentistry is a medical procedure, sometimes involving surgery, nerve blocks, extractions, reshaping the teeth for proper occlusion, and periodontal issues, all of which require a physical exam and appropriate sedation for the health and safety of the horse.

I was called recently to examine a horse that had a dentistry performed by a lay individual. The horse had been unable to eat since that dentistry 5 days prior. The lay individual could not be reached to recheck his work. The owner was very concerned that the horse couldn't eat, and she was worried because the lay individual said her horse was allergic to sedation. Her horse apparently had a seizure a few seconds after the lay person administered the sedation injection. The injection may have been given in an artery instead of a vein, which could cause a seizure. I proceeded to sedate the horse without incident and examined the mouth. I noted that the previous dentistry had left the teeth with serious malocclusions preventing the horse from chewing without pain. I fixed the malocclusions, and the horse ate his next meal normally.

During many years of equine practice, I have found that sedation, pain killers, and anti-inflammatory medications are necessary to examine and properly balance a horse's mouth, as well as to provide appropriate after-care. Some of the sedatives are controlled substances requiring DEA certification. The sale of all prescription drugs requires a veterinary license. The veterinarian also needs to account for the health and metabolism of the whole horse before proceeding with the teeth. Sometimes, lab tests, radiographs, and scoping are needed to evaluate the appropriate course of treatment. Occasionally, lab results show that a horse is not capable of handling the stress of the treatment or the drugs needed to proceed with the treatment. Lay individuals cannot accomplish the above tasks within the scope of their degree, certification, or training. Therefore, for the welfare of the horse, lay

individuals should work only under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

I am very concerned about this bill and have seen many cases similar to the one described above. I worry about the potential harm to horses from lay providers. Training courses of non-licensed individuals are not standardized or vetted. The lack of a Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship causes problems with recovery and after-care. Horses and their owners deserve the services of a licensed and insured veterinarian.

I thank the committee members for their time and urge you to vote no on SB976.

Sincerely,

Steve Sundholm, DVM