



The Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board

77 South High Street, 16th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215-6108



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE OHIO SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

FISCAL YEARS 2011-2012 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION:

Chairman Widener and respected members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Theresa Stir and, as the Executive Director, I am representing the Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board. I am appearing before this committee to seek the support of the Ohio Senate for the proposed Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013 executive budget for the Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board (hereafter "Board"). This budget contains core funding that will allow the Board to meet its legislative mandates, which include licensing veterinarians and registering veterinary technicians, issuing veterinary business facility permits, investigating complaints against licensees and registrants, conducting compliance inspections of veterinary facilities, establishing continuing education requirements for veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians and promulgating rules.

THE PRACTICE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE AND LICENSING:

Veterinary medicine is an old and respected profession. Veterinarians practice in all areas from small companion animal practice to large animal and livestock practice to exotic animal practice to board certified specialties that parallel human medicine. Registered veterinary technicians are the equivalent of nurses in the field of veterinary medicine. Registered veterinary technicians hold a degree in animal health technology from an approved college. A registered technician may administer drugs, including anesthesia, apply wound dressings, casts and splints, suture skin incisions, and perform dental prophylaxis.

The Board's mission is to regulate the practice of veterinary medicine by licensing qualified applicants, acting on complaints that are filed with the Board, and monitoring continuing education for licensees and registrants. The Board's fiscal objectives are to efficiently and cost-effectively provide timely, professional service to licensees, registrants and the public.

The Board has improved customer service through the use of e-mail and the Internet. All of the Board's forms, minutes, meeting dates and board member information are posted on the agency's website. The Board is committed to updating the posted information monthly so that consumers and licensees can receive current information. The Board also created a newsletter that was sent to each licensee and is posted on the website. In FY 09, the Board began on-line licensure renewal which has resulted in over 50% of both veterinarians and RVTs taking advantage of online renewal. The online renewal has reduced the amount of paper submitted to

the office, and more importantly, the handling of checks. We would eventually like to offer initial license applications through an online process, but at this time it is not within the Board's fiscal capabilities. I would like to encourage the Governor and General Assembly to continue to support the boards and commissions in improving technological capabilities.

PERFORMANCE:

Fiscal: The Board is self-sustained fiscally through licensure fees, late fines and miscellaneous sources. The Board was allotted \$319,407 for FY 10. The Board had \$82,145 in operating expenses in FY 10 which is a 20% reduction from FY08. The decrease in operating expenses can be attributed to having less board meetings, copying almost all documents as two-sided, not paying for a staff or board member to attend the professional regulatory board national conference, and a number of other cost-saving measures. The Board generated \$721,175 in Revenue for FY10. Of the total revenue, \$36,800 has been transferred to fund the Veterinary Student Loan Repayment Program in accordance with ORC 4741.17(A)(7).

Veterinary Student Loan Repayment Program: HB 458 of the 126th General Assembly created a veterinary loan program to address current and future shortages of veterinarians in large animal and regulatory public health situations in Ohio. Loan repayment grants can be up to \$20,000 for a two year commitment of service. HB 119 of the 127th General Assembly provided a line item of \$60,000 for the veterinary student loan repayment program. Pursuant to Section 4741.17(A)(7) ORC, the Board has transferred \$36,770 to the Veterinary Student Loan Repayment Fund (ALI 888-602) to reflect \$10.00 from each veterinary license renewal from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. In 2010, the Board issued two awards in the amount of \$30,000.

Licensure: The Board is currently responsible for the licensure requirements of 3,790 veterinarians, 2,492 registered veterinary technicians, 128 limited licensed veterinarians (whose practice is limited to an academic institution or government laboratory), and 52 business facility licenses. The number of licensees varies slightly from year to year. For instance:

<u>RVTs:</u>		<u>Veterinarians:</u>	
FY 07 New: 258	Total: 1825	FY 07 New: 194	Total: 3775
FY 08 New: 206	Total: 2017	FY 08 New: 144	Total: 3492
FY 09 New: 243	Total: 2168	FY 09 New: 158	Total: 3861
FY 10 New: 297	Total: 2492	FY 10 New: 186	Total: 3790

In an effort to perform an internal performance audit, the Board is beginning to track the number of days to issue a license from the date the application is received to the date it is issued.

Complaint & Disciplinary Process: During FY 10, the Board received 122 complaints. The Board does not have jurisdiction over boarding, grooming, or pet breeding issues, fees charged or any financial transactions (such as attempts to collect debts), communications, business practices, or refusal to write prescriptions. The Board reports discipline taken by the state Board to a national registry and places the disciplinary action on its website.

Currently, the average time span from the time a complaint is received until disposition of the case by the Board members is two months.

The Board contracts for investigative services with the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Once the Board reviews a complaint and medical record, they will determine if the complaint warrants an investigation which is then sent to the ODA with the case file. The Board has found this arrangement very satisfactory. The Board pays an hourly rate and mileage for each inspection completed. This cooperative effort allows the agencies to split some costs when able and work more efficiently.

Communication: The Board consists of two full time staff members and one part time clerk, which has been vacant since October, 2010. The Board staff prides itself on its communication skills and quick response whether it is by phone, mail, or electronic correspondence. The Board has updated the website to include recent Board positions on issues, approved continuing education, criminal background check information, Board discipline, and the public records policy. Board members and staff continue to provide educational presentations to veterinarians and veterinary technicians as requested.

IT: The Board contracts with DAS shared services for computer services.

EXECUTIVE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES:

From FY 02- FY10, the Board consistently decreased its appropriation and spending by not filling one position, contracting work on an hourly basis, and by performing more duties in-house. In FY 01 the appropriation was \$452,823. Even with the current increases, the Board's appropriations are still well below their level of ten years ago.

The Board's payroll expenses are a large portion of the budget. The Board has experienced a turnover of its Administrative Assistant and part-time employee in the last fiscal year which has assisted with lowering the Board's payroll costs. However, the Board is no different than any other agency in that we are subject to the impact of increased costs of health care benefits, PERS contribution rates and other changes that affect payroll spending. Additionally, the Board funds seven board members for 96 hours per member/fiscal year. The number of board meetings in a year will likely require a decrease with the current budget funding proposal.

In an effort to keep costs down, the Board prints all licensing and renewal forms in house rather than paying to have them printed. In addition to contracting with the Ohio Department of Agriculture for investigatory services, the Board contracts with Central Services Agency, a division of the Department of Administrative Services, for OAKS fiscal and human resource assistance. The Board hand-processes all renewals, eliminating the need for a lockbox. The Board is always looking for ways to increase savings and efficiency while still meeting the mission of the Board.

In summary, the approval of a FY 12 & 13 budget of \$322,375 and \$319,857, respectively, for the Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board, with some adjustments, will permit the continuance of the Board's current operations. On behalf of the Ohio Veterinary Medical

Licensing Board, I would like to thank the members of this Committee of the Ohio Senate for the opportunity to present the board's FY 2012 and FY 2013 budget.