

Veterinary Medicine Telehealth Background:

- On April 15, 2021, the Michigan Board of Veterinary Medicine finalized state rules allowing telemedicine for veterinary care. As with human medicine, the rules allow for a patient to begin telemedicine without first having to do an in-person visit with a veterinarian.
- Unless it is amended, House Bill 4912 severely limits veterinary telemedicine by only allowing it to occur after an in-person visit takes place. Unfortunately, having to do an in-person visit defeats the purpose of telemedicine and is not even a requirement for human medicine.
- The Committee Substitute for House Bill 4912 allows telemedicine to begin without first requiring an in-person visit. It improves efficiencies and accessibility, makes sense for veterinary medicine, and benefits both animals and their owners.
- Allowing telehealth to begin without first doing an in-person visit:
 - Has long been the practice for Human Medicine ⁱ
 - Is explicitly allowed in rules adopted by the Michigan Board of Veterinary Medicine ⁱⁱ
 - Is consistent with *American Association of State Veterinary Boards* guidelines ⁱⁱⁱ

Benefits of Veterinary Telemedicine:

- Veterinary telemedicine is a time tested, safe, and effective way to treat patients. There have never been complaints where it exists.
- Telemedicine is an excellent resource for emergency or after-hours situations.
- For those in rural and urban areas with limited or no transportation, telemedicine may be the only option for care.
- Telemedicine is often the option for senior citizens with mobility issues to obtain veterinary care.
- Telemedicine greatly lessens the level of anxiety for animals.
- Remote telemedicine reduces the chance of an animal catching a new illness.
- Veterinary telemedicine is as effective tool for post-surgical care.
- With the current shortage of veterinarians this allows for a greater use of resources and better access to timely care.
- Telemedicine will not replace office visits, but it has been shown to be an effective tool in treating animals. Licensed veterinarians should be **trusted** to use this tool to advance treatment and care.
- Michigan allows telemedicine to begin without first having an in-person visit for human medicine for all ages. Michigan should allow the same for veterinary medicine.

ⁱ See: MCL 500.3476 Telemedicine services; provisions; definitions

ⁱⁱ See: R 338.4901a Telehealth Services. Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs—Veterinary Medicine General Rules

ⁱⁱⁱ See: AAVSB Recommended Guidelines for the Appropriate Use of Telehealth Technologies in the Practice of Veterinary Medicine. September 2018