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AB-516 Registered veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants: scope of practice. (2025-2026)

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Assembly Bill No. 516

CHAPTER 371

An act to amend Section 4840 of the Business and Professions Code, relating to healing arts.

[Approved by Governor October 06, 2025. Filed with Secretary of State October 06, 2025.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 516, Kalra. Registered veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants: scope of practice.

Existing law, the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act, establishes the California Veterinary Medical Board to license and regulate the practice of veterinary medicine. Existing law authorizes registered veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants to perform animal health care services prescribed by law under the supervision of a veterinarian, and authorizes registered veterinary technicians to perform animal health care services on animals impounded by a state, county, city, or city and county agency pursuant to an order of a veterinarian.

This bill would instead authorize registered veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants to perform animal health care services not otherwise prohibited by law under the supervision of a veterinarian, and would authorize both registered veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants to perform animal health care services not otherwise prohibited by law on animals housed in public or private animal shelters, humane societies, or societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals pursuant to an order of a veterinarian. The bill would also authorize a registered veterinary technician to perform dental care procedures, including tooth extractions, under the supervision of a veterinarian.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 4840 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

4840. (a) Registered veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants are approved to perform animal health care services not otherwise prohibited by law under the supervision of a veterinarian licensed or authorized to practice in this state.

(b) (1) Registered veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants may perform animal health care services not otherwise prohibited by law on those animals housed in public or private animal shelters, humane societies, or societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals pursuant to the direct order, written order, or telephonic order of a veterinarian licensed or authorized to practice in this state.

(2) An order established by a veterinarian pursuant to paragraph (1) may include any of the following information:

(A) Time periods by which an animal is required to be assessed at intake and monitored while in the custody of an agency.

(B) Protocols to address the treatment of common medical conditions encountered in animals.

(C) Protocols for controlling infectious and zoonotic diseases and for preventing environmental contamination.

(D) Protocols for controlling the acute pain of an animal.

(E) Communication requirements between the registered veterinary technician and the supervising veterinarian.

(F) Euthanasia criteria for medically related cases.

(c) Registered veterinary technicians may perform dental care procedures, including tooth extractions, under the supervision of a veterinarian licensed or authorized to practice in this state.

(d) Registered veterinary technicians may apply for registration from the federal Drug Enforcement Administration that authorizes the direct purchase of sodium pentobarbital for the performance of euthanasia as provided for in paragraph (4) of subdivision (a) of Section 4827 without the supervision or authorization of a licensed veterinarian.

(e) Registered veterinary technicians may act as an agent of the supervising veterinarian in establishing the veterinarian-client-patient relationship for the purposes of administering preventive or prophylactic vaccines or medications for the control or eradication of apparent or anticipated internal or external parasites in accordance with subdivision (b) of Section 4826.7.