

Veterinary Law and Ethics Syllabus

Section 1 – Moral, Ethical and Legal Decision Making – 2 Hours

- Explain the factors in moral, ethical and legal decision making
- Outline the importance ethics rounds play when making choices that can reduce staff discord and grow leadership skill and stature
- Define differences between ethical principles and legal requirements
- Know where to find resources available to assist in making these decisions

Section 2 – Understanding State Board Licensing Issues and Disciplinary Procedures – 2 Hours

- Explain the State Board's mission and regulation of the legal monopoly granted to veterinarians by the board's licensing authority
- Articulate how practice acts define what is legal versus illegal
- Determine what is required to obtain veterinary and veterinary technician licenses
- Learn the legalities of non-veterinary practice ownership, rules and disciplinary actions for unprofessional conduct and regulations associated with mandatory continuing education

Section 3 – Applied Ethics – Relations with Colleagues – 1 Hour

- Develop a course of action to take when confronted with suspected or actual negligent care rendered by colleagues
- Access and utilize key reference materials to develop scripts with which to approach clients where potentially adversarial medical, ethical and legal issues exist
- Find and apply the AVMA's Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics

Section 4 – Animal Law – 5 Hours

- Define pet, owner and guardian and be able to articulate the debates associated with each term
- Differentiate between economic and non-economic damages for pet loss
- Clarify the value of knowledge of and application of state and local laws and where to find them
- Evaluate the implications of confinement, nuisance, bite, dangerous dog, abandonment, lien, livestock protection, welfare and anti-cruelty laws

Section 5 – The Legal Use of Veterinary Drugs – 2 Hours

- Understand proposals that will mandate that veterinarians provide prescriptions
- Identify FDA, USDA, EPA and DEA jurisdiction over veterinary drugs and biologicals
- Summarize FDA drug compounding rules and risks associated with their use
- Articulate the elements required for a valid veterinary-client-patient relationship
- Identify current legal standards regarding the need for pain management drugs

Section 6 – Professional Negligence / Paw & Order: The Profession on Trial – 4 Hours

- Identify the four elements of a cause of action for negligence
- Explain negligence law's duty of care element
- Describe the role that standards of care play in proving negligence cases
- Articulate the difficulties proving proximate causation
- Recognize how proof of damages impacts case outcomes
- Articulate the veterinarian's role in preventing zoonotic diseases; view Paw & Order court case video to see how medical records and malpractice overlap

Section 7 – Medical Records – 2 Hours

- List requirements for compliance with State Board medical records regulations
- Articulate the business, medical, public relations, financial and legal value of good client and patient records
- Demonstrate innovative strategies for patient record management
- Discuss ownership, retention and confidentiality requirements for records
- Describe what should versus should not be entered in your records
- Explain the importance of legal presumptions, the value of well written, signed client consent forms and the evidentiary clout this provides

Section 8 – Introduction to Contract Law – 2 Hours

- Outline the elements required to create enforceable contracts
- Describe the role medical care plans play as this terminology replaces money focused estimates
- Understand remedies for breaches of contracts
- Explain the law of unjust enrichment and its application to patient care