

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1271

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, March 17, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to dispensing and administration of drugs by registered or licensed veterinary personnel.

**Brief Description:** Regarding the preparing and administration of drugs by registered or licensed veterinary personnel.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Haigh, Finn, Crouse, Green, Liias, Springer, O'Brien, Goodman, Morris, Ormsby, Blake, Van De Wege, Moeller, Cody, Conway, Hurst, Walsh, McCune, Hinkle, Nelson and Kenney).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/23/09, 95-0.

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 3/17/09 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hatfield, Chair; Ranker, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Haugen, Morton and Shin.

**Staff:** Bob Lee (786-7404)

**Background:** A veterinary technician is a person who is licensed by the Washington Veterinary Board of Governors (Board) after meeting certain statutory requirements. These requirements include passing an examination administered by the Board and completing a post-high school course approved by the Board, or having five years of practical experience, acceptable to the Board, with a licensed veterinarian.

A veterinary medication clerk is a person who has satisfactorily completed a Board-approved training program designed to teach certain nondiscretionary functions used in dispensing legend and nonlegend drugs, except controlled substances.

Currently, a veterinarian legally prescribing drugs may delegate certain nondiscretionary functions used in dispensing legend and nonlegend drugs, except controlled substances, to a

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licensed veterinary technician or a veterinary medication clerk while under the veterinarian's direct supervision. Direct supervision means the veterinarian is on the premises and is quickly and easily available, while indirect supervision means the veterinarian is not on the premises but has given written or oral instructions for the delegated task.

Legend drugs are any drugs that are required by state law or by regulation of the Washington State Board of Pharmacy to be dispensed by prescription only or are restricted to use by practitioners only.

**Summary of Bill:** Controlled substances are added to an existing list of drugs that a veterinarian legally prescribing drugs is permitted to ask a licensed veterinary technician to dispense under the veterinarian's indirect supervision.

A licensed veterinary technician is allowed to administer legend drugs and controlled substances under the indirect supervision of a veterinarian.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** None.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: To fulfill the needs for veterinarian services, the role and responsibilities of licensed veterinary technicians has increased. A review by the Attorney General revealed that the current statute does not allow the vet techs to perform all the functions for which they have been trained. This bill makes it legal for vet techs to do the work they have been doing for a number of years. Licensed veterinarians retain their responsibility in authorizing and supervising the work of the vet techs. Existing state and federal requirements mandate that all controlled substances be kept in a separate drawer in a locked facility and that they be accounted for.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Haigh, prime sponsor; Greg Hanon, Washington Veterinary Medical Association.