

WAC 246-933-200 Veterinary-client-patient relationship. A veterinary-client-patient relationship is the basis for interaction between veterinarians and their clients and patients.

(1) A veterinary-client-patient relationship exists when all of the following conditions have been met:

(a) The veterinarian has assumed responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the animal(s) and need for medical treatment, and the client or key party as defined in WAC 246-934-020 has agreed to follow the instructions of the veterinarian.

(b) The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) to initiate, at a minimum, a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical conditions of the animal(s). This means the veterinarian:

(i) Has examined the animal(s) within the last year, or sooner if medically appropriate; or

(ii) In cases involving operations with several animals, such as encountered at farms, laboratories, or in shelters, is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal(s) by virtue of an examination of the animal(s) or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal(s) are kept.

(c) The veterinarian is readily available for follow-up evaluation or has arranged for emergency coverage and continuing care and treatment.

(2) The veterinarian shall not establish a veterinary-client-patient relationship solely by telephonic or other electronic means. However, once established, a veterinary-client-patient relationship may be maintained between medically necessary examinations via telephone or other types of consultations.

(3) The veterinary-client-patient relationship may be terminated under these conditions:

(a) Veterinarians may terminate a veterinary-client-patient relationship as long as the termination does not constitute patient abandonment as described in WAC 246-933-060.

(b) If there is an ongoing medical or surgical condition, the patient should be referred to another veterinarian for diagnosis, care, and treatment.

(c) Clients may terminate the veterinary-client-patient relationship at any time.

(4) For animals or animal products for food consumption:

(a) There must be a written agreement with the client that identifies the farm veterinarian of record (VOR) who is accountable for drug use and treatments administered to the animals on the farm operation;

(b) The VOR is the responsible party for providing appropriate oversight of drug use on the farm operation. Oversight includes establishment of diagnostic and treatment protocols, training of personnel, review of treatment records, monitoring drug inventories, assuring appropriate labeling of drugs, and monitoring compliance and outcomes. Veterinary oversight of drug use must include all drugs used on the farm regardless of the distribution of the drugs to the farm;

(c) Provision of drugs or drug prescriptions must be for specific time frames appropriate to the scope and type of operation involved and only for the management groups within the operation that the VOR has direct involvement and oversight;

(d) A veterinarian issuing a veterinary feed directive (VFD) must comply with applicable federal law, including 21 C.F.R. 558.6.

(5) Medical records must be maintained pursuant to WAC 246-933-320(7).

(6) (a) A veterinarian shall use or prescribe drugs only within the context of a veterinary-client-patient relationship. Veterinary prescription drugs are restricted by federal law, under 21 U.S.C. Sec. 353(f), to be used by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

(b) Extra label use is legal only when ordered by a veterinarian and within the context of a veterinary-client-patient relationship.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.92.030. WSR 16-11-004, § 246-933-200, filed 5/4/16, effective 6/4/16.]