

Interim Committee Combining Certain Public Health Boards

December 14, 2016

Overview of Kansas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners Jay Hedrick, DVM, Executive Director

Good Afternoon Chairman Hawkins and members of the Interim Committee for Combining Certain Public Health Boards.

My name is Dr. Jay Hedrick, Executive Director for the Kansas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (KBVE). I am here on behalf of the Board to provide an overview of the agency and comments on why Public Health Board consolidation will decrease KBVE efficiencies. Thank you for allowing me to make my presentation this week as I was traveling out of state last week.

I appreciate this time to tell you about the KBVE. The agency was developed in 1907 by legislative action. The mission of the Board of Veterinary Examiners is to promote public health, safety, and welfare relative to veterinary medical services offered to the citizens of Kansas through licensure of veterinarians, and registration of veterinary technicians and veterinary premises.

The KBVE meets in person five times a year, and additionally by conference call as needed. There are seven Board members, comprised of six veterinarians and one non-veterinarian. The Board has four staff persons.

The news of a possible merger of Public Health agencies definitely brings concerns to KBVE in light of negative outcomes of our recent trial merger with the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA). Those negative outcomes include: non-communication, disruption and downgrade of services, loss of control, overturning of decisions, dilution of authority, undermining of mission, potential legal liabilities, disorganization of meetings, and lack of new board member orientation and training.

The two-year trial merger with KDA was for the purpose of exploring optimization of administrative efficiencies for the KBVE, while allowing the board to retain responsibility and authority in regulating the practice of veterinary medicine. However, **specific areas of potential improved efficiencies** - compared to *actual outcomes* include:

Fiscal - *expenditures increased.*

Legal - *Unfamiliar with functions of a licensing and discipline agency. Steep learning curve for counsel.*

Information technology - *questionable security of records with large financial waste to agency without successful transfer of paper records to usable digital records, and no progress of promised online licensing.*

Legislative - *changes without input from KBVE and corrections still being made.*

Communications - *reactive communications instead of proactive, statements made without any board member input. Delegating authority to approve KSU veterinary students for the national licensing exam to an out of state entity, loss of contact to our graduating veterinarians.*

Having served in various leadership capacities in the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB), I am intimately familiar with the national surveys by the AAVSB which show no statistical benchmarks that a merged agency has enhanced efficiencies over a non-merged agency. A larger percent of merged agencies chose not to respond to the survey and those that did respond did not provide complete data when compared to non-merged agencies.

A round-table discussion on merged and non-merged agencies at the September 2015 AAVSB meeting, provided feedback from multiple states indicating non-merged were the most efficient and effective boards for public protection. The least efficient and effective board for public protection were boards merged under the wrong agencies and mega agency boards merged under one large umbrella agency.

More layers tend to delay and interfere with the mission of public protection. There is a wide range of renewal fees and frequency among states. The average veterinarian license renewal fee for all merged Boards is \$140.00 annually. Kansas veterinarian license renewal fee is \$95.00 annually.

In theory, consolidation of services for like-minded agencies with similar missions and goals would be a positive move. That theory must be researched to be sure a merging of two or more agencies will benefit those being served, the citizens of Kansas. We must remember the public includes those being regulated by these agencies. The complainant and respondent both deserve a fair and expedient investigational process. Decisions to eliminate "redundancy" in services must take into account the specific needs of each agency to determine if there are, in fact, real redundancies.

A specific concern is the financial burden for KBVE in funding such a study as described in the Alvarez-Marsal report. We are currently burdened with the effects of our recent trial merger resulting in a \$127,112 (39.5%) decrease in our fee fund balance and the need to rebuild the agency's organization and office.

I can only hope there might be extreme caution in developing an umbrella agency where the member boards are advisory and recommendations are passed on to a central authority where final decisions on "litigation" are made. Decisions on malpractice must remain with the experts in a given profession.

Thank you for the opportunity to address your committee, if the Kansas Board of Veterinary Examiners can provide additional information please let us know.

Agency Mission – To promote public health, safety and welfare relative to the practice of veterinary medicine.

Agency Philosophy – To approach our activities with a deep sense of purpose and responsibility; to conduct ourselves in accordance with the highest standards of ethics, accountability, efficiency and openness; to provide the public and veterinary profession alike a balanced and sensible approach to regulation.

Agency Goals – The Kansas Board of Veterinary Examiners has the following goals:

- To assure the public consumer that each licensed veterinarian and each registered veterinary technician is qualified, properly trained, and performing in accordance with the Kansas Veterinary Practice Act.
- To assure that all Kansas veterinary premises meet or exceed minimum premise standards to assure adequate facilities for providing veterinary services to the public in a sanitary and safe manner.
- To assure that licensees practice in a manner that protects the safety of animal products entering the public food chain, and prevents and controls animal diseases communicable to humans.
- To guard against negligent and fraudulent practices, and respond efficiently and effectively in the investigation of all allegations of violations reported to the agency.

Kansas Veterinary Oversight 2016

7/1/2015 – 6/30/2016

2613 Veterinary license renewals

176 **NEW** licenses

443 Vet Technician renewals

54 **NEW** Vet Technician registrations

498 Veterinary Premises registration renewed

15 **NEW** Veterinary Premises registered

317 Premise inspections

At the end of FY'16, the Kansas Board of Veterinary Examiners and the Kansas Department of Agriculture completed a two-year trial merger. The Board of Veterinary Examiners began FY'17 as a stand-alone regulatory agency deriving 100% of its revenues from licensing fees and 0% from the state general funds. The board is composed of seven members. By statute, six members are licensed veterinarians and one member is a non-veterinarian Kansas resident. The board makes policy decisions for the agency and oversees agency operations and staff. The agency has four FTE staff positions. Agency staff implement the policies set forth by the board and carry out the day to day work of the board. As a State of Kansas governmental agency, the KBVE conducts itself in accordance with all provisions of the Kansas Open Meetings and Open Records Acts.

KBVE Board Members

Joseph Allen, Non Veterinary Member
Philip Bentz, DVM
Gregory E. Bogue, DVM, President
Sheila M. Dodson, DVM
Michael C. Kobuszewski, DVM
Paul F. Ritter, DVM
Orman Snyder, DVM

KBVE Staff

Konrad Coe, Premise Inspector
Dirk Hanson, DVM, Investigator
Jay Hedrick, DVM, Executive Director
Cheryl Mermis, Administrative Officer