



MAINE DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL & FINANCIAL REGULATION  
Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation  
**BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICINE**

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Janet T. Mills  
Governor

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**GUIDANCE PAPER #02-2020**  
**Low-Cost Spay/Neuter and Vaccine Clinic Offerings**  
**(8/11/2020)**

At its virtual board meeting on August 11, 2020 the Board discussed a complaint case that raised concerns about whether applicable standards of veterinary practice are being followed by all licensed veterinarians when conducting low-cost spay/neuter and vaccine clinic offerings. The purpose of this guidance paper is to notify licensed veterinarians of the Board's concern with possible sub-standard practice by some veterinarians, which could lead to patient harm and injury.

The Board recognizes and understands the importance of low-cost clinics and that such clinics are valuable to animal health care that might otherwise not be available to some. It also recognizes that such clinics may generate an unanticipated high turnout. However, conducting low-cost clinics should not diminish the quality of care to which patients are entitled. All licensed veterinarians are reminded that they must maintain applicable standards of practice and care at all times.

The Board wishes to communicate the following:

**Rabies Clinics** – For rabies clinics where only a rabies vaccine is administered, under most circumstances, there is no requirement for a physical examination, but the veterinarian is responsible for maintaining a copy of the rabies vaccine certificate.

**Vaccine Clinics** – (where vaccines in addition to the rabies vaccines are administered) – The veterinarian is responsible for, at a minimum:

- Conducting a physical examination and recording the findings of the examination.
- Maintaining a record of the vaccines administered.

**Spay/Neuter Clinics** – The veterinarian is responsible for, at a minimum:

- ☒ Conducting a physical examination on the day of surgery. The veterinarian performing the surgery must perform a physical examination on the day of the procedure to determine the patient’s readiness for surgery (such as, cardiovascular stability for anesthesia) and record the results of the examination.

A physical examination performed by an assistant or technician is not sufficient. This examination should not be delegated to an assistant or technician.

The Board commends low-cost clinic organizers and participants in support of the public’s need for low cost care to the extent possible, but it is equally important for licensed veterinarians to uphold essential good practice standards of care at all times.

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**Board of Veterinary Medicine Members:**

*Donald Hoenig, VMD, Board Chair*

*Douglas Andrews, DVM, Board Vice-Chair*

*Nicholas Pesut, VMD, Board Complaint Officer & Medical Records Reviewer*

*Peter Davis, DVM, Veterinarian Member*

*Matthew Townsend, DVM, Veterinarian Member (absent from the 8/11/2020 board meeting)*