



Q & A Guideline about Your Rights Getting Prescriptions

Q: You ask your vet to write a prescription rather than dispense a prescription drug out of his/her clinic. What are your rights and his/her responsibilities?

A: The AVMA developed a position statement to guide your vets actions. The AVMA encourages veterinarians to honor client requests to prescribe rather than dispense a drug when a veterinarian-client-patient relationship exists and the veterinarian has determined that the drug is medically necessary. If the veterinarian does not have a veterinarian-client-patient relationship or does not believe the drug is medically indicated, the veterinarian should not write the prescription.

If the veterinarian has determined that dispensing the drug from the clinic may be best for the patient or client, the veterinarian may wish to explain the reasons for this to the client. If, however, the client prefers a prescription to a dispensed drug, veterinarians should honor client requests to prescribe rather than dispense a drug. The client has the option of filling a prescription at any pharmacy.

Some state regulations require a veterinarian to provide a prescription rather than dispense a drug when requested by the client. None of these laws require the veterinarian to write a prescription in the absence of a veterinarian-client-patient relationship or if the drug is not medically indicated. Veterinarians should ascertain state requirements by contacting the Board of Veterinary Medicine in the state(s) in which they are licensed. Also, depending upon the state, Board of Pharmacy regulations may also apply to veterinarians as handlers of prescription drugs. Therefore, veterinarians should make themselves aware of any pertinent Board of Pharmacy regulations in their state. State veterinary medical associations work on your behalf to monitor state issues that affect veterinary medicine and may be a very helpful resource.