



**C.R.S. 12-315-104**

Statutes current through Chapter 1 of the 2024 Regular Session, effective as of February 1, 2024. The 2024 legislative changes are not final until compared and reconciled to the 2024 work product of the Colorado Office of Legislative Services later in 2024.

**Colorado Revised Statutes Annotated > Title 12. Professions and Occupations (§§ 12-1-101 — 12-315-210) > Health Care Professions and Occupations (Arts. 200 — 315) > Article 315. Veterinarians (Pts. 1 — 2) > Part 1. General Provisions (§§ 12-315-101 — 12-315-126)**

**12-315-104. Definitions.**

As used in this article 315, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) "Animal" means any animal other than human, and the term includes fowl, birds, amphibians, fish, and reptiles, wild or domestic, living or dead.

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(1.5) "Animal shelter" has the meaning set forth in section 35-80-102.

(2) "Artificial insemination" means the collection of semen and the fertilization of, or attempted fertilization of, the ova of the female animal by placing or implanting, by artificial means, in the genital tract of the female animal the semen obtained from the male animal that will subsequently be used, or attempted to be used, to impregnate the female.

(3) "Board" means the state board of veterinary medicine created in section 12-315-106.

(4) "Client" means the patient's owner, the owner's agent, or a person responsible for the patient.

(5) "Complainant" means the board or any other person who initiates a proceeding.

(6) "Direct supervision" means the supervising licensed veterinarian is readily available on the premises where the patient is being treated.

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(7) "Dispense" means to provide a drug or device, other than by distribution, bearing a label stating the name of the veterinarian, the date dispensed, directions for use, all cautionary statements, withdrawal time, if appropriate, the identity of the animal, and the owner's name.

(8) "Distribute" or "distribution" means to provide a drug or device in the manufacturer's original package to the client-patient.

(9) "Hearing" means any proceeding initiated before the board in which the legal rights, duties, privileges, or immunities of a specific party or parties are determined.

(10) "Immediate supervision" means the supervising licensed veterinarian and any person being supervised are in direct contact with the patient.

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(10.5) "Indirect supervision" means supervision in which the supervising licensed veterinarian directs or supervises the authorized delegated treatment or collection of diagnostic information of a patient at veterinary premises without being on the premises but being readily available for communication.

(11) "Licensed veterinarian" means a person licensed pursuant to this part 1.

(12) "Ova transplantation" means a technique by which fertilized embryos are collected from a donor female and transferred to a recipient female that serves as a surrogate mother for the remainder of the pregnancy.

**(13)** "Patient" means an animal that is examined or treated by a licensed veterinarian and includes herds, flocks, litters, and other groups of animals.

**(14)** "Practice of veterinary medicine" means any of the following:

**(a)** The diagnosing, treating, correcting, changing, relieving, or preventing of animal disease, deformity, defect, injury, or other physical or mental conditions, including the prescription or administration of any drug, medicine, biologic, apparatus, application, anesthetic, or other therapeutic or diagnostic substance or technique and the use of any manual or mechanical procedure for artificial insemination, for ova transplantation, for testing for pregnancy, or for correcting sterility or infertility or to render advice or recommendation with regard thereto;

**(b)** The representation, directly or indirectly, publicly or privately, of an ability and willingness to do an act described in subsection (14)(a) of this section;

**(c)** The use of any title, words, abbreviation, or letters in a manner or under circumstances that induce the belief that a person using them is qualified to do any act described in subsection (14)(a) of this section;

**(d)** The application of principles of environmental sanitation, food inspection, environmental pollution control, animal nutrition, zoonotic disease control, and disaster medicine as applied to an act described in subsection (14)(a) of this section.

**(15)** "Rule" means any regulation, standard, or statement of policy adopted by the board to implement, interpret, or clarify the law that it enforces and administers and that governs its duties, functions, organization, and procedure.

**(16)** "School of veterinary medicine" means any veterinary school or department of a legally organized college or university whose course of study in the art and science of veterinary medicine has been approved by the board.

**(17)** "Unprofessional or unethical conduct" includes, but is not limited to, conduct of a character likely to deceive or defraud the public; false or misleading advertising; obtaining any fee or compensation by fraud or misrepresentation; sharing office space with any person illegally practicing veterinary medicine; employing either indirectly or directly any unlicensed person to practice veterinary medicine or to render any veterinary services except as provided in this article 315; or the violation of any rules adopted by the board that provide a code of professional ethics to be followed and carried out by persons licensed under this article 315.

**(18)** "Veterinarian" means a person who has received a doctor's degree in veterinary medicine, or its equivalent, from a school of veterinary medicine.

**(19)** "Veterinarian-client-patient relationship" means that relationship established when:

**(a)** The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of an animal and the need for medical treatment, and the owner or other caretaker has agreed to follow the instruction of the veterinarian;

**(b)** There is sufficient knowledge of an animal by the veterinarian to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal, which means that the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal by virtue of an examination of the animal or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal is kept; and

**(c)** The practicing veterinarian is readily available, or has arranged for emergency coverage, for follow-up evaluation in the event of adverse reactions or failure of the treatment regimen.

**(20)** "Veterinary medicine" includes veterinary surgery, obstetrics, dentistry, and all other branches or specialties of animal medicine.

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(21) "Veterinary premises" or "premises" means a veterinary office, hospital, clinic, or temporary location where veterinary medicine is being practiced by or under the direction and supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

(21.5) "Veterinary professional" means a veterinarian licensed pursuant to this part 1 and a veterinary technician registered pursuant to part 2 of this article 315.

(22) "Veterinary student" is a veterinary medical student who is enrolled in a school of veterinary medicine.

(23) "Veterinary student preceptor" is a veterinary medical student enrolled in a preceptor program in a school of veterinary medicine.

(24) "Veterinary technician" means a veterinary technician registered pursuant to part 2 of this article 315.

(25) "Veterinary technician credentialing organization" or "credentialing organization" means:

- (a) A veterinary technician credentialing organization approved by the board pursuant to section 12-315-201 to credential veterinary technicians in this state; or
- (b) The board if, pursuant to section 12-315-201 (2), no credentialing organization is approved.

## History

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Source: L. 2019: Entire title R&RE with relocations, [\(HB 19-1172\), ch. 136, p. 1617, § 1](#), effective October 1. L. 2022: (1.5), (10.5), (21.5), (24), and (25) added and (11) amended, [\(HB 22-1235\), ch. 442, p. 3102, § 8](#), effective August 10.

Annotations

## Research References & Practice Aids

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### Hierarchy Notes:

[C.R.S. Title 12](#)

Source:

[C.R.S. Title 12, Art. 315](#)

## State Notes

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## Notes

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### Editor's note:

This section is similar to former § 12-64-103 as it existed prior to 2019.

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## C.R.S. 12-315-105

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**Colorado Revised Statutes Annotated > Title 12. Professions and Occupations (§§ 12-1-101 — 12-315-210) > Health Care Professions and Occupations (Arts. 200 — 315) > Article 315. Veterinarians (Pts. 1 — 2) > Part 1. General Provisions (§§ 12-315-101 — 12-315-126)**

### 12-315-105. License requirements and exceptions - definitions - rules.

(1) A person shall not practice veterinary medicine in this state if the person is not a licensed veterinarian. A person shall not practice artificial insemination or ova transplantation of cattle or other animal species in this state except in accordance with section 12-315-106 (5)(c). This article 315 does not prohibit:

(a) An employee of the federal, state, or local government from performing the employee's official duties;

(b) A person who is a veterinary student or veterinary student preceptor in an approved school of veterinary medicine from performing duties or actions as described in section 12-315-116;

(c) A person from advising with respect to, or performing acts that are, accepted livestock management practices;

(d) A veterinarian regularly licensed in another state from consulting with a licensed veterinarian in this state;

(e) Any merchant or manufacturer from selling, at the person's regular place of business, medicines, feed, appliances, or other products used in the prevention or treatment of animal diseases;

(f)

(I) Except as provided in subsection (1)(f)(II) of this section and subject to subsection (2) of this section, the owner of an animal and the owner's employees from caring for and treating the animal belonging to the owner.

(II) Subsection (1)(f)(I) of this section does not apply in cases where the ownership of the animal was transferred for purposes of circumventing this article 315 or where the primary reason for hiring the employee is to circumvent this article 315.

(g) A person from lecturing or giving instructions or demonstrations at a school of veterinary medicine or in connection with a continuing education course or seminar for veterinarians;

(h) Any person from selling or applying any pesticide, insecticide, or herbicide;

(i) Any person from engaging in bona fide scientific research that reasonably requires experimentation involving animals or commercial production of biologics or animal medicines;

(j) Any person from performing duties other than diagnosis, prescription, surgery, or initiating treatment under the direction and supervision of a licensed veterinarian who shall be responsible for the person's performance;

(k) Repealed.

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- (l) Any person otherwise appropriately licensed or approved by the state from performing the functions described in section 12-315-104 (14)(d);
- (m) Any person from performing massage on an animal in accordance with section 12-235-110 (1)(f);
- (n) The practice of animal chiropractic pursuant to section 12-215-127;
- (o) The practice of animal physical therapy pursuant to section 12-285-116 (4);
- (p) Any person from assisting in a surgical procedure under the immediate supervision of a licensed veterinarian, who is responsible for the person's performance.

(q)

(l)

(A) A person from administering a rabies vaccine to an animal if the person is under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian and has been trained in rabies vaccine storage, handling, and administration and in the management of adverse events; or

(B) A person working on behalf of an animal shelter from administering a rabies vaccine to animal-shelter-owned animals if the person is under the indirect supervision of a licensed veterinarian and has been trained in rabies vaccine storage, handling, and administration and in the management of adverse events.

(II) The veterinarian signing the rabies vaccination certificate shall ensure that the person who administered the vaccine pursuant to this subsection (1)(q) is identified on the certificate.

(2)

(a) Notwithstanding subsection (1)(f) of this section and except as permitted by subsection (1)(j) of this section, a person who is not a licensed veterinarian shall not administer, distribute, dispense, or prescribe prescription drugs. Except as provided in subsection (2)(b) of this section, a licensed veterinarian must have a veterinarian-client-patient relationship with the animal and its owner or other caretaker in order to administer, distribute, dispense, or prescribe prescription drugs to or for an animal.

(b)

(I) In an emergency situation where a licensed veterinarian who has a veterinarian-client-patient relationship prescribes a prescription drug that the licensed veterinarian does not have in stock and is not available at a local pharmacy, another licensed veterinarian who does not have a veterinarian-client-patient relationship with the animal and owner or other caretaker may administer, distribute, or dispense the prescription drug to the animal based on the examining veterinarian's expertise and veterinarian-client-patient relationship.

(II) The board shall adopt rules defining what constitutes an emergency situation under which this subsection (2)(b) would apply, including a requirement that failure to administer, distribute, or dispense the prescription drug threatens the health and well-being of the animal and requiring detailed records documenting the emergency circumstances that include at least the following:

(A) A requirement that the examining veterinarian with the veterinarian-client-patient relationship document the emergency and the immediate need for the prescription drug;

(B) A requirement that the examining veterinarian with the veterinarian-client-patient relationship document the veterinarian's efforts to obtain the prescription drug from a local pharmacy, including documentation of contact with at least one pharmacy in the general proximity of the examination location that does not have the prescription drug immediately available; and

(C) A requirement that the licensed veterinarian who administers, distributes, or dispenses the prescription drug document the date the prescription is administered, distributed, or dispensed.

(III) A veterinarian who administers, distributes, dispenses, or prescribes a prescription drug in accordance with this subsection (2)(b) is not subject to discipline pursuant to section 12-315-112 (1)(y) if the veterinarian satisfies the requirements of this subsection (2)(b) and the rules adopted by the board.

(3) If a veterinarian complies with the requirements of section 12-280-121, the veterinarian may maintain an office stock of compounded drugs. As used in this subsection (3), "office stock" has the same meaning as set forth in section 12-280-121 (5)(b).

(4)

(a) As used in this subsection (4), unless the context otherwise requires:

(I) "Cat" means a small, domesticated feline animal that is kept as a pet. "Cat" does not include a nondomesticated wild animal.

(II) "Dog" means any canine animal owned for domestic, companionship, service, therapeutic, or assistance purposes.

(III) "Emergency medical service provider" means an emergency medical service provider who is certified or licensed by the department of public health and environment, created under section 25-1-102.

(IV) "Employer" means an entity or organization that employs or enlists the services of an emergency medical service provider, regardless of whether the provider is paid or is a volunteer. The employer may be a public, private, for-profit, or nonprofit organization or entity; or a special district.

(V) "Preveterinary emergency care" means the immediate medical stabilization of a dog or cat by an emergency medical service provider, in an emergency to which the emergency medical service provider is responding, through means including oxygen, fluids, medications, or bandaging, with the intent of enabling the dog or cat to be treated by a veterinarian. "Preveterinary emergency care" does not include care provided in response to an emergency call made solely for the purpose of tending to an injured dog or cat unless a person's life could be in danger attempting to save the life of a dog or cat.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an emergency medical service provider may provide preveterinary emergency care to dogs and cats to the extent the provider has received commensurate training and is authorized by the employer to provide the care. The provision of preveterinary emergency care to dogs and cats by emergency medical service providers in accordance with this subsection (4)(b) is not a violation of this article 315. Requirements governing the circumstances under which emergency medical service providers may provide preveterinary emergency care to dogs and cats may be specified in the employer's policies governing the provision of care.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, nothing in subsection (4)(b) of this section imposes upon an emergency medical service provider any obligation to provide care to a dog or cat or to provide care to a dog or cat before a person.

## History

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**Source:**L. 2019:Entire title R&RE with relocations, [\(HB 19-1172\), ch. 136, p. 1619, § 1](#), effective October 1.L. 2022:IP(1) and (1)(b) amended, (1)(k) repealed, and (1)(q) added, [\(HB 22-1235\), ch. 442, p. 3102, § 9](#), effective August 10.

Annotations

## Research References & Practice Aids

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### Hierarchy Notes:

[C.R.S. Title 12](#)

[C.R.S. Title 12, Art. 315](#)

## State Notes

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## Res Notes

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### Editor's note:

This section is similar to former § 12-64-104 as it existed prior to 2019.

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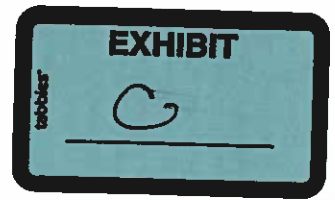
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**Initiative 144 (Telehealth):**

Single subject (and “confusingly written”):

1. The single subject is the first one identified by the objectors – “authorizing Colorado-licensed veterinarians to provide care through veterinary telehealth.”

2. New C.R.S. 12-315-127(1): “a veterinarian holding an active Colorado license may practice veterinary telehealth on a patient located in Colorado.”

*in the measure*

3. The initiative explicitly does not authorize an “unlicensed veterinarian” to practice veterinary telehealth.

a. Current C.R.S. 12-315-105(1) states “A person shall not practice **veterinary medicine** in this state if the person is not a licensed veterinarian.”

b. “Licensed veterinarian” is defined in current C.R.S. 12-315-104(11) as “a person licensed pursuant to this part 1” – *i.e.*, in Colorado.

c. Per R&C substantive comment 7 – we explicitly define “veterinary telehealth” is “**the practice of veterinary medicine**.” New C.R.S. 12-315-104(26) – Sec. 1 of initiative.

4. The initiative does not alter the standard of care for veterinary practice.

a. In new C.R.S. 12-315-127(4)(a), we explicitly state that “The same standards of care apply to veterinary medicine services via telehealth and in-person veterinary medical services.”

b. The disciplinary authorization in current C.R.S. 12-315-112(1)(z) – applicable to all “licensed veterinarians” – for failing to meet “*generally accepted standards of veterinary practice*” has not been changed.

c. New C.R.S. 12-315-127(5)(a) simply requires veterinarians utilizing telehealth to evaluate their patients consistent with the *prevailing quality of veterinary medical care for the particular patient presentation*; it does not alter the general disciplinary authorization of C.R.S. 12-315-112(1)(z) or any other generally applicable standard. [And if there were a difference, it would only apply to telehealth.]

The titles are not incomplete or misleading:

1. This is incorrect – we are not authorizing unlicensed veterinarians to use telehealth.
2. This is incorrect – we are not altering the standard of care.
3. This is incorrect – we are not authorizing unlicensed veterinarians to use telehealth.
4. This is incorrect – see above – we explicitly state that “Veterinary telehealth means the practice of veterinary medicine . . .” New C.R.S. 12-315-104(26).
5. The Title Board’s present language adequately expresses the meaning and intent of the measure.
6. This is an implementation detail that need not be included in the title.
7. This is incorrect – the disciplinary authorization in C.R.S. 12-315-112(1)(z) applicable to all licensed veterinarians has not been changed.
8. The only “parameters” addressed in the initiative are for the prescription or provision of controlled substances. The details of these parameters need not be included in the title.