

VETERINARY TELEHEALTH AND TELEMEDICINE

33. Definitions:

A. “Telehealth” means use of technology to deliver health information, education, or care remotely.

B. “Telemedicine” means use of technology to exchange medical information electronically from one site to another to improve a patient’s clinical health status, including evaluating, diagnosing, and treating a patient without the need for an in-person visit. Telemedicine is a subcategory of telehealth.

C. “Teletriage” means emergency animal care, including animal poison control services, for immediate, potentially life-threatening animal health situations (e.g., poison exposure mitigation, animal CPR instructions, other critical lifesaving treatment or advice).

D. “VCPR” means “veterinarian-client-patient relationship” as defined by Ark. Code Ann. § 17-101-102(11).

34. Requirements for all services provided by veterinarians using telemedicine:

A. Any person that delivers telemedicine services to a patient located within the State of Arkansas must be licensed to practice veterinary medicine in the State of Arkansas and have an established VCPR.

B. A VCPR must be established by an in-person examination of the animal, or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal is kept. An established VCPR can extend to other veterinarians licensed by the board who practice in the same physical location as the attending veterinarian if they have access to, and have reviewed, the patient’s medical records. An in-person examination is not required when providing teletriage services and the patient is referred to in-person emergency services according to established protocols pursuant to Section 34.E. and as generally accepted by the veterinary profession.

C. Telehealth services must be delivered in a transparent manner, including providing access to information identifying the veterinarian in advance of the encounter, with name, contact information, and Arkansas license number, as well as the client’s financial responsibilities.

D. The veterinarian must obtain from the client a detailed explanation of the patient’s pertinent history and presenting complaint to determine if using telemedicine is an appropriate method for delivering medical advice or treatment to the patient.

E. Veterinarians delivering services through telehealth must have an established protocol for making referrals for in-person emergency services.

F. If the decision is made to provide treatment through telemedicine, the veterinarian agrees to accept responsibility for the care of the patient and must obtain consent from the client.

_____ G. If the veterinarian determines that the patient needs to be seen in-person for the presenting complaint, they must arrange to see the patient in person or refer the client to another licensed veterinarian.

_____ H. If treatment was provided through telemedicine and follow-up care is indicated, the veterinarian must agree to provide or arrange for such follow-up care.

_____ I. A veterinarian providing treatment through telemedicine may prescribe a drug to the patient if the veterinarian has an established VCPR and is a prescriber acting within their scope of practice.

_____ J. Telemedicine services must be documented in the patient's medical record and comply with the Record Keeping rule established by the Board.