

Veterinarians in the State of Texas are regulated by the Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners and must comply with the Veterinary Licensing Act. Chapter 801 of the Occupations Code, Section 801.351 requires that veterinarians create a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship with an animal prior to treating/vaccinating them. Compliance with this part of the Code means that every animal coming into the shelter requires a full veterinary examination before the standard set of intake vaccinations is administered. With an average of 55 intakes per day, compliance is not possible in large municipal shelters like ours.

Because this Rule affects every shelter in the State, the matter was brought up for revision during the last legislative session, but it did not make it out of committee. Upon the recommendation of the Texas Veterinary Medical Association, municipal shelters across the state are requesting a local ordinance amendment which designates the City as the “caretaker” of every animal upon impoundment.

The proposed amendment, if passed by Council, will allow our veterinarians to continue to employ best practices in shelter medicine and avoid non-compliance issues with the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners. This measure is simply meant to codify existing policy at Austin Animal Center.

The Animal Advisory Commission has been apprised of this ordinance amendment via a memo from the Animal Services Officer.