

North Carolina Veterinary Medical Board

April 2022

*Regulatory
Bulletin*

Volume 6 Issue 1

The Importance of Good Medical Records “If it’s not in the medical record, it didn’t happen.”

Well documented medical care is not only beneficial to the patient and their owners, but to you and your practice should you ever be placed in the position of having to defend that care. The medical record is very often helpful, especially where memories have faded and the only recollection of the event is the written record. Regardless of all the benefits of a well-documented medical record, it is also a requirement and condition of North Carolina statutes and administrative codes, and the retention of your license.

The primary purpose of the medical record is to communicate the condition of the patient at the time of their examination or treatment. It serves to document what you have done and why. Inversely, it also serves to document what you have not done and in some circumstances, why you have chosen not to do so. Therefore, the medical record corroborates your actions, thought process and decision making with respect to your care of the patient. The patient’s history is also relevant, especially where different veterinarians within the practice will be seeing the animal, so that each veterinarian is fully informed of the patient’s condition in one accessible place and optimal care can be provided. Remember as well that patients may leave your practice and therefore, your medical record becomes important to the continuity of care provided by subsequent treating veterinarians. Depending on the number of patients seen in the day and the requirements of your practice, it may be difficult to complete your documentation contemporaneous with your care or within 24 hours. Therefore, it is advisable that you make every effort to document as much as is reasonably possible as soon as is reasonably possible.

The NCVMB recommends that if the following services are provided, they shall be documented in the medical records:

- Laboratory reports
- Radiographic studies
- Consultation
- Medical or surgical treatment
- Hospitalization
- Medications prescribed or administered
- Pathology reports
- Necropsy findings

Though the mere decision to perform these tests, administer medications, or perform surgery speaks to your thought process, it remains beneficial to document your reasoning. These tests, medications and procedures are very often where a majority of costs to the client are incurred and the ability to explain and justify their performance can become an issue should billing be brought into question. One of the key components of this medical record documentation, and which is frequently the cause of adverse incidents, is medication administration. Medication is a critical component of the record and often takes the place of other treatments or is the primary treatment before other procedures are explored. It is also advisable to document by whom the medication was ordered, administered and dispensed, as well as the route, strength and dosage of the medication.

Additionally, it is essential to document all communication with the owner regardless of how it takes place. This is essential in preventing a “he said/she said” situation in the event of a complaint. The use of authorization forms is also highly recommended and they should be included with your medical record of the animal.



Facility Inspection results are available to the public on-line!

Starting July 1st, 2020, the most recent facility inspection results have been available on-line for the public to view. This allows the public to search and review information on the veterinary facilities to allow them to make an informed decision on where to take their animals. This information is public record and has been available previously from the NCVMB office.

The public will be able to see citations that occurred during the inspection and also when the deficiencies were corrected. Only your hospital's most recent inspection will be listed for review.



Assessment of Hazardous Drug Handling in North Carolina

My name is Gillian Miner, and I am a Clinical Veterinary Pharmacy Resident at the NC State Veterinary Hospital. I am conducting voluntary research to understand current hazardous drug handling practices within veterinary clinics in North Carolina, determine veterinarians' familiarity with USP General Chapter <800> Hazardous Drugs – Handling in Healthcare Settings (USP <800>), and examine the impact of pharmacist-provided training on veterinarians' knowledge of USP <800>. Information collected from the survey will be used to determine areas in which pharmacists can help veterinary practices be in compliance with state and local regulations as well as improve their handling of hazardous drugs to protect staff, clients, and patients.

Eligible participants must be 18 years of age or older, reside in the United States, and be a licensed and practicing veterinarian in the state of North Carolina.

This Qualtrics survey includes questions regarding demographics, a pre-video assessment, a short video describing important aspects of hazardous drug handling, a post-video assessment, and questions about current hazardous drug handling practices. Estimated time to complete the entire survey is about 20 minutes. Your responses are anonymous; no identifying information will be collected or associated with your responses.

Please click the link below to read the full consent statement and begin the survey:

https://ncsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5jX10ZI7PoY7mwS

Be Careful...Use of Heating Pads

The NCVMB Board has heard several complaints of thermal burns to an animal obtained during surgery or post-operatively. Most of the burns occur due to lack of monitoring or the use of heating pads not designed for use in sedate animals. Common heat sources used in clinics are water-filled exam gloves, “rice socks,” IV fluid bags, reusable discs, “hard” electric heating pads, heating blankets, water or air blankets, and surgery tables. These burns are significant and can lead to extended medical care. When used appropriately, heat therapy is beneficial to animals. The Board is not against the use of all heating devices. There are several medical devices on the market that safely maintain an animal’s body temperature. The best way to avoid complications starts with a basic understanding by all team members of the different heat sources, their intended use, and their risks.



Verifying Veterinary Licenses (It is important for employers to verify the license/registration of new hires)

The only official verification of a Veterinary License or Veterinary Technician Registration can be found on the NCVMB’s website. You can access this information via this link:

<https://portal.ncvmb.org/verification/search.aspx>

A printed license is not considered official since it is possible to alter the date. It is important that all Veterinary facilities verify the licenses of any new hire prior to the start of employment.



Are you screening the individuals who have access to your Controlled Substances???

Title 21 CFR § 1301.90 DEA: Employee Screening

It is the position of DEA that the obtaining of certain information by non-practitioners is vital to fairly assess the likelihood of an employee committing a drug security breach. The need to know this information is a matter of business necessity, essential to overall controlled substances security. In this regard, it is believed that conviction of crimes and unauthorized use of controlled substances are activities that are proper subjects for inquiry. It is, therefore, assumed that the following questions will become a part of an employer's comprehensive employee screening program:

- Question: Within the past five years, have you been convicted of a felony, or within the past two years, of any misdemeanor or are you presently formally charged with committing a criminal offense? (Do not include any traffic violations, juvenile offenses or military convictions, except by general court-martial.) If the answer is yes, furnish details of conviction, offense, location, date and sentence.
- Question: In the past three years, have you ever knowingly used any narcotics, amphetamines or barbiturates, other than those prescribed to you by a physician? If the answer is yes, furnish details.
- Advice: An authorization, in writing, that allows inquiries to be made of courts and law enforcement agencies for possible pending charges or convictions must be executed by a person who is allowed to work in an area where access to controlled substances clearly exists. A person must be advised that any false information or omission of information will jeopardize his or her position with respect to employment. The application for employment should inform a person that information furnished or recovered as a result of any inquiry will not necessarily preclude employment, but will be considered as part of an overall evaluation of the person's qualifications. The maintaining of fair employment practices, the protection of the person's right of privacy, and the assurance that the results of such inquiries will be treated by the employer in confidence will be explained to the employee.

