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House Agriculture Committee
Sponsor Testimony on Substitute Senate Bill 60
June 18, 2025

Chair Klopfenstein, Vice Chair Newman, Ranking Member Miller and members of the House Agriculture Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present Sponsor Testimony in support of Substitute Senate Bill 60.

I would also like to thank my joint sponsor, Senator Huffman, for joining me on this legislation.

Substitute SB 60, which passed unanimously out of the Senate on June 4th, 2025, builds on an already successful telehealth for pediatric and adult medicine by expanding this practice to veterinary medicine. I will let my joint sponsor speak to the medical side of this in a minute, but I would like to focus on the business side.

By expanding telehealth to veterinarian medicine, we will increase access to veterinarian care across the state. In addition, this legislation will be particularly beneficial for those in rural or underserved areas as well for those who do not have access to transportation or transportation is difficult.

Not to mention this will make veterinarian care more efficient and timely in many cases. Imagine being able to take a photo or a short video of an animal as opposed to stressing an animal with a car ride and exposure to other animals when a qualified licensed vet can make a quick determination and call in your prescription. However, if that determination can not be made from a picture or video, the vet may require an office or farm visit to determine the issue and/or

treatment. This is solely at the discretion of the vet.

Throughout the process in the Senate, we heard some concern over the veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR) regarding veterinarian telehealth. That is why I want to note that there are several parameters in current law as well as in this legislation that will help ensure that the veterinary-client-patient relationship is preserved including:

- VCPR must be established in person first as required under federal law
- Veterinarians must be licensed in Ohio
- Standards of care equally apply to in-person and tele-vet visits

I will now turn this testimony over to my joint sponsor, Sen. Dr. Huffman who will expand on the medical side of this legislation.

Many things in the medical field have changed in recent years. Telehealth specifically was expanded and has been quite successful in many areas of the nation as well as right here in Ohio. There is no reason to not follow suit with veterinarian care.

Several other states have already enacted legislation allowing for telehealth for veterinarians including Arizona, which enacted telehealth for veterinarians in 2023. California as well as Florida followed suit by enacting telehealth for veterinarians early last year.

In addition to the other safety measures that my joint sponsor mentioned earlier, there are additional checks and balances in this legislation including:

- Veterinarians may recommend an in-person visit if they can't determine issue
- Veterinarians must gain informed consent from the client
- Under current federal law veterinarians can only prescribe certain medications and Substitute SB 60 goes one step further to prohibit prescribing controlled substances without in person physical examination of the patient
- Prescriptions prescribed to a patient via tele-health can only be for up to 14 days and no more than one refill for no more than 14 days before in person visit is required
- Substitute SB 60 shall not invalidate or overrule the provisions of Chapter 956 which deals with commercial breeding. For example, Chapter 956 requires in-person exams by a licensed vet in between breeding cycles. SB60 **would not** change that requirement or any other provision in Chapter 956
- The practice of veterinary medicine occurs in the state in which the patient is located

I would also like to note that one important change made in the Senate that further puts guardrails on tele-health for veterinarians is Substitute SB 60 prohibits clients that are raising livestock (porcine, bovine, caprine, ovine and poultry) for "human food product" from utilizing tele-health services for those specific livestock unless a veterinary-client-patient relationship

(VCPR) has been established in person first. In the case that federal law changes in the future, Substitute SB 60 would allow clients that are raising livestock for "human food product" to utilize tele-advice before establishing an in-person VCPR (different from tele-health in that they can't treat or diagnosis) which could greatly benefit the livestock community in times of potential outbreaks as well as for those rural farms that don't have easy access to a vet.

We would like to thank the various Interested Parties that worked with us to ensure that we have the very best version of tele-health for veterinarians in front of us today and I would like to leave you all with one final comment:

In a time where there are national veterinarian shortages and continued competition to attract and retain veterinarians, Ohio should not allow an opportunity pass by to be an attractive place for veterinarians to be licensed and practice.

Chair, Vice Chair, Ranking Member, and fellow members of the House Agriculture Committee, we thank each of you for your time and interest in Substitute Senate Bill 60. We would be happy to answer any questions at this time.