



# **NEW REGULATIONS FOR VETERINARY MEDICAL SERVICES IN ANIMAL SHELTERS**

**THE VETERINARY BOARD OF GOVERNORS – MAY 19, 2023**

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# Presentation Overview

- Review of 2019 law change
- Rulemaking to implement the law
- Auditing process to ensure service to low-income households
- Next steps
- Q&A and feedback on the board's proposed process

# Substitute Senate Bill 5004 (2019)

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Amended RCW 18.92.250 and .260 to:

- Remove the word “limited”; shelters no longer limited to sterilization, vaccines and microchipping
- Provide veterinary care to adopted pets for up to 30 days after adoption – regardless of household income
- Allow shelters to provide treatment in the case of an emergency – regardless of household income
- Require the Veterinary Board to establish annual reporting requirements that demonstrates only low-income households are served (except for emergency and post-adoption care).

# Substitute Senate Bill 5004

## What did not change:

- “Low-income household” is still defined as earning <80% of the median area income in county
- Qualifying organizations are defined the same:
  - Animal care and control agencies as defined in RCW 16.52.11 (Prev of Cruelty to Animals law)
  - 501(c)(3) qualified humane societies
- Organizations must register with the board/DOH to provide services

# Rulemaking Summary

# Rulemaking:

## WACs 246-933-501 through -590

The board has adopted rules, which become effective June 3, 2023:

- Outline requirements for documenting household income verification:
  - Proof of income that meets the low-income definition
  - Proof of eligibility or enrollment in benefit program
  - Attestation
- Requires organization to provide documentation that “demonstrates they have verified...” income

# Annual Audit Process Development



# Next Steps – Auditing Process

- **July/Aug** - Reach out to collect dedicated e-mail addresses from registered organizations to use for sending audit
- **July/Aug** – Solicit comments from organizations on draft of audit tool, proposed process, and timelines
- **Sept** – Board reviews organization feedback / finalizes process
- **Oct/Nov** - E-mail all registered organizations with guidance about what to expect, how to prepare, and a board contact person to answer questions
- **May 2024** – additional e-mail to registrants to prepare to start data collection for first reporting period.

# Data Collection for Annual Audit

- Total number of households served
- Total number of patients served
- Check box attesting organization has used <80% MHI income tables from HUD's website (link and guidance for income tables will be included in communications and audit tool).
- Check box attesting low-income status was verified by the organization (this means someone either verified income/low-income program participation, or collected attestation)

# Data Collection for Annual Audit

- Number of participants qualified by following source:
  - Income statement(s)
  - Eligibility/participation in benefits programs
  - Attestations
- Sample forms the organization uses for verifying income must be sent separately e-mail
- The board DOES NOT want any identifying information

# Proposed Timeline for Reporting

- Reporting period being considered: July 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup> to align with State fiscal year
- Organization reports annual data prior to renewal deadline (August 1<sup>st</sup>)
- The board will give organizations time to prepare
  - The first reporting period will likely be July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025,
  - The board will have guidance finalized early on in 2024.

# Annual Audit of Income Verification for Households Served

## Board review process:

- Board will review report of aggregated information by organization.
- Board will consider input from DOH staff on any challenges or improvements for the reporting process.
- The board may adjust the process based on feedback.

# Questions and Feedback

## Program Contacts:

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*After July 1, 2023:*

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*\*New Program Manager will be hired to replace Lorelei Walker, who is leaving the board 5/24/2023.*