**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**H. 3223**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Rep. Bailey

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Introduced in the House on January 14, 2025

Last Amended on April 30, 2025

Currently residing in the House

Summary: Telehealth for Veterinary Services

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 12/5/2024 House Prefiled

 12/5/2024 House Referred to Committee on **Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs**

 1/14/2025 House Introduced and read first time (House Journal‑page 134)

 1/14/2025 House Referred to Committee on **Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs** (House Journal‑page 134)

 4/29/2025 House Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs** (House Journal‑page 6)

 4/30/2025 Scrivener's error corrected

 4/30/2025 House Amended

 4/30/2025 House Read second time

 4/30/2025 House Roll call Yeas-110 Nays-0

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[12/05/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/3223_20241205.docx)

[04/29/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/3223_20250429.docx)

[04/30/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/3223_20250430.docx)

Indicates Matter Stricken

Indicates New Matter

Committee Report

April 29, 2025

H. 3223

Introduced by Rep. Bailey

S. Printed 4/29/25--H. [SEC 4/30/2025 10:21 AM]

Read the first time January 14, 2025

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The committee on House Agriculture, Natural Res. and Environmental Affairs

To whom was referred a Bill (H. 3223) to amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Article 5 to Chapter 69, Title 40 so as to provide definitions and requirements concerning the use of telehealth, etc., respectfully

Report:

That they have duly and carefully considered the same, and recommend that the same do pass with amendment:

 Amend the bill, as and if amended, SECTION 1, by striking Section 40-69-510(1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), and (11) and inserting:

 (1) “Telehealth” the overarching term that encompasses all uses of technology to virtually deliver medical and health information or education. Telehealth is not a specific service, but a collection of tools that allow for enhanced veterinary care and client education.

 (2) “Telemedicine” means the remote practice of veterinary medicine through the use of telecommunications technology that allows a licensed veterinarian with an established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship to evaluate and treat a patient virtually.

 (1) “Tele‑advice” means the provision of any health information, opinion, or guidance by a veterinary professional that is not intended to diagnose, treat, or issue prognoses of the physical or behavioral illness or injury of an animal. A veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship is not required to provide tele‑advice.

 (2) “Teleconsulting” means a veterinarian who communicates with a veterinary specialist or other qualified expert using telecommunications technology to gain insight or advice regarding the care of a patient.

 (3) “Tele‑education” means the use of information and telecommunications technology for distance learning.

 (4)(a) “Telehealth” means the use of telecommunications technology to provide veterinary services or to collect and deliver veterinary health information or education virtually and can encompass general veterinary services or patient‑specific veterinary services.

 (b) “Telehealth” may include tele‑advice, teleconsulting, tele‑education, telemedicine, telemonitoring, telereferral, telesupervision, teletriage, and other tools that help veterinary professionals deliver veterinary education and services virtually.

 (5) “Telemedicine” means the remote practice of veterinary medicine through the use of telecommunications technology that allows a licensed veterinarian with an established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship to evaluate, diagnose, and treat a patient virtually.

 (6) “Telemonitoring” means the use of telecommunications technology to augment veterinary services by collecting and delivering health information from a patient.

 (7) “Telereferral” means a veterinarian with an established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship who refers the client to a veterinary specialist to provide veterinary services using telecommunications technology under the established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship.

 (8) “Telesupervision” means the supervision of individuals providing veterinary services using media such as audio, audio‑visual conferencing, text messaging, e‑mail, or other virtual or digital technologies.

 (9) “Teletriage” means the safe, appropriate, and timely assessment of an animal, or a group of animals, under conditions of uncertainty and urgency, and the possible referral to a licensed veterinarian, after discussion with the individual responsible for the animal or group of animals, using telecommunications technology. A veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship is not required for such an assessment or referral. “Teletriage” does not include the rendering of a diagnosis but may include the provision of tele‑advice.

 (10) “Veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship” means:

 (a) The veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal through an in‑person, physical examination of or visit to the premises where the animal is kept.

 (b) The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the animal and the need for medical treatment.

 (c) The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal to initiate a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal.

 (d) The veterinarian is available or has arranged for emergency coverage for follow‑up and evaluation.

 (e) The client has agreed to follow the veterinarian’s instructions.

 (f) The veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship lapses when the licensee has not seen the animal within one year.

 (g) The veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship may extend to other licensed veterinarians working out of the same physical practice location as the veterinarian who established the veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship if the other licensed veterinarians have access to and have reviewed the patient’s medical records.

 (11) “Veterinary specialist” means a veterinarian who is formally recognized as a specialist from a specialty organization that is recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association’s American Board of Veterinary Specialties, or its successor organization, or another association that recognizes veterinary specialists that the state board of veterinary medicine has approved by rule.

Amend the bill further, SECTION 1, by striking Section 40-69-520(B)(1) and (2) and inserting:

 (B)(1) A veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship only may be established by an in‑person, physical examination of the animal or timely visits to the premises where the animal is kept.

 (2) A veterinary specialist may use telecommunications technology to see a patient under another veterinarian’s previously established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship pursuant to Section 40‑69‑560.

Amend the bill further, SECTION 1, by striking Section 40-69-530(D)(2)(b) and (c) and inserting:

 (b) whether, in the veterinarian’s professional opinion, the patient’s condition can be accurately diagnosed or treated using telemedicine; and

 (c) the diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment options for the patient.

Amend the bill further, SECTION 1, by striking Section 40-69-540(A) and inserting:

 (A) A licensed veterinarian using telehealthtelemedicine to provide veterinary services shall conduct all necessary patient evaluations and treatment using the applicable standard of care for those evaluations and treatments.

Amend the bill further, SECTION 1, by deleting Section 40-69-550(C) from the bill.

Amend the bill further, SECTION 1, by striking Sections 40-69-560 and 40-69-570 and inserting:

 Section 40‑69‑560. A licensed veterinarian shall ensure that a client’s privacy and confidentiality are protected when the veterinarian is providing veterinary services using telehealth pursuant to the veterinarian’s professional and legal obligations.(A) A veterinarian with an established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship may refer a patient to a veterinary specialist.

 (B) A veterinary specialist to whom a patient is referred may provide veterinary services using telecommunications technology for the patient and client under the referring veterinarian’s veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship.

 (C) A veterinary specialist to whom a patient is referred shall provide the referring veterinarian with information related to the diagnosis, treatment, and progress of the patient.

 (D)(1) A veterinary specialist to whom a patient is referred shall not prescribe medications to the patient unless the veterinary specialist establishes a veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship through an in‑person, physical examination of the patient.

 (2) The licensed veterinarian with the established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship may prescribe medications to the patient after consultation with the veterinary specialist to whom the patient was referred.

 Section 40‑69‑570. A licensed veterinarian shall ensure that a client’s privacy and confidentiality are protected when the veterinarian is providing veterinary services using telehealth pursuant to the veterinarian’s professional and legal obligations.

Amend the bill further, by striking SECTION 2 and inserting:

SECTION X. Section 40-69-20 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 40-69-20. As used in this chapter, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

 (1) “Animal” means an animal that is not a human and includes fowl, birds, reptiles, and fish which are wild or domestic, living or dead.

 (2) “Board” means the South Carolina State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners.

 (3) “Direct supervision” means that a veterinarian currently licensed to practice veterinary medicine in this State is available on the premises and within immediate vocal communication of the supervisee.

 (4) “Emergency clinic” means a facility having as its primary function the receiving, treatment, and monitoring of emergency patients during its specified hours of operation.

 (5) “Emergency hospital” means a facility whose primary function is the receiving, treatment, and monitoring of emergency patients during its specified hours of operation and includes the confinement of emergency patients.

 (6) “Immediate supervision” means that a licensed veterinarian is within direct eyesight and hearing range.

 (7) “Indirect supervision” means the supervising licensed veterinarian is available for immediate voice contact by telephone, radio, or other means, and shall provide consultation and review of cases at the veterinary facility.

 (8) “Investigative Review Committee” (IRC) means an investigative review panel appointed by the board chairman, in consultation with the other members of the board. The IRC must be comprised of four members who are former board members or other experienced licensed veterinarians. The board chairman must appoint the Chairman of the IRC. Veterinarian members of the IRC must have a current license issued pursuant to this chapter to be eligible to serve. The IRC shall review any complaint against a licensed veterinarian or veterinary technician and make a recommendation as to whether the board should proceed with formal action. The board must consider the recommendation of the IRC, but the final determination whether to proceed with formal action must be made by the board.

 (9) “License” means any permit, approval, registration, or certificate issued by the board.

 (10) “Licensed veterinarian” means a person who is licensed pursuant to this chapter to practice veterinary medicine in this State.

 (11) “Licensed veterinary technician” means a person who has received a degree in animal health technology from an American Veterinary Medical Association accredited school offering a program in animal health technology and who has been licensed to practice in this State. This person must be knowledgeable in the care and handling of animals, in the basic principles of normal and abnormal life processes, and in routine laboratory and clinical procedures. The performance of the licensed veterinary technician must be under the supervision of a veterinarian licensed to practice in this State.

 (12) “Mobile facility” means a vehicle with special medical or surgical facilities or a vehicle suitable only for making house or farm calls.

 (13) “Practice of veterinary medicine” means to:

 (a) diagnose, prescribe, or administer a drug, medicine, biologic, appliance, or application or treatment of whatever nature for the cure, prevention, or relief of a wound, fracture, or bodily injury or disease of an animal;

 (b) perform a surgical operation, including cosmetic surgery, upon an animal;

 (c) perform a manual procedure for the diagnosis or treatment for sterility or infertility of an animal, including embryo transplants;

 (d) offer, undertake, represent, or hold oneself out as being qualified to diagnose, treat, operate, or prescribe for an animal disease, pain, injury, deformity, or physical condition;

 (e) use words, letters, or titles in such connection or under such circumstances as to induce the belief that the person using them is engaged in the practice of veterinary medicine.

 (14) “School of veterinary medicine” means a veterinary school or college that offers the D.V.M. or equivalent degree and whose course of study conforms to the standards required for accreditation by the American Veterinary Medical Association and approved by the board.

 (15) “Telemedicine” is an audio, video, or data communication of medical information.

 (16)(15) “Temporary license” means temporary permission to practice veterinary medicine or animal technology issued pursuant to this chapter.

 (17)(16) “Therapeutic options or alternate therapies” means, but is not limited to, the veterinary practice of acupuncture, manipulation and adjustment, magnetic field therapy, holistic medicine, homeopathy, herbology/naturopathy, massage, and physical therapy.

 (18)(17) “Veterinarian” means a person who has received a doctor's degree or equivalent in veterinary medicine.

 (19)(18) “Veterinary aide” means a nurse, attendant, intern, technician, or other employee of a veterinarian, other than a licensed veterinary technician.

 (19) “Veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship” means:

 (a) The veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal through an in‑person, physical examination of or visit to the premises where the animal is kept.

 (b) The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the animal and the need for medical treatment.

 (c) The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal to initiate a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal.

 (d) The veterinarian is available or has arranged for emergency coverage for follow‑up and evaluation.

 (e) The client has agreed to follow the veterinarian’s instructions.

 (f) The veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship lapses when the licensee has not seen the animal within one year.

 (g) The veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship may extend to other licensed veterinarians working out of the same physical practice location as the veterinarian who established the veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship if the other licensed veterinarians have access to and have reviewed the patient’s medical records and the condition is related to a prior medical condition.

 (20) “Veterinary medicine” includes veterinary surgery, obstetrics, dentistry, and all other branches or specialties of veterinary medicine.

 (21) “Veterinary student preceptee” means a person who is a student enrolled and in good standing in a recognized college of veterinary medicine. The student's presence in a practice may be as part of a normal preceptorship program of the college or as an informal arrangement between the student and a veterinarian licensed by the board.

Renumber sections to conform.

Amend title to conform.

WILLIAM HIXON for Committee.

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A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING ARTICLE 5 TO CHAPTER 69, TITLE 40 SO AS TO PROVIDE DEFINITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING THE USE OF TELEHEALTH FOR VETERINARY SERVICES; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 40‑69‑20, RELATING TO DEFINITIONS CONCERNING THE BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS, SO AS TO REMOVE AN OBSOLETE DEFINITION.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Chapter 69, Title 40 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Article 5

Telehealth for Veterinary Services

 Section 40‑69‑510. As used in this article:

 (1) “Tele‑advice” means the provision of any health information, opinion, or guidance by a veterinary professional that is not intended to diagnose, treat, or issue prognoses of the physical or behavioral illness or injury of an animal. A veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship is not required to provide tele‑advice.

 (2) “Teleconsulting” means a veterinarian who communicates with a veterinary specialist or other qualified expert using telecommunications technology to gain insight or advice regarding the care of a patient.

 (3) “Tele‑education” means the use of information and telecommunications technology for distance learning.

 (4)(a) “Telehealth” means the use of telecommunications technology to provide veterinary services or to collect and deliver veterinary health information or education virtually and can encompass general veterinary services or patient‑specific veterinary services.

 (b) “Telehealth” may include tele‑advice, teleconsulting, tele‑education, telemedicine, telemonitoring, telereferral, telesupervision, teletriage, and other tools that help veterinary professionals deliver veterinary education and services virtually.

 (5) “Telemedicine” means the remote practice of veterinary medicine through the use of telecommunications technology that allows a licensed veterinarian with an established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship to evaluate, diagnose, and treat a patient virtually.

 (6) “Telemonitoring” means the use of telecommunications technology to augment veterinary services by collecting and delivering health information from a patient.

 (7) “Telereferral” means a veterinarian with an established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship who refers the client to a veterinary specialist to provide veterinary services using telecommunications technology under the established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship.

 (8) “Telesupervision” means the supervision of individuals providing veterinary services using media such as audio, audio‑visual conferencing, text messaging, e‑mail, or other virtual or digital technologies.

 (9) “Teletriage” means the safe, appropriate, and timely assessment of an animal, or a group of animals, under conditions of uncertainty and urgency, and the possible referral to a licensed veterinarian, after discussion with the individual responsible for the animal or group of animals, using telecommunications technology. A veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship is not required for such an assessment or referral. “Teletriage” does not include the rendering of a diagnosis but may include the provision of tele‑advice.

 (10) “Veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship” means:

 (a) The veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal through an in‑person, physical examination of or visit to the premises where the animal is kept.

 (b) The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the animal and the need for medical treatment.

 (c) The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal to initiate a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal.

 (d) The veterinarian is available or has arranged for emergency coverage for follow‑up and evaluation.

 (e) The client has agreed to follow the veterinarian’s instructions.

 (f) The veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship lapses when the licensee has not seen the animal within one year.

 (g) The veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship may extend to other licensed veterinarians working out of the same physical practice location as the veterinarian who established the veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship if the other licensed veterinarians have access to and have reviewed the patient’s medical records.

 (11) “Veterinary specialist” means a veterinarian who is formally recognized as a specialist from a specialty organization that is recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association’s American Board of Veterinary Specialties, or its successor organization, or another association that recognizes veterinary specialists that the state board of veterinary medicine has approved by rule.

 Section 40‑69‑520. (A) Only a veterinarian licensed by the board may establish a veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship in this State.

 (B)(1) A veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship only may be established by an in‑person, physical examination of the animal or timely visits to the premises where the animal is kept.

 (2) A veterinary specialist may use telecommunications technology to see a patient under another veterinarian’s previously established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship pursuant to Section 40‑69‑560.

 (C) An established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship may be maintained through examinations that occur using telecommunications technology in between appropriate in‑person, physical examinations or visits to the premises where the patient is kept.

 Section 40‑69‑530. (A)(1) A person must be licensed to practice veterinary medicine in this State in order to practice telemedicine in this State.

 (2) A person who is not a licensed veterinarian in this State and who uses telemedicine to provide veterinary services to animals and individuals responsible for the animals engages in the unauthorized practice of veterinary medicine. Such person is subject to penalties for the unauthorized practice of veterinary medicine provided in this chapter.

 (B) A licensed veterinarian shall employ sound, professional judgment when determining whether to provide veterinary services to a patient through telemedicine and shall use telemedicine only when such use is medically appropriate based on the patient’s condition.

 (C) A veterinary professional shall ensure that the technology used when providing veterinary services through telehealth is of appropriate quality to ensure:

 (1) accuracy of the remote assessment of the patient’s condition or behavior;

 (2) clear communication with clients; and

 (3) compliance with all relevant privacy and confidentiality requirements.

 (D)(1) A veterinary professional shall obtain consent from the client before providing veterinary services through telehealth and shall record the client’s consent in the patient’s medical record.

 (2) A veterinary professional using telehealth to provide veterinary services shall inform the client, or the client’s authorized representative, of:

 (a) the veterinary professional’s name, location, and, if applicable, license number and licensure status;

 (b) whether, in the veterinarian’s professional opinion, the patient’s condition can be accurately diagnosed or treated using telemedicine; and

 (c) the diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment options for the patient.

 Section 40‑69‑540. (A) A licensed veterinarian using telehealth to provide veterinary services shall conduct all necessary patient evaluations and treatment using the applicable standard of care for those evaluations and treatments.

 (B) A licensed veterinarian shall not recommend treatment or care for an animal based solely on a client’s responses to an online questionnaire.

 Section 40‑69‑550. (A)(1) Except as provided in subsection (B), only a licensed veterinarian with an established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship may prescribe medication through telemedicine.

 (2) A licensed veterinarian shall use professional judgment when determining if it is appropriate to prescribe medication through telemedicine.

 (B) A licensed veterinarian who prescribes medication through telemedicine is subject to the limitations on prescriptions provided in this chapter.

 (C) A licensed veterinarian who does not have an established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship with an animal and its owner may use telemedicine to administer, distribute, or dispense a prescription drug that has been prescribed by another licensed veterinarian who has an established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship.

 Section 40‑69‑560. (A) A veterinarian with an established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship may refer a patient to a veterinary specialist.

 (B) A veterinary specialist to whom a patient is referred may provide veterinary services using telecommunications technology for the patient and client under the referring veterinarian’s veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship.

 (C) A veterinary specialist to whom a patient is referred shall provide the referring veterinarian with information related to the diagnosis, treatment, and progress of the patient.

 (D)(1) A veterinary specialist to whom a patient is referred shall not prescribe medications to the patient unless the veterinary specialist establishes a veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship through an in‑person, physical examination of the patient.

 (2) The licensed veterinarian with the established veterinarian‑client‑patient relationship may prescribe medications to the patient after consultation with the veterinary specialist to whom the patient was referred.

 Section 40‑69‑570. A licensed veterinarian shall ensure that a client’s privacy and confidentiality are protected when the veterinarian is providing veterinary services using telehealth pursuant to the veterinarian’s professional and legal obligations.

SECTION 2. Section 40‑69‑20(15) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (15) “Telemedicine” is an audio, video, or data communication of medical informationReserved.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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