

# North Carolina Veterinary Medical Board

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Regulatory  
Bulletin

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From the NCVMB website

<http://www.ncvmb.org/>

## EFFECTIVE: 2020 Renewals

**Continuing Education Requirement:** Two (2) hours of CE on the 'abuse of controlled substances' will be required per renewal cycle. *This includes both veterinarians and technicians.* You will find examples of CE that fulfill this requirement in this issue and on the NCVMB website.



## NCVMB FACEBOOK Page

<https://www.facebook.com/NCVetMedicalBoard>

The NCVMB Facebook page has a vast variety of information available for veterinarians, technicians, and pet owners. Examples of recent posting include the following topics:

- Keep Easter Lilies away from Cats
- Differentiating Syncope from Seizure
- Breeding Older Mares
- Top 5 Tips for Sedation & Anesthesia in Fractious Dogs
- Final Thoughts: Is Suicide Preventable?
- What Should I Do if I Suspect Horse Neglect?



## What CE will fulfill the new requirement for “abuse of controlled substances”?

Courses that fulfill this requirement include, but are not limited to, the following:

“instruction on controlled substance prescribing practices, proper medical use of controlled drugs, opioid indications and contraindications, and recognizing and preventing the abuse of controlled substances by Veterinary Practice Employees.

The new 2-hour CE requirement is not in addition to the existing requirement of 20 hours of CE. For example: Veterinarians need 2 hours of “drug CE” and 18 hours of other veterinary related CE each year.

Please refer to the information inside this bulletin to learn of CE offerings available to NC Veterinarians to fulfill this requirement.

# The Opioid Epidemic: What Veterinarians Need to Know

Courtesy of the United States FDA <https://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/ResourcesforYou/ucm616944.htm>

The epidemic of opioid abuse is affecting medical and health professionals such as physicians and pharmacists, but also veterinarians.

Prescription opioids are powerful pain-reducing medications that include oxycodone, hydrocodone, and morphine, among others, and they have both benefits as well as potentially serious risks, such as addiction, abuse, and overdose.

While opioids are a small part of the veterinarian's medical arsenal for treating pain in animals, stocking and administering these drugs also makes it important for veterinarians to understand how they can help combat the abuse and misuse of pain medications.

So what steps can veterinarians take if they stock and administer opioids?

## 1. Follow All State Regulations on Prescribing Opioids

Each state creates its own regulations for the practice of veterinary medicine within its borders. These include regulations about secure storage of controlled substances, like opioids, and under what conditions veterinarians can prescribe them to patients.

States are enacting new laws or strengthening existing ones in an effort to restrict access to opioids. In some states, veterinarians are also subject to these laws. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, fifteen states and the District of Columbia currently have regulations requiring veterinarians to report when they dispense opioids and other controlled substances to patients: Alaska, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Vermont, Washington state, and West Virginia. Thirty-four states, however, exempt veterinarians from Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs.

Not only are states changing reporting requirements, some are also setting limits on the number of pills that can be prescribed at one time and some are even limiting the duration of a patient's treatment with opioids. States such as Colorado and Maine require veterinarians to look at a pet owner's past medication history before dispensing opioids or writing an opioid prescription.

To ensure that they are in full compliance with current state laws, veterinarians can contact their State Board of Veterinary Medicine and their State Board of Pharmacy for updated regulations.

## 2. Follow All Federal Regulations on Prescribing Opioids

FDA approves controlled drugs and monitors reported adverse events associated with these drugs. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), however, creates and enforces the regulations regarding controlled substances. Veterinarians should contact their local DEA office if they have questions about the federal regulations regarding controlled substances.

When controlled substances are stolen from the clinic, veterinarians must report the theft to DEA and to their local police department as soon as possible.

There are few opioids specifically approved for use in animals, and only two are currently being marketed (buprenorphine for use in cats and butorphanol for use in cats, dogs and horses). Wildlife Laboratories, the sponsor of a potent analog of fentanyl called carfentanil (marketed as Wildnil), voluntarily relinquished the approval for this drug in March 2018, as it hadn't been marketed in at least five years, and because the sponsor wanted to avoid the possibility of diversion of the drug if marketed in the future. Another approved drug, Recuvyra (fentanyl), is not being marketed. Due to the limited products approved for use, veterinarians who need to use an opioid to control pain in their patients often use products approved for use in humans.

FDA has pre-approval (abuse potential review) and post-approval safeguards in place for these drugs, and requires Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies (REMS) for some products to ensure that the benefits outweigh certain risks.

While veterinarians using approved human opioids extra-label in animals do not have to follow the human drug's risk mitigation requirements, they do have to follow the [regulations for extra-label use in animals](#). FDA also strongly encourages veterinarians to read the label information for human opioid drugs and take any associated training. Veterinarians can find a [list of FDA-approved human drugs marketed under REMS programs](#) on FDA's website.

### **3. Use Alternatives to Opioids**

Pain management is an important issue in veterinary medicine, and in many cases non-opioid protocols may adequately control pain in animals. [The International Association of Veterinary Pain Management](#)  is a good resource for pain management information for companion animals, as is the [American Animal Hospital Association and American Association of Feline Practitioners 2015 Pain Management Guidelines](#) .

### **4. Educate Pet Owners on Safe Storage and Disposal of Opioids**

Pet owners may be unaware that pet opioid prescriptions in the home pose a risk for accidental or intentional misuse by family members or guests. Whenever pets are actively receiving opioids, veterinarians should advise pet owners to secure the opioids and [store them](#) out of sight. When the pet owner has unwanted opioids, disposing of the medication should be a priority. Because of their inherent risks, FDA has [specific recommendations for opioid disposal](#).

### **5. Know What to Do If a Pet Overdoses on Fentanyl or Other Opioids**

Not only can people overdose on opioids, but so can pets. Working dogs, like narcotics detection dogs, are particularly susceptible because they may inhale the powdered drug. Because fentanyl and fentanyl-related drugs are potent, it only takes a tiny amount of drug to cause an overdose. Veterinarians can contact the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine's emergency hotline for suspected cases of canine opioid overdoses. An AVMA/University of Illinois [video](#)  may also give veterinarians important information on what to do in the event of an overdosing canine patient.

### **6. Have a Safety Plan and Know the Signs of Opioid Abuse**

Veterinarians should have a safety plan in the event they encounter a situation involving opioid diversion or clients seeking opioids under the guise of treating their pets. Local police departments can advise veterinarians about what to do in these situations. The Fairfax County Police Department in Virginia, for

example, has released a brochure for veterinarians about “veterinarian shopping” and preventing diversion of controlled substances.

### **How do you know if a client or employee may be abusing opioids?**

While these may all be ordinary occurrences, some warning signs that a client is potentially abusing opioids may include:

- Suspect injuries in a new patient
- Asking for specific medications by name
- Asking for refills for lost or stolen medications
- Pet owner is insistent in their request

Some warning signs that veterinary staff may be abusing opioids include:

- Mood swings, anxiety, or depression
- Mental confusion and an inability to concentrate
- Making frequent mistakes at work
- Not showing up for work

Combating opioid addiction and addressing misuse of pain medication continues to be one of FDA’s highest priorities. Veterinarians as medical professionals have an opportunity to partner with FDA and others to take on this deadly epidemic, and the agency encourages them to continue to work with their clients and both local and national organizations to join in the fight.

### **Resources**

#### **Signs of Opioid Abuse**

- [Drugabuse.gov: Recognizing Opioid Abuse](#)

#### **Opioid Information**

- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\), Opioids](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

#### **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**

- [A Brief Overview of Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies \(REMS\)](#)
- [Risk Minimization Action Plans \(RiskMAP\) for Approved Products](#)
- [Disposal of Unused Medications: What You Should Know](#)
- [Lock It Up: Medicine Safety in Your Home](#)

#### **Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)**

- [Don’t Be Scammed by a Drug Abuser](#)
- [Pharmacy Robbery and Burglary: Tips to Protect Your Customers, Your Business, and Yourself](#)

## American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)

- [Facts about Federal Opioid Training Requirements](#)
- [Opioid Resources for Veterinarians](#)

## Examples of CE that satisfies the Opioid requirement

### What CE courses meet the requirement?

- Any webinar or CE course pertaining to the prescribing or dispensing of controlled drugs that is RACE Approved.
- Any webinar or CE course pertaining to the prescribing or dispensing of controlled drugs by veterinarians that is provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), VetFolio, VetGirl, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) or the N.C. Veterinary Medical Association (NCVMA).

### On the NCVMB Website (check back frequently to the Continuing Education Page

<http://www.ncvmb.org/professional.php?section=education#content> )

- VetBloom: [The Prescription and Use of Opioids in Small Animal Patients](#) (2 hrs)
- NC Academy of Small Animal Medicine - Pharmacology (5 hrs) & Substance Abuse (2 hrs) [December 4, 2019](#) Sanford, NC

### Check on the NCVMA website for their Opioid CE offerings:

<http://www.ciclt.net/sn/clt/ncvma/default.aspx?ClientCode=ncvma>

## N.C. Department of Agriculture: CBDs

RALEIGH – The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is sending out letters next week to manufacturers and retailers who sell products containing CBD oil, detailing what is legal to sell in North Carolina.

“Under federal Food and Drug Administration laws, CBD is considered a drug,” said Joe Reardon, NCDA&CS assistant commissioner of consumer protection. “North Carolina state laws mirror federal laws. This means that CBD cannot legally be added to any human food or animal feed that is for sale.”

The product can also not make health claims, including statements that the product may prevent, treat or cure any disease. Failure to comply could result in embargo or seizure of products.

“We are taking an educate before regulate stance with industry,” Reardon said. “We know they may not be aware of the state laws regarding the addition of a drug to a food product. However, we reserve the right to be more assertive, as other states have been, if we need to be in the future. Our main concern is consumer health and safety with any product that falls under our regulatory authority.

“We also urge consumers to be smart shoppers and ask questions before choosing to purchase any tincture that contains CBD or hemp extract. Find out how the product is manufactured, if the company has purity standards and what the potency may be,” he said.

Industry with questions about the regulation of CBD can call the Food and Drug Protection Division, 919-733-7366.

# The North Carolina Veterinary Response Corps

The North Carolina Veterinary Response Corps (NCVRC) is a North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services initiative. The mission of the NCVRC is to train and prepare professionals in the animal care community to respond to disaster events (all hazard) that affect livestock and companion animals. The response of these trained professionals will mitigate the impact to both the state and the nation of such an event.

Membership is open to North Carolina veterinarians, veterinary technicians, veterinary and veterinary technician students, animal shelter employees, animal control officers, and Cooperative Extension agents.

By joining NCVRC and completing the training and other requirements for deployment you will contribute to our state's preparedness and effective response on behalf of all animals.

NCVRC uses North Carolina TERMS (Training, Exercise, & Response Management System), to manage member data and send information. If you are interested in joining NCVRC, please visit <https://terms.ncem.org> and create an account. Then fill out your Response Profile and request membership for the Veterinary Response Corps under ESF-11. Your TERMS account also gives you access to other emergency preparedness/response/management related trainings across the state.

There are no specific requirements to register as a member of NCVRC, however, the requirements for deployment must be completed before you will be allowed to volunteer during an incident. These include taking online Incident Command System courses – ICS 100, 200, and 700, completing Biosecurity/PPE and Animal Sheltering Training - provided by NCDA&CS, a basic awareness of NC Emergency Management concepts and the NC Emergency Operations Plan, Emergency Support Functions (specifically ESF-11), and signing a Code of Conduct.

NCDA&CS staff provide training to all veterinary technician students and veterinary students at the NCSU CVM during their programs. We also provide training annually at the NC Veterinary Conference. This year, we plan to provide multiple training opportunities throughout the state. These opportunities will be available through NC TERMS and advertised by email, on our website, and through our partners.

If you would like more information, please visit our website, <http://www.ncagr.gov/oep/veterinary/VetCorps.htm>, or contact the NCVRC Coordinator Dr. Anna Allen [anna.allen@ncagr.gov](mailto:anna.allen@ncagr.gov).

