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Attending Veterinarian Information

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The duties performed by the attending veterinarian to ensure compliance with the Animal Welfare Act and Regulations are ultimately the responsibility of the licensee or registrant. The licensee or registrant must provide the attending veterinarian with adequate authority to carry out their functions.

The Animal Welfare Act grants the USDA authority over regulated facilities. We do not have the authority to pursue action against the attending veterinarian.

Citations for failure to provide adequate veterinary care are often due to not recognizing animal injury or illness, not contacting the attending veterinarian about animal health issues, or not following the instructions of the attending veterinarian. When these issues are cited on a USDA inspection, it reinforces the attending veterinarian's authority for the provision of adequate veterinary care.

Facilities may be subject to penalties or other sanctions for failing to comply with the Animal Welfare Act or Regulations, but not the attending veterinarian.

What about an attending veterinarian's DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) license?

The use and dispensing of controlled substances is solely at the discretion of the attending veterinarian, and as directed by the program of veterinary care.

The Animal Welfare Act and Regulations do not require attending veterinarians to dispense controlled substances to regulated facilities. Attending veterinarians should follow all state and DEA requirements and their own personal judgment when it comes to dispensing controlled substances.

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