

# Oregon Veterinary Medical Examining Board Strategic Plan

2024-2028



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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Government service faces unique challenges today including increased demand for quality, timely services, while agencies face decreasing resources. Essentially, we are being asked to do more with less. This requires increased efficiency in our agency's administration and operations. However, it is vital we do not diminish our mission of service and public safety in pursuit of appropriate efficiencies.

On behalf of the board members and staff of the Oregon Veterinary Medical Examining Board, I am pleased to present the Board's Strategic Plan for 2023-2027. The purpose of this plan is to outline the direction and priorities which have been established by the board and which will ensure that Oregon veterinary practice is regulated in the interest of public health and safety, result in exceptional service to our licensees, and advance the health of all Oregonians.

We would like to acknowledge the input of our partners and the public who share their views on priorities for veterinary regulation that allows our agency to respond appropriately, and support veterinarians, interns, and technicians in providing the best possible care to all Oregonians, their pets, and domestic animals. The practice of veterinary medicine has continued to face broad changes due to licensee shortages, technological advancements, changes in healthcare delivery, fragmentation of care, remote practice, health disparities, access issues, opioid abuse, and a variety of political and economic forces. We are committed to continuing to assure that veterinary services are provided in a way that prevents healthcare disparities, access to care and to maintain a supportive workplace environment, our affirmative action, diversity, equity and inclusion goals in recruitment and retention of board and committee members and staff.

The five strategic goal areas outlined in this Strategic Plan will continue to guide the work of the Board and staff to create the regulatory structure necessary to incorporate and encourage the best veterinary practices to ensure public health and safety. This plan will be reviewed and updated annually to assess progress and to encourage safe and equitable delivery of veterinary services. The five strategic goal areas include:

- Appropriate Regulatory Oversight: Pursue regulatory streamlining to ease burdens on veterinary professional applicants and licensees without compromising public safety requirements

- Wellness in the profession: Assess mental health and wellness in the veterinary workforce and promote opportunities to support licensees.
- Operations Advancement: Address workforce issues with innovation and collaboration to implement opportunities for improving efficiency in agency operations.
- Community Partnerships: Develop, strengthen, and maintain relationships with internal and external partners who will support agency mission and licensees.
- Education and outreach: Identify and/develop educational and outreach opportunities for licensees and the public.

As we implement these initiatives, we encourage continued active engagement from licensees, the public and partners with the Board and staff. We invite active communication and participation in board meetings, committee meetings, rules hearings, and other board activities.

Governor Kotek’s leadership and commitment to equity and inclusion drives policy and resource decisions for Oregon. Our agency’s vision is the pursuit of safe, and equitable access to veterinary care. OVMEB strives to solicit input from a wide range of community partners, drawing from a diverse cross section that would include:

- OVMEB Board and Staff
- Underrepresented Community Partners
- Licensees and their employees
- Public community / Industry consumers
- Other Health Related Licensing Boards
- Legislators and Governor’s Office
- Local and National Industry Associations

We believe that building a more equitable Oregon begins with government leading the way with inclusive hiring practices that promote an inclusive and diverse workforce. Consistent with the policies of the State of Oregon, OVMEB is committed to:

- Maintaining a work force that represents and incorporates the diversity of Oregon’s population beyond the majority culture.
- Providing fair and equal employment opportunities for all persons without bias.
- Maintaining a workplace environment that encourages individual expression and inclusion and that is free from any form of harassment or

intimidation on account of an individual's race, color, religion, beliefs, gender identity, assigned or identified sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, social or economic status, or disability.

Under the guidance and leadership of our Board, this strategic plan will guide the agency to utilize resources effectively and efficiently to generate outcomes that benefit the public, our licensees, our partners, and Oregon pets and domestic animals. This Strategic Plan provides the framework to address challenges and opportunities through targeted resource allocation and informed decision-making to ensure that the agency is appropriately striving to achieve Governor Kotek's objectives.

Peter J. Burns,  
Executive Director



## **OUR PURPOSE: Mission, Vision, and Values**

The Veterinary Medical Examining Board was established in 1903 to test, license, monitor and regulate practitioners of veterinary medicine throughout the State of Oregon. The Board works in the interest of animal health and welfare, public health, and consumers of veterinary services. The Board's authority comes from the Veterinary Practice Act, Chapter 686 of the Oregon Revised Statutes and Chapter 875 of the Oregon Administrative Rules.

The Board is a consumer-focused organization with a citizen governing body appointed by the Governor. The agency receives policy direction and oversight from an eight-member Board, comprised of five Veterinarians, one Certified Veterinary Technician and two public members.

The full mission of the Oregon Veterinary Medical Examining Board is to protect public and animal health and consumers of veterinary services by regulating veterinary professionals in Oregon under the statutes and rules that comprise the Veterinary Practice Act. The Act establishes licensing requirements, professional conduct and minimum medical standards for veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and euthanasia technicians. Veterinary care in Oregon must be provided by qualified and competent practitioners to assure the public that pets and food animals will be examined, diagnosed, and treated with consistent expertise. The Board continuously reviews and updates minimum practice standards to regulate the profession in conformance with current veterinary medical research and education, improvements in technology, and public expectations. The Board investigates consumer complaints and takes remedial or disciplinary action to ensure that appropriate veterinary care is offered to the public. The Board's authority and responsibilities are defined in Oregon Revised Statutes Ch. 686 and Oregon Administrative Rules Ch. 875.

Our vision is to work closely with licensees, partners and the public to ensure quality and appropriate regulatory oversight to safeguard animal care in Oregon.

The agency's core values reflect our Board and staff's commitment to conduct ourselves professionally as we seek to provide the best customer service possible. These include the following:

- Customer service – Dedication to meeting the needs of our clients

and customers and to honoring our commitments;

- Leadership – Being open and authentic, and lifting others up while building consensus towards a common goal;
- Integrity – Meeting commitments, acting responsibly with public and personal trust and being accountable for our actions;
- Professionalism – Embodying a commitment to quality and pride in our work;
- Operational Excellence – Striving for the highest quality and for continuous improvement;
- Innovation – Developing creative solutions and putting them into action;
- Collaboration – Demonstrating an ability to facilitate, negotiate, build consensus, develop strong teams, and empower others.

## **OVMEB Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement**

At the Oregon Veterinary Medical Examining Board, we are committed to fostering a culture that values and celebrates diversity, pursues equity in opportunities, and promotes inclusion for all individuals within our agency and the veterinary profession. We recognize that diversity encompasses a wide range of identities, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, and socioeconomic status.

We believe that a diverse and inclusive agency and veterinary community is essential for promoting excellence, innovation, and compassion in animal health and welfare. By embracing diverse perspectives and experiences, we enrich our collective understanding and enhance our ability to serve the needs of veterinarians, veterinary technicians, animal owners, and the public.

We are dedicated to promoting equity by addressing systemic barriers and inequities that may exist within the State system, our agency, and the veterinary profession. We are committed to providing fair and equitable access to opportunities for professional development, advancement, and leadership within our organization.

We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where all individuals feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique talents and perspectives. We are dedicated to creating a culture of belonging where everyone feels supported, heard, and included in decision-making processes.

We recognize that achieving our DEI goals requires ongoing effort, collaboration, and accountability. We are committed to continuously learning, evolving, and improving our practices to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within our organization and, as we are able, the veterinary profession as a whole.

Together, we strive to build a veterinary community that reflects the rich diversity of Oregon and embodies the principles of fairness, justice, and compassion.



## Veterinary Strategic Landscape

Since early 2020, a transformation in healthcare, veterinary practice and society has occurred due to health and social trends as well as telemedicine. These trends will likely continue and have far-reaching consequences on the delivery of healthcare, veterinary practice, providing care, regulation and how we do business.

A variety of changes in how veterinary services are delivered are impacting the OVMEB's regulatory activities, daily work, and strategic priorities. Many of these changes offer potential benefits to the public, the veterinary profession and health care while others pose potential risks. All, however, require careful monitoring and response from the Board to ensure public safety is maintained and that licensing, regulation, enforcement, and outreach efforts reflect the evolving landscape.

Some of the issues facing the Veterinary Board include:

***Access and distribution:*** A stark increase in pet ownership since 2020 has highlighted value and vulnerability of Veterinarians, Interns, Certified Veterinary Technicians and Certified Euthanasia Technicians as they struggle to respond to a sharp increase in demand for services.

***Economic and social impacts:*** The economics of the veterinary field along with veterinarians and veterinary technicians leaving the profession has resulted in challenges for the public seeking services. Veterinary professionals have been relocating or leaving the field in numbers that are impacting access to veterinary services, particularly in rural Oregon.

***Regulatory trends:*** The move to remote practice and telework has impacted veterinary service models as well as regulation. Improvements in technology and the need to assure equitable access to veterinary services for all Oregonians have necessitated new regulatory approaches. The Board supports rule changes when they result in improved access, efficiency, and protection of public health, safety, and welfare.

## **KEY GOALS**

The agency has a team of five full-time equivalent (FTE) staff that work toward achieving the following key goals:

### **Engaged & Proficient Team**

Staff are open, accessible, and accountable for the outcomes on behalf of the citizens of Oregon. We employ specialized professionals trained in investigations, inspections and administration who understand their critical role and contribute toward our goals and mission. We seek to innovate whenever possible and utilize best practices to deliver as effectively as possible. We believe offering professional training and continuing education for our staff and Board is critical to our outcomes.

### **Effective Education and Outreach**

As a state agency, we are diligent in our efforts to ensure that Oregonians know who we are and what we do. Anyone who needs to access our services may reach us in a manner convenient for them. We are committed to timely, thorough, and accurate communication. We strive to return calls or emails within 48 hours of receipt. We seek to proactively communicate information to our licensee, partners and the public.

### **Operational Excellence**

We are intentional in our efforts to perform at the highest level to ensure the results on behalf of Oregonians utilizing veterinary services. We map our workflow and processes and look for ways to measure and evaluate the work to ensure we are achieving the expected and desired outcomes. We identify collaborative opportunities and solutions to help us meet outcome-based performance measures, as well as meeting agency, legislative and funding requirements, and reporting.

### **Quality Service**

We care about understanding our performance in delivering quality services in a timely manner, while maintaining a focus on resource utilization to ensure services are being delivered in effective and efficient ways. We rely on measurable data to

assess our success.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

In order to appropriately respond to and prepare for changes in the needs of our licensees, the public and partners, with the increased demands on resources, OVMEB developed five strategic priorities as a means to organize our work:

- **Operations Advancement:** Address workforce issues with innovation and collaboration to implement opportunities for improving efficiency in agency operations.
- **Appropriate Regulatory Oversight:** Pursue regulatory streamlining to ease burdens on veterinary professional applicants and licensees without compromising public safety requirements.
- **Wellness in the profession:** Assess mental health and wellness in the veterinary workforce and promote opportunities to support licensees.
- **Community Partnerships:** Develop, strengthen, and maintain relationships with internal and external partners who will support agency mission and licensees.
- **Education and outreach:** Identify and develop educational and outreach opportunities for licensees and the public.

### **Strategic Priority 1: Operations Advancement**

Skills Development: We support our staff in obtaining training and development opportunities. Agency will utilize the statewide enterprise and other training resources to develop best practices and specialized skills to enhance operations to achieve agency goals.

Retention: As the nation's workforce has evolved, we can no longer expect to have employees who choose to work in the same job for their entire career. To retain our skilled staff, we strive to be creative in offering compelling reasons for employees to consider long-term employment with our agency. Opportunities for professional development and growth and an engaging mission are compelling reasons that today's staff members remain, fostering

their passion for the work. We recognize that by retaining valuable staff and engaging them in their jobs we can complete the critical work of the agency.

Develop Operational Efficiencies: Review and utilize best practices in regulatory operations. Identify and utilize new and existing technical products to support and streamline agency operations.

## **Strategic Priority 2: Appropriate Regulatory Oversight**

Public Safety: Timely and thorough completion of investigations of all complaints. Timely and appropriate communication to the public of Board actions. Proactively provide best-practices and practical applications/interpretation of rule/statutes to licensees to avoid mistakes and potential violations.

Licensing Administration: Timely and thorough processing of licenses once complete applications are received. Proactive communication to applicants and licensees regarding requirements for licensing and/or renewal.

## **Strategic Priority 3: Wellness in the Profession**

Understanding Challenges: Review, analyze and apply data regarding challenges to the overall mental and physical wellness of OVMEB licensees. Leverage agency relationships with local and national associations to obtain accurate data and the best response options, both in terms of compliance and support.

Appropriate Response: OVMEB will work with partners and other jurisdictions to promote best practices to maintain health and wellness. OVMEB will work with partners and other jurisdictions to identify appropriate regulatory responses to cases involving wellness, mental health, addiction, etc.

## **Strategic Priority 4: Community Partnerships**

Unified Goals: Establishing community partnerships to bolster animal welfare and public safety. We will diligently identify and engage key partners, deploying tailored strategies such as educational programs and collaborative initiatives to foster dialogue and address shared concerns. Through transparent communication channels and advocacy efforts, we aim to develop evidence-based policies and regulations while continually evaluating our partnerships' efficacy to ensure we meet the evolving needs of our stakeholders and fulfill our mission effectively.

### **Strategic Priority 5: Education and Outreach**

Broadcast our Mission: Enhance public understanding of veterinary regulation, emphasizing the importance of licensed veterinary care and compliance with regulatory standards for animal welfare.

Broadcast Best Practices: Provide proactive communication to licensees regarding regulation, Board determinations and interpretations, as well as opportunities for professional development opportunities.

Build Bridges: Engage directly with the community through outreach events and digital platforms to promote Board mission and foster a shared culture of informed decision-making and uphold the highest standards of veterinary care and public safety.

### Organization Chart for 2024-2025

