

Pacific Tide

An informational newsletter

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About our Author

Emma J. Sanchez, CVPM

Emma J. Sanchez graduated from Cabrillo College with an AS in Accounting and an AA in Business. After working for Pacific for three years she sat for her Certified Veterinary Practice Manager (CVPM) in 2009 and passed that same year. She has held the position of secretary to the Monterey Bay Area Veterinary Medical Association (MBAVMA) since 2006. She attended Colorado State University—Global and obtained her BA in Business Management in June 2014. She enjoys the challenges of practice management as well as working with the clients, staff and referring veterinarians.

In her free time she enjoys spending time with her family and friends. She loves watching football, cooking and swimming.



**Emma J. Sanchez,
CVPM**

Is Your Practice Ready for 2015?

Emma J. Sanchez, CVPM

With 2014 almost at its end (where has the time gone?), it is time to get ready for 2015.

For the majority of us working and living in California can be great for employees, but not so great for employers. California is known for favoring the employee and usually being one of the first states in the US to implement change. In 2014 there were a few changes that occurred that will impact how employers do business and have ramifications for the future.

Effective August 18, 2014 tramadol became a Schedule IV drug per the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). While the change is something that we have seen happen before, it is the big picture ramifications that we haven't seen yet that we need to be prepared for. There is a prescription pain killer abuse problem that has hit our communities. In 2010 more than 12 million people reported using prescription painkillers nonmedically. Pain killers were involved in 14,800 overdose deaths in 2008, more than cocaine and heroin combined. This amount has risen by 300% since 1999. This impacts veterinary medicine in multiple ways. As an employer we need to understand how this impacts our business as well as our employees. As a veterinarian it impacts the way you practice medicine, as people are using their pets to obtain pain killers and other drugs.

With the passage of AB 1839, as of January 1, 2013, veterinary assistants who have access to controlled substances are required to have background checks. This is written into Section 4836.1 and it shall remain in effect until January 1, 2015. So here we are, with that date fast approaching.

Currently, the changes to take effect will require any veterinary assistant who has access to controlled drugs have a valid veterinary assistant controlled substance permit which shall be a form furnished by the VMB Board, per Section 4836.2. The assistants will have to be fingerprinted with the Department of Justice for the purposes of conducting both a state and federal criminal history record check. The renewal of the permit is on or before the last day of the applicant's birthday month. The bill authorizes the Board to collect a filing fee, not to exceed \$100, from applicants for a veterinary assistant controlled substances permit. For those employers that pay for licensing for their staff, there is now an additional cost for non-RVT's. The *real* big picture is that if this trend continues, there potentially will be stricter laws allowing only DVMs and RVTs access to controlled drugs. This could make unpacking orders and dismissals rather costly.

Another change for California employers is the Paid Sick Leave that was signed into law in

September and must take effect July 1, 2015. This law, in a nutshell, will require any employers, except for those with a collective bargaining agreement, to offer 24 hours or 3 paid sick days per year. The bill requires employers to provide paid sick leave to any employee who has worked in California for 30 days, at an accrual rate of one hour for every 30 hours worked. Employers are allowed to limit employees' use of paid sick leave to 24 hours or three days in each year of employment. There will also be new posting requirements for employee notices. While this seems pretty straightforward, there is a "big picture" component to consider.

For employers who have many part time employees, the paid sick leave becomes a financial nightmare as they pay twice as much in sick time as they would to one full time employee. However, reducing the number of staff by hiring full time employees does not necessarily help either because of the Affordable Care Act and the rules and regulations about who and what must be covered for small businesses in California. However, that topic is better saved for another newsletter. Some employers might decide for their part-time employees to have them be independent contractors. There are specific guidelines that a person must fit in order to truly be classified as an independent contractor. The penalties and fines are quite severe for improperly classifying an employee as an independent contractor. Not only is there the unpaid employee/employer taxes you didn't pay, but it is also classified as workers compensation fraud.

As with many things that become law, it begins with a lawsuit. With the ever changing world of rules and regulation it is important to devote some time and resources to making sure your hospital and employees are in compliance. It is important that you have someone that owns the responsibility of staying up to date with all the changes. California is known for setting precedents so you won't usually hear about it until it has already happened. In veterinary medicine we have to be in compliance with many regulatory agencies such as the VMB, DEA, FDA, USDA, EDD, AVMA, CVMA, OSHA as well as your city and county local agencies. When it comes to these agencies, taking a proactive approach versus a reactive approach is ideal.

For more information regarding the topics above please see the following website. Being a member of the California Chamber of Commerce can give you up to date information and the support and training you need to stay within compliance.

<http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/rxbrief/>

http://www.vmb.ca.gov/about_us/agenda_items/vmbagenda_20131022_11ai.pdf

<http://hrwatchdog.calchamber.com/2014/09/mandatory-paid-sick-leave-signed-law-california.html>

<http://www.calchamber.com/hrcalifornia/Pages/hrcalifornia.aspx>

Our Doctors

Internal Medicine

Kelly Akol, DVM, DACVIM (SAIM)
Merrienne Burtch, DVM, DACVIM(SAIM)
Michelle Pressel, DVM, DACVIM (SAIM)
Bryn Hoffman, MVB (Residency Trained in Internal Medicine)

Surgery

Lisa Metelman, MS, DVM, DACVS
Tom LaHue, DVM, DACVS
Dean Filipowicz, MS, DVM, DACVS

Oncology

Theresa Arteaga, DVM, DACVIM(Oncology)

Critical Care

Colleen Brady, DVM, DACVECC
Lillian Good, DVM, DACVECC

Cardiology

Kristine Yee, DVM, DACVIM(Cardiology)

Radiology (VRS)

Larry Kerr, DVM, DACVR
Mark Lee, DVM, DACVR

Emergency

Christian Robison, DVM
Kim Delkener, DVM
Mark Saphir, DVM
Jessica Kurek, DVM
Sara Heidelberger, DVM

Behavior

Jan Brennan, DVM (practice limited to behavior)

About Our Hospitals

Pacific Veterinary Specialists was founded to provide high quality, specialized medical care to companion animal patients. Our practice is dedicated to serving the veterinary community as a partner in total patient care. We offer comprehensive specialized services including video endoscopy, Doppler ultrasound, surgery, 24-hour ICU care, and emergency and critical care. Our staff is committed to providing compassionate and thorough medical care that meets the needs of the patient, client, and referring veterinarian. In September 2011 we opened PVSM and currently offer internal medicine and oncology, Tuesday through Thursday in Monterey. Behavior consultations by appointment are available on Mondays.

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Pacific Veterinary Specialists

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