

PRESS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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**Governor Shumlin Signs Veterinary Dentistry Bill**

By the Vermont Veterinary Medical Association

MONTPELIER, VERMONT - Governor Peter Shumlin signed into law on May 2 a bill to include veterinary dentistry in the practice of veterinary medicine. Vermont was one of only two states that did not define veterinary dentistry in their statutes, and this law makes it clear that dental scaling and the use of power-tool floating equipment fall within the practice of veterinary medicine. The law ensures that dental procedures which can cause potential harm and pain to animals are done by trained veterinarians and their staff who have the equipment and sedation necessary for the health and safety of their animals.

The bill was sponsored by Representative John Bartholomew (WR-1) of Hartland, a retired veterinarian, who shepherded the bill through deliberations in the House and Senate.

According to VVMA President Dr. Hailey Gentile, "By age three, 85% of dogs and cats have dental disease which can lead to serious health consequences. The only way to resolve dental disease is to have a professional cleaning with your veterinarian because a thorough dental cleaning on pet teeth requires general anesthesia at a veterinary clinic. This law protects well-intentioned pet owners who are misled into thinking they are receiving professional dental care, when in fact these unsupervised, unregulated non-veterinarians are at best only brushing teeth and giving their pet a breath spray, or at worse providing non-anesthetic dental scaling that can injure pets."

The VVMA worked closely on the bill with representatives of the equine dentistry community. The law maintains the existing exemption that permits the use of handheld files or rasps for equine "floating" by non-veterinary personnel, but prohibits the use of power-tool floating equipment.

For further information, contact the Vermont Veterinary Medical Association at 802-878-6888 or visit [www.vtvets.org](http://www.vtvets.org).

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*The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association is comprised of 340 member veterinarians. Their mission is promote animal well-being and public health, to provide education for veterinarians and the public, and to enhance the ability of veterinarians to succeed.*