

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA
BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICINE
COMPLAINT REVIEW COMMITTEE

In the Matter of
Catherine A.C. Townes, DVM
License No. 27418

**AGREEMENT FOR
CORRECTIVE ACTION**

This Agreement is entered into by and between Catherine A.C. Townes, DVM (“Licensee”), and the Minnesota Board of Veterinary Medicine Complaint Review Committee (“Committee”) based on Minnesota Statutes section 214.103, subdivision 6(a)(2). Licensee and the Complaint Review Committee agree to the following:

FACTS

1. At all times relevant to these allegations, Licensee practiced veterinary medicine at Banfield Pet Hospital (“Clinic”) in Richfield, Minnesota:

a. On June 14, 2023, Licensee examined Lucky, a 3-year-old female Border Collie owned by Z.J., but did not personally verify the dog’s history with the owner before reaching a diagnosis and advising treatment.

b. Licensee did not note that the dog was febrile and therefore did not consider an infection as a possible etiology.

c. Licensee documented elbow joint effusion, poorly characterized the identified swelling distal to the joint, and failed to note the severity of the lameness in the record.

d. Licensee attributed Lucky’s lameness to overuse partly on the basis of her breed and did not discuss other potential diagnoses in her subsequent conversation with her owner.

e. Licensee prescribed carprofen, a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication, and trazodone to reduce anxiety and promote rest. Potential side effects of these medications were not addressed.

f. Licensee did not advise Lucky's owner that a failure to improve with treatment or an increase in lameness warranted prompt re-examination.

g. Licensee's Clinic staff was contacted by Lucky's owner three days later to report increased swelling and lameness as well as vomiting. Staff informed the owner that re-evaluation was unnecessary. Licensee was not informed.

h. Licensee's assessment and recommendations delayed specific treatment of infected puncture wounds that were identified and surgically managed at other veterinary clinics.

i. Licensee's medical record was incomplete, lacking sufficient detail of potential diagnoses and cause of the fever, complete history of the lameness, and owner communication.

2. On October 13, 2023, Licensee met with the Complaint Review Committee, composed of Julie Dahlke, DVM, Board member, and Raye Taylor, DVM, Board member, to discuss allegations regarding Licensee's practice of veterinary medicine contained in a Notice of Conference dated September 28, 2023. Priya S. Narayanan, Assistant Attorney General, represented the Complaint Review Committee during the conference and participated remotely. Licensee was represented by Teri E. Bentson, Esq., of the Law Office of John C. Syverson, in London, Kentucky. Dr. Julia Wilson, Executive Director of the Board, also participated.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

3. Based on the available information, Licensee and the Committee agree that the conduct above violates Minnesota Statutes section 156.081, subdivision 2(11) and (12); and Minnesota Rules 9100.0700, subpart 1(A) and (C); and 9100.0800, subparts 1 and 4. Licensee and the Committee have agreed to enter into this Agreement for Corrective Action as follows:

a. Within one month from the date of this Agreement, Licensee shall submit to the Committee documentation of the continuing education for Licensee's most recent license renewal.

b. Within three months from the date of this Agreement, Licensee shall submit to the Committee evidence of completion of at least four (4) credit hours of continuing education on the topic of medical records and client communication. For purposes of this requirement, the Committee preapproves the following online courses offered by Animal Law and Legal Services: "Michigan: Medical Records and Veterinary Law" (2 credits); "10 Top Medical Record Deficiencies" (1 credit); and "Consent and Client Communication" (1 credit). The credits from this continuing education may not be applied to the requirements for Licensee's next license renewal.

c. Within six months from the date of this Agreement, Licensee shall submit to the Committee evidence of completion of at least two (2) credit hours of interactive or pre-recorded continuing education on the topic of evaluation of canine lameness. The proposed continuing education must be preapproved by the Committee. The credits earned may not be applied to the requirements for Licensee's next license renewal.

d. Within three (3) months following completion of this continuing education, Licensee shall submit her appointment schedule for the preceding three months. Licensee will submit a copy of the complete medical records for two (2) patients selected by the Committee for review. The records must meet the Committee's approval.

OTHER INFORMATION

4. Upon Licensee's satisfactory completion of the corrective action referenced in paragraph 3 above, the Committee agrees to dismiss the complaint(s) concerning the matters

referenced in paragraph 1. The Committee shall be the sole judge of satisfactory completion. The Committee may reopen this complaint if it receives newly discovered information that was not available to the Committee during the initial investigation, or if the Committee receives a new complaint that indicates a pattern of behavior or conduct.

5. If Licensee fails to complete the corrective action satisfactorily, the Committee may, at its discretion, reopen the investigation and proceed according to Minnesota Statutes chapter 156 (the Board's Practice Act) and Minnesota Statutes chapters 214 and 14. Licensee agrees that failure to complete the corrective action satisfactorily is failure to cooperate under Minnesota Statutes section 156.123 and may subject Licensee to disciplinary action by the Board.

6. This agreement shall become effective upon execution by the Board's Executive Director and shall remain in effect until the Committee dismisses the complaint, unless the Committee receives additional information that renders corrective action inappropriate. Upon receiving such information, the Committee may, at its discretion, proceed according to Minnesota Statutes chapter 156 (the Board's Practice Act) and Minnesota Statutes chapters 214 and 14.

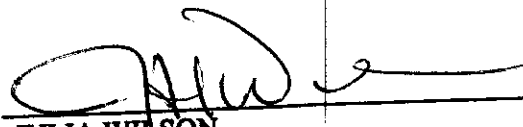
7. This agreement is not disciplinary action. *See* Minnesota Statutes section 214.103, subdivision 6. However, this agreement is classified as public data pursuant to Minnesota Statutes sections 13.41, subdivision 5, and 214.072, subdivision 3.

8. Licensee hereby acknowledges having read and understood this agreement and having voluntarily entered into it. This agreement contains the entire agreement between the Committee and Licensee, there being no other agreement of any kind, verbal or otherwise, which varies the terms of this agreement.

COMPLAINT REVIEW COMMITTEE


CATHERINE A.C. TOWNES
Licensee

Dated: 12/18/23


JULIA WILSON
Executive Director

Dated: Dec 18, 2023

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