

**BEFORE THE MINNESOTA
BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICINE**

In the Matter of
Catherine Townes, D.V.M.
License No. 27418

**FINDINGS OF FACT,
CONCLUSIONS,
AND FINAL ORDER**

The above-entitled matter came on for hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Minnesota Board of Veterinary Medicine (“Board”) on September 24, 2025, convened both virtually via Webex and in person at 335 Randolph Avenue, Room 106 – Split Rock, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102. Licensee did not appear before the Board. Assistant Attorney General Theresa Flahaven appeared on behalf of the Board’s Complaint Review Committee (“Committee”). Jamal Zayed, Assistant Attorney General, was present as legal advisor to the Board. Professional Board members Julie Dahlke, DVM, and Raye Taylor, DVM, did not participate in deliberations and did not vote on the matter.

On February 10, 2025, the Committee commenced this contested case proceeding against Licensee by filing a Notice and Order for Prehearing Conference and Hearing (“Notice of Hearing”). The Committee issued the Notice of Hearing as a formal notice of intent to seek disciplinary action against Licensee’s veterinary medicine license.

On July 2, 2025, the Committee filed a Motion for Summary Disposition, requesting an order finding no genuine issue of material fact and recommending summary disposition. The Licensee did not respond to the Motion. Both parties appeared at an August 4, 2025 motion hearing.

On August 12, 2025, Administrative Law Judge Joseph Meyer (“ALJ”) issued a Recommendation and Order on Summary Disposition (“ALJ’s Report”), recommending that the Board impose disciplinary action against Licensee’s veterinary medicine license for violations of Minnesota Statutes section 156.081, subdivision 2(11), (12); 156.123 and Minn. R. 9100.0700, subp. 1(A), (C), (H); and 9100.0800, subp. 1 and 4. The ALJ concluded, “[t]he Committee has demonstrated that there are no genuinely disputed issues of material fact and that the Board may impose discipline for all three of its allegations. Therefore, the Committee’s Motion for Summary Disposition should be **GRANTED**, and the record will be transmitted to the Board for issuance of a final decision where the Board should impose appropriate discipline on Licensee’s license.”¹ (A true and correct copy of the ALJ’s Report is attached hereto and incorporated as Exhibit A.)

Based upon its review of the evidence in the record and after careful and thorough deliberation, the Board makes the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT²

The Board has reviewed the record of this proceeding and hereby issues the following Findings of Fact:

1. Licensee entered into an Agreement for Corrective Action (“ACA”) on December 18, 2023 with the Committee. The ACA arose from an incident on June 14, 2023, where Licensee diagnosed a three-year-old dog with lameness and prescribed medications for the dog without personally verifying the dog’s history. Licensee did not note that the dog was febrile and thus did not consider infection as a possible etiology. Licensee also did not note potential side

¹ ALJ’s Report Ex. A at 7-8.

² The Board modified the format of the findings of fact from the ALJ’s Report and made non-substantive changes to conform to the standard format the Board uses for findings of fact and for ease of reading. In doing so, the Board reformatted and numbered paragraphs and removed the ALJ’s citations to the record.

effects for medication prescribed to the dog or advise the dog's owners that a failure to improve with treatment or increased lameness would warrant reexamination. Further, Licensee kept an incomplete medical record, failing to include sufficient detail of potential diagnosis and cause of the fever, a complete history of the lameness, and owner communication.

2. In the ACA, Licensee admitted to the conduct described above and further agreed that the conduct violated Minn. Stat. § 156.081, subd. 2(11) and (12); Minn. R. 9100.0700, subp. 1(A) and (C); and Minn. R. 9100.0800, subps. 1 and 4. In order to resolve the Committee's allegations, Licensee agreed to (1) submit to the Board documentation of continuing education for Licensee's most recent license renewal within one month of the ACA; (2) submit to the Board evidence of completion of at least four credit hours of continuing education on the topic of medical records and client communication within three months of the ACA; (3) submit to the Board evidence of completion of at least two credit hours of interactive or pre-recorded continuing education on the topic of evaluation of canine lameness within six months of the ACA; and (4) submit to the Board Licensee's appointment scheduled for the prior three months along with medical records of two patients selected by the Committee within three months of completing continuing education. Licensee did not complete any of these requirements.

3. The ACA provided that failure to complete the corrective action described above would constitute a failure to cooperate with the Board pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 156.123 and may subject Licensee to disciplinary action.

4. The Board's executive director, Dr. Pamela Johnson, sent an email to Licensee on July 2, 2024, informing Licensee that she had not completed her corrective action and requesting a response by July 21, 2024. Dr. Johnson followed up with a letter sent by certified mail that Licensee received on July 26, 2024 informing Licensee that she had not completed her corrective

action and requesting a response by August 15, 2024. In early September 2024, the Board sent a Notice of Conference with Board Complaint Review Committee to Licensee which notified Licensee that it would hold a conference on October 18, 2024 and requesting that Licensee confirm her attendance at the meeting within ten days of service. Licensee failed to respond to any of this correspondence or appear at the October 18, 2024 conference.

CONCLUSIONS

The Board accepts the ALJ's August 12, 2025 recommendation that the undisputed facts sustain the following grounds for discipline and that there is a basis for taking action against Licensee's license for the following violations:

1. Engaging in fraud, deception, or incompetence in the practice of veterinary medicine, including any departure from or failure to conform to the minimum standards of acceptable and prevailing practice without actual injury having to be established, in violation of Minn. Stat. § 156.081, subd. 2(11) (2024), and Minn. R. 9100.0700, subp. 1(A) and (C) and 9100.0800, subp. 1 and 4 (2025);
2. Engaging in unprofessional conduct, including failing, within 30 days, to provide information in response to a written request made by the Board pursuant to an investigation by or on behalf of the Board, in violation of Minn. Stat. § 156.081, subd. 2(12) and Minn. R. 9100.0700, subp. 1(H); and
3. Failing to cooperate with an investigation of the Board, in violation of Minn. Stat. § 156.123.

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions, and upon the recommendation of the ALJ, the Board issues the following Order:

1. NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Committee's Motion for Summary Disposition is **GRANTED** and the license of Licensee to practice veterinary medicine in the State of Minnesota is **SUSPENDED**. The suspension is hereby **STAYED** subject to Licensee complying with all of the following **CONDITIONS**:

- a. Within one (1) month of the date of this Order, Licensee shall submit to the Committee documentation of the continuing education for Licensee's most recent license renewal.
- b. Within three (3) 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 (6) 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 prerecorded 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.

2. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that within twelve (12) months of this Order, Licensee shall pay an **ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY** in the amount of \$5,399.80. The Board has determined an administrative penalty is appropriate based on the facts herein and will serve to discourage similar violations and reimburse the Board for the cost of the investigation and proceedings herein. The administrative penalty shall be paid by cashier's check or money order made payable to the Minnesota Board of Veterinary Medicine and shall be delivered personally or by mail to the Minnesota Board of Veterinary Medicine, c/o Pamela Johnson, Executive Director, 335 Randolph Avenue, Suite 215, St. Paul, MN 55102.

3. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Licensee's violation of this Order shall constitute the violation of a Board order for purposes of Minnesota Statutes section 156.081, subdivision 2(12), and provide grounds for further disciplinary action.

4. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, upon successful completion of the conditions described in Paragraph 1 and 2 above, Licensee may petition the Board for removal of the stayed suspension status on her license. Licensee bears the burden of proof to establish she has successfully completed the conditions of this Order. The Board may, at any regularly scheduled meeting following Licensee's petition for reinstatement of her unconditioned license, take any of the following actions:

a. Grant an unconditioned and unlimited license to Licensee;

- a. Grant an unconditioned and unlimited license to Licensee;
- b. Grant reinstatement to Licensee with limitations upon the scope of Licensee's practice and/or with conditions for Licensee's practice; or
- c. Continue the stayed suspension of Licensee's license upon Licensee's failure to meet the burden of proof

Dated: 10/6/2025

STATE OF MINNESOTA
BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICINE



Presiding Board Member