



- Equine Veterinary Care 288 Training Center Drive Elkton, MD 21921 410309-0762 •

Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR)

At the core of equine veterinary care is the Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR). This is the foundation that allows us to provide responsible and legally compliant care for your horse.

What is a VCPR?

A VCPR exists when a veterinarian:

1. **Takes responsibility** for your horse's medical care and makes clinical decisions in your horse's best interest.
2. **Has sufficient knowledge** of your horse's health through recent examinations and regular visits either at the barn or in-clinic.
3. **Is available for follow-up care** or has arranged for emergency care when needed.

This relationship is crucial because it enables your veterinarian to provide tailored care for your horse based on a clear understanding of their health, history, and environment. Most importantly, without an established VCPR, **veterinarians are legally prohibited from prescribing medications or administering certain treatments** for your horse.

Why is a VCPR Established and Maintained?

A well-established VCPR ensures that your horse receives:

- **Personalized and informed care:** Your veterinarian knows your horse's health history and can make recommendations based on direct, up-to-date knowledge.
- **Timely medical interventions:** With regular assessments, potential health issues can be addressed before they become severe.
- **Compliance with legal standards:** Most importantly, **without a valid VCPR, it is illegal for a veterinarian to prescribe or dispense any medications**, including routine treatments, antibiotics, pain relief, or other necessary drugs.



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Legal Restrictions on Medications and Treatments

To protect your horse's health and safety, the law mandates that medications and many treatments can only be prescribed or administered if a VCPR is in place. This means that:

- **We cannot prescribe or refill prescriptions** unless we have a valid VCPR.
- **Routine or emergency treatments** that require medication, such as pain management or antibiotics, also cannot be administered without an active VCPR.
- A VCPR must be **maintained** with regular visits, examinations, and updated health information to ensure your horse receives the correct and legal care.

How is a VCPR Ended?

A VCPR can be ended by:

- **Client decision:** You may choose to transfer care to another veterinarian at any time, but it's important to notify us to ensure a smooth transition of medical records.
- **Veterinarian decision:** A veterinarian may choose to end the VCPR if they are no longer able to provide care.
- **Inactivity:** If your horse has not been seen or examined for an extended period, the VCPR will lapse, and a new exam will be required to re-establish it.

Why is the VCPR So Important in Equine Veterinary Medicine?

Equine medicine often involves complex cases, emergencies, and preventative treatments, where medications are an essential part of care. Without a valid VCPR:

- **No medications can be prescribed, refilled, or administered**, which could result in delays in critical care.
- **Preventative care** such as vaccines or routine treatments cannot be legally performed.



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- Your horse's health may be at risk, as ongoing care depends on an active VCPR to monitor conditions and adjust treatments.

Maintaining a VCPR ensures that we can continue to provide the best care for your horse and legally prescribe and administer necessary treatments to protect their health.

Please contact us with any questions or to schedule a visit to ensure your horse's VCPR is current and compliant with legal requirements at Equine Veterinary Care 410-392.6646 or info@equinevetcare.com.