

Advisory Opinion: Use of the term ‘veterinary nurse’ by those licensed by the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners.

Date: April 3, 2014

The South Carolina Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners has received inquiries concerning the use of the term ‘veterinary nurse’ by those licensed by the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners. In response to these inquiries the Board advises that it does not endorse use of the term ‘nurse’ by its licensees unless they are duly licensed by the South Carolina Board of Nursing. While the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners practice act defines ‘veterinary aide’ to include a *nurse, attendant, intern, technician, or other employee of a veterinarian, other than a licensed veterinary technician*, the term ‘nurse’ itself is a protected term according to the statutory language of the nurse practice act.

Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners records indicate that in 2009, the Board responded to a similar individual inquiry and indicated that it would consider a possible amendment to its statute in the future.

OPINION: The Board recommends and advises that its veterinary aides or other employees of a licensed veterinarian not use the term ‘nurse’ to avoid possible confusion.

VETERINARY PRACTICE ACT SECTION 40-69-20. Definitions.

(19) "Veterinary aide" means a nurse, attendant, intern, technician, or other employee of a veterinarian, other than a licensed veterinary technician.

NURSE PRACTICE ACT SECTION 40-33-30. Licensing requirement; use of title "nurse"; exceptions; establishment of policies to cover special health care needs.

(C) A person may not use the word "nurse" as a title, or use an abbreviation to indicate that the person is practicing in this State as a nurse, unless the person is actively licensed as a nurse as provided for in this chapter. If the term "nurse" is part of a longer title, such as "nurse's aide", a person who is entitled to use that title shall use the entire title and may not abbreviate the title to "nurse". This does not prohibit the use of the title "nurse" by persons who hold a temporary permit pending licensure by endorsement from another jurisdiction, and it does not prohibit the use of the title "nurse" by persons enrolled in a board-approved refresher course for the purpose of obtaining an active South Carolina license.