



February 24, 2026

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 1305 An Act enabling the use of telehealth to deliver veterinary care

Dear Chair Aron, Vice Chair Barbour, and Committee Members,

On behalf of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and our almost 7,000 New Hampshire supporters, I am writing to express support for HB 1305, legislation to expand access to [veterinary telemedicine](#) by enabling a veterinarian to establish a new patient relationship over telemedicine. Unfortunately, current New Hampshire law unnecessarily blocks veterinary telemedicine access for professional licensed veterinarians and pet owners by requiring a veterinarian to conduct an in-person examination before they can treat an animal patient over telemedicine (Part Vet 604.01). HB 1305 would modernize the state's approach and thereby increase access to veterinary care.

New Hampshire animal shelters and pet owners are struggling to access timely veterinary care<sup>1</sup> amidst an ongoing [veterinary shortage](#).<sup>2</sup> A lack of proper care can lead to costly and more complex treatment needs, unnecessary suffering, premature death, and more animals relinquished to shelters.<sup>3</sup> Improving access to veterinary care can help keep pets in loving homes and out of New Hampshire's overburdened shelters. A national study showed that 40% of low-income owners who rehomed their pets reported that access to affordable vet care would have helped them keep their pet.<sup>4</sup>

Increasing access to veterinary telemedicine can help mitigate the effects of the veterinary workforce shortage.<sup>5</sup> Safe, convenient veterinary telemedicine can help address many common barriers to care faced by senior pet owners, as well as those who live in rural or underserved areas, face transportation problems, have large, fearful, or potentially aggressive animals, or need to access veterinary services outside of normal clinic hours due to work schedules or time-sensitive pet issues. Conditions such as itchy skin or ears, common flea and tick prevention and treatment medications, initial assessment of gastrointestinal or mobility issues, as well as hospice, behavioral, or nutritional consultations are among the many situations that can be appropriate for veterinary telemedicine at the discretion of the licensed veterinarian.

Telemedicine is an optional tool for care delivery at the discretion of the licensed veterinarian. Nothing in this legislation requires a veterinarian to utilize telehealth technology. If a veterinarian does not wish to use telemedicine or believes they cannot properly diagnose a particular condition over telehealth, they simply ask the pet owner to bring the animal in for a clinical examination. All 50 states have laws that empower physicians to use telehealth as an additional tool to establish new doctor-patient relationships and treat patients, including babies and other nonverbal patients.<sup>6</sup> Over 100 million Americans live in states where they can begin a new relationship with a client over telemedicine—including Arizona, California, Florida, Ohio, New Jersey, Virginia, Idaho, and Vermont, and bills are pending to enable an e-VCPR in Massachusetts, Michigan, Washington, and Rhode Island.

HB 1305 will safely and effectively expand access to veterinary care for pet owners of all income levels and residences in the state, as well as for veterinarians who wish to offer in-demand telemedicine services to more clients. We would appreciate your support for this important issue. Please contact us if we can provide additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Hobgood, Ph.D., Senior Director, Access to Care Policy, ASPCA

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<sup>1</sup> Blanchard, Mya. "Higher number of pet surrenders leave animal shelters swarmed." 13 July 2025, <https://nashua.inklink.news/higher-number-of-pet-surrenders-leave-animal-shelters-swarmed/>. Accessed 26 Jan 2026.

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<sup>2</sup> American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges. AAVMC Statement on U.S. Veterinary Workforce. Available online at <https://www.aavmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/AAVMC-Statement-on-Workforce-July-2022.pdf> (accessed 07.07.24)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2018-10/ama-chart-telehealth-patient-physician-relationship.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Univ. of Tennessee College of Social Work. (2018) Access to Veterinary Care: Barriers, Current Practices, and Public Policy <https://pphe.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/avcc-report.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Weiss, E., Gramann, S., Spain, V., & Slater, M. (2015). "Goodbye to a good friend: An exploration of the re-homing of cats and dogs in the U.S." *Open Journal of Animal Sciences*. 5: 435-456.

<sup>5</sup> Snyder, Alec. (2021). Covid-19 pandemic magnifies workforce crisis in veterinary field. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/20/us/vet-tech-shortage-burnout/index.html>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2018-10/ama-chart-telehealth-patient-physician-relationship.pdf>