

COMMENTS TO THE TBVME BOARD on FEBRUARY 27, 2017

My name is Judy Santerre. My horse, Harvey, was subjected to gross malpractice by multiple veterinarians which caused his death.

The primary purpose of this board is protecting the public from dangerously incompetent veterinarians. The most serious violation this board will see is gross malpractice resulting in animal suffering and death. This board is working on guidelines for enforcement and I understand the model being used is the California one. I refer you to Section 4883(m) of the California Veterinary Medical Board Disciplinary Guidelines for cruelty to animals. The maximum penalty is revocation and a \$5,000 fine. I want to read this note in that California section into the record here, and I quote: "While the Board believes this violation is so severe that revocation is the only appropriate penalty, it recognizes that a lesser penalty may be appropriate where there are mitigating circumstances." End quote.

I've tried hard to come up with a mitigating circumstance that would make animal cruelty a lesser offense and the only thing I came up with is a veterinarian forced at gunpoint to abuse an animal. That's it.

Gross malpractice resulting in animal suffering and animal cruelty and death is a very serious crime and one that should receive the most intense enforcement actions possible from this board. Such grossly incompetent veterinarians, those whose patients suffer needlessly and die, won't get better with any peer review process. They are a continuing threat to the public.

Anyone capable of gross malpractice to this degree has no business holding a veterinary license. I know this state agency is small and has limited funds, but those funds should be applied first to the most serious violators, those cases where our pets suffer horribly and die. Spending money on vaccination clinics pales by comparison.

In Harvey's case, veterinarians changed jobs, there was a lawsuit that has now settled, and A&M said Harvey's case was the worst they had ever seen of a horse with a joint infection that had been under veterinary care from the date of his injury.

Yet when this Board was presented with overwhelming evidence, it dismissed the case against the worst offender. All this while undergoing a Sunset Review that stated its enforcement of cases was grossly unequal and inconsistent in its treatment of violators. Clearly the conflicts of interests of this board's veterinarians, the failures to protect the public and our pets, and the violations of public trust continue. When you don't do your jobs, the public and our pets suffer.

I think the board makeup should be moved to 50% retired veterinarians and 50% public members. With that makeup, enforcement actions should climb to the appropriate levels needed to protect the public.

I feel badly for the future victims of the dangerously incompetent veterinarian who was dismissed on my appeal last week. What that veterinarian learned in this process was how to cover it up better the next time. Instead of protecting the public, the board is still victimizing again devastated pet owners like me by dismissing grossly incompetent veterinarians from any consequences for their actions in the gruesome deaths of our pets.

This is for my horse, Harvey, who suffered horribly and needlessly before he died. Thank you.