SENATE DOCKET, NO. 3751 FILED ON: 3/9/2026

SENATE . . . . . No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Joan B. Lovely

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to animal telehealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Joan B. Lovely	*Second Essex*

SENATE DOCKET, NO. 3751 FILED ON: 3/9/2026

SENATE . . . . . No.

By Ms. Lovely, a petition (accompanied by bill) (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Joan B. Lovely for legislation relative to animal telehealth. Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act relative to animal telehealth.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 54A of chapter 112 of the General Laws, as appearing in the most recent edition, is hereby amended by inserting at the end thereof the following:-

"Veterinarian-client Patient Relationship (VCPR)", (a) the veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the patient and the client has agreed to follow the veterinarian's instructions; (b) the veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the patient to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the patient. This means that the veterinarian and/or his or her veterinary practice has recently seen, or is personally acquainted with, the care of the animal patient by doing any of the following: (1) examining the animal patient in person, or (2) examining the animal patient by use of synchronous audio-video communication, or (3) making medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises on which the animal patient is kept; (c) the veterinarian is readily available for follow-up evaluation or has arranged for the following: veterinary emergency coverage and

13 continuing care and treatment; (d) the VCPR shall extend to associate veterinarians within the
14 same practice.

15 SECTION 2. Section 58A1/2 of the General Laws, as appearing in the most recent
16 edition, is hereby amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting place thereof the following:-

17 (b) A veterinarian may dispense a compounded drug to a companion animal if: (i) the
18 companion animal is a patient within a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship; (ii) the
19 quantity dispensed does not exceed a 120 hour supply; (iii) the compounded drug is for the
20 treatment of an emergency condition; and (iv) timely access to a compounding pharmacy is not
21 available, as determined by the prescribing veterinarian.

22 SECTION 3. Chapter 112 of the General Laws, as appearing in the most recent edition,
23 is hereby amended by inserting the following new section:-

24 Section 55C.

25 (a) A veterinarian shall not prescribe, dispense, or administer a drug, medicine,
26 application, or treatment of whatever nature for the prevention, cure, or relief of a wound,
27 fracture, bodily injury, or disease of animals unless a veterinarian-client-patient relationship
28 exists or as otherwise permitted by law, except when the animal patient is a wild animal or the
29 owner of the animal patient is unknown. A veterinarian-client-patient relationship exists if all of
30 the following conditions are met:

31 (1) The client has authorized the veterinarian to assume responsibility for medical
32 judgments regarding the health of the animal patient; and

33 (2) The veterinarian possesses sufficient knowledge of the animal patient to initiate at
34 least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the animal patient's medical condition; and

35 (3) The veterinarian has assumed responsibility for making medical judgments regarding
36 the health of the animal patient and has communicated with the client a medical, treatment,
37 diagnostic, or therapeutic plan appropriate to the circumstances.

38 (b) A veterinarian possesses sufficient knowledge of the animal patient for if the
39 veterinarian has recently seen, or is personally acquainted with, the care of the animal patient by
40 doing any of the following:

41 (1) Examining the animal patient in person; or

42 (2) Examining the animal patient by use of synchronous audio-video communication; or

43 (3) Making medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises on which the animal
44 patient is kept.

45 (c) For purposes of paragraphs (1) and (3) of subsection (a), the client may authorize an
46 agent to act on the client's behalf.

47 (d) Synchronous audio-video communication is not required for the delivery of
48 veterinary medicine via telehealth after a veterinarian-client-patient relationship has been
49 established unless the veterinarian determines that it is necessary in order to provide care
50 consistent with prevailing veterinary medical practice.

51 (e) A veterinarian-client-patient relationship shall not be established solely by audio-only
52 communication or by means of a questionnaire.

53 (f) Only a person who holds a current license to practice veterinary medicine in this state
54 is authorized to practice veterinary medicine via telehealth on an animal patient located in this
55 state.

56 (g) Before delivering veterinary medicine via telehealth, the veterinarian shall inform the
57 client about the use and potential limitations of telehealth and obtain consent from the client to
58 use telehealth, including acknowledgment of all of the following:

59 (1) The same standards of care apply to veterinary medicine services via telehealth and
60 in-person veterinary medical services; and

61 (2) The client has the option to choose an in-person visit from a veterinarian at any time;
62 and

63 (3) The client has been advised how to receive follow-up care or assistance in the event
64 of an adverse reaction to the treatment or in the event of an inability to communicate resulting
65 from technological or equipment failure.

66 (h) A veterinarian who practices veterinary medicine via telehealth shall do all of the
67 following:

68 (1) Ensure that the technology, method, and equipment used to provide veterinary
69 medicine services via telehealth comply with all current privacy protection laws.

70 (2) Have historical knowledge of the animal patient by obtaining and reviewing the
71 animal patient's relevant medical history, and, if available, medical records. If medical records
72 exist from a previous in-person visit and are available to the client, the client may transmit those
73 records, including any diagnostic data contained therein, to the veterinarian electronically.

74 (3) Employ sound professional judgment to determine whether using telehealth is an
75 appropriate method for delivering medical advice or treatment to the animal patient and
76 providing quality of care consistent with prevailing veterinary medical practice.

77 (4) Be familiar with available medical resources, including emergency resources near the
78 animal patient's location, be able to provide the client with a list of nearby veterinarians who
79 may be able to see the animal patient in person upon the request of the client, and keep, maintain,
80 and make available a summary of the animal patient record.

81 (5) Provide the client with the veterinarian's name, contact information, and license
82 number.

83 (6) Secure an alternative means of contacting the client if the electronic means is
84 interrupted.

85 (i) (1) A veterinarian shall not prescribe a drug for a duration of time that is inconsistent
86 with the medical condition of the animal patient or the type of drug prescribed.

87 (2) A veterinarian who established the required veterinarian-client-patient relationship by
88 examining the animal patient in person or by making medically appropriate and timely visits to
89 the premises on which the animal patient is kept shall not prescribe a drug for a duration of time
90 that is longer than one year from the date that the veterinarian examined the animal patient in
91 person or visited the premises and prescribed the drug.

92 (3) Except as provided in paragraphs (4) to (7), inclusive, of this subsection, a
93 veterinarian who practices veterinary medicine via telehealth may order, prescribe, or make

94 available drugs, as defined in Section 1 of Massachusetts Controlled Substance Act (Title XV
95 Chapter 94C), in accordance with all relevant state and federal regulations.

96 (4) A veterinarian who established the required veterinarian-client-patient relationship
97 using synchronous audio-video communication shall not prescribe a drug to the animal patient
98 for use for a period longer than six months from the date upon which the veterinarian examined
99 the animal patient or prescribed the drug. The veterinarian shall not issue another prescription to
100 the animal patient for the same drug unless they have conducted another examination of the
101 animal patient, either in person or using telehealth.

102 (5) A veterinarian who established the required veterinarian-client-patient relationship
103 using synchronous audio-video communication shall not prescribe an antimicrobial drug to the
104 animal patient for a period longer than 14 days of treatment. The veterinarian shall not issue any
105 further antimicrobial drug prescription, including a refill, to treat the condition of the animal
106 patient unless the veterinarian has conducted an in-person examination of the animal patient.

107 (6) The veterinarian shall not order, prescribe, or make available a controlled substance,
108 as defined in Section 1 of Massachusetts Controlled Substance Act (Title XV Chapter 94C), or
109 xylazine, unless the veterinarian has performed an in-person physical examination of the animal
110 patient or made medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal patient
111 is kept.

112 (7) The veterinarian shall notify the client that some prescription drugs or medications
113 may be available at a pharmacy and, if requested, the veterinarian shall submit a prescription to a
114 pharmacy that the client chooses.

115 (j) A veterinarian is permitted to use telehealth without establishing a veterinarian-client-

116 patient relationship in order to provide advice in an emergency.