

Good evening.

My name is Janet McKim.

I'd like to introduce myself by providing a brief resume of my education and experience:

I have:

- a bachelor of science degree from Rutgers University
- a doctorate degree in veterinary medicine from The Ohio State University
- Certification in Veterinary Acupuncture through the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society
- Certification in Traditional Chinese Herbs through the same organization
- I have Completed Humane Alliance Training in High Quality/High Volume/Low Cost Spay/Neuter techniques
- I have a Masters Certificate in Shelter Medicine from the University of Florida

I am a member in good standing of:

- The American Veterinary Medical Association
- The South Carolina Veterinary Medical Association
- Trident Veterinary Medical Association
- The Association of Shelter Veterinarians
- Veterinary Information Network

I owned a small animal practice for 24 years and continue to practice veterinary medicine and surgery in both private practice and shelter environments.

As a veterinarian I am foremost a scientist. I make decisions based on facts. My comments will be based on facts.

The list of animal welfare issues is expansive; I will limit my comments to two points:

1. The quality of care veterinarians practicing in shelters are providing
2. The important role veterinarians practicing at shelters have treating publicly owned animals.
  - Due to time constraints I will limit my comments to vaccinations.

Dr. Hill authored an editorial in the Greenville News under the headline "Improve Quality of Care for pets". Therein she states veterinarians have brought cases to the association that ended tragically due to inadequate oversight of humane societies. To know more about these cases I reviewed the LLR website that publishes the outcomes of complaints against veterinarians accused of providing substandard quality of care.

I examined the last 100 actions of the veterinary licensing board that is tasked with reviewing, investigating, making judgment and levying penalties. The period covered is almost 7 years. After removing multiple actions regarding the same complaint, complaints against non-licensed individuals, dismissed and withdrawn complaints there were a total of 59 actions.

Here are the **facts**:

**FACT 1:** 58 of the 59 complaints sited veterinarians in private practice. Some doctors were sited multiple times over this period.

**FACT 2:** There was a single complaint filed against a veterinarian practicing in a shelter environment.

I categorized the complaints under medical, surgical or procedural.

I defined procedural complaints as non-compliance with licensing laws, while not insignificant, none rose to the level that an animal's well being was cited as at risk.

There were 10 medical complaints, 15 surgical complaints and 28 procedural. Many of the medical and surgical complaints were serious, even tragic, involving animals that were maimed or died because of inadequate care.

**FACT 3: None of the medical or surgical complaints involved a shelter, or humane society.**

The single complaint against a veterinarian practicing in a shelter was a procedural complaint. The staff at the shelter was not in compliance with the law regarding rabies vaccinations and selling prescription products to the public. When notified by the board of these infractions the veterinarian fully cooperated and amended procedures to insure it could not continue. In its actions the board specifically noted the veterinarian's cooperation and compliance.

**FACT 4:** There was no fine or requirement to undertake additional professional training made to the veterinarian practicing at the shelter.

My review of these actions sustains my belief that veterinarians as a whole are a group of smart, competent, caring individuals who on the whole do a good job no matter where they work. When one of us fails to meet the high standards of our profession there is an effective system in place to address the issue.

I found **no facts** that shelters or humane societies require more oversight of medical/surgical procedures.

## **ISSUE #2:**

Dr. Hill advocates limiting veterinarians who practice at shelters from vaccinating publicly owned animals in accordance with universally accepted vaccination protocols.

Here are the **facts** on vaccinations:

**FACT 1:**

“VACCINATIONS HAVE SAVED MORE LIVES AND PREVENTED MORE SUFFERING THAN ALL OTHER VETERINARY INTERVENTIONS **COMBINED.**”\*

Vaccinations accomplish this amazing feat by working on two levels:

1. Vaccinating a single animal protects that animal from disease
2. Vaccinations protect the entire population when a sufficient number are vaccinated by preventing spread of the disease.

**FACT 2:** Restricting any veterinarian from vaccinating animals will reduce the number of animals vaccinated.

**FACT 3:** Only 25% of eligible animals in SC have a current rabies vaccination.\*

The percentage of animals vaccinated for distemper and parvo are likely even lower.

How low can our percentage of vaccinated animals go before we lose the public health impact of vaccination and a disease outbreak ensues?

Where are the **facts** that limiting public access to vaccinations through a licensed veterinarian working at a shelter **improves** the quality of care for pets?

I join Dr. Hill in encouraging legislators to fully study this issue on the basis of **fact** and not emotion and welcome any questions you may have.

I thank everyone here today for showing their concern and for the opportunity to speak.

\* Richard Ford, DVM, MS, Dipl. ACVIM, Dipl. (Hon) ACVPM, emeritus professor at North Carolina State University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

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Summary of SC Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation  
 Before the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners  
 Period of October 25, 2007 to August 7, 2014

Total Number of Board Actions Reviewed	Number of Veterinarians sited in Medical Complaints	Number of Veterinarians sited in Surgical Complaints	Number of Veterinarians sited in procedural complaints (pharmacy law, DEA violations, inadequate record keeping other licensing violations)	Number of Licenses Voluntarily Relinquished	Number of complaints against veterinarians engaged in private practice	Number of complaints against Veterinarians engaged in shelter medicine
100	10	15	28	6	58	1

Categories do not total number of Board Actions for following reasons:

- complaints were withdrawn without action
- complaints were dismissed
- complaints were against non-professional
- complaints covered multiple categories
- board actions were related to prior complaints

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