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[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Issues](#) | [My AVMA](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Animal Health](#) | [Public Health](#)
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Positions, Guidelines.


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## Issues

[Issues](#) > [Policy](#) > [Veterinary medical ethics of the AVMA](#)

### AVMA policy

#### **Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics of the AVMA**

(Approved by the Executive Board July 1999; revised November 2003; revised by Council October 2006; approved by Executive Board November 2006; revised April 2008)

*(**Bold print states the Principles, standard print explains or clarifies the Principle to which it applies**)*

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. **Veterinarians are members of a scholarly profession who have earned academic degrees from comprehensive universities or similar educational institutions. Veterinarians practice the profession of veterinary medicine in a variety of situations and circumstances.**
- B. **Exemplary professional conduct upholds the dignity of the veterinary profession. All veterinarians are expected to adhere to a progressive code of ethical conduct known as the Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics (the Principles). The basis of the Principles is the Golden Rule. Veterinarians should accept this rule as a guide to their general conduct, and abide by the Principles. They should conduct their professional and personal affairs in an ethical manner. Professional veterinary associations should adopt the Principles or a similar code as a guide for their activities.**
- C. **Professional organizations may establish ethics, grievance, or peer review committees to address ethical issues. Local and state veterinary associations should also include discussions of ethical issues in their continuing education programs.**
  1. **Complaints about behavior that may violate the Principles should be addressed in an appropriate and timely manner. Such questions should be considered initially by ethics, grievance, or peer review committees of local or state veterinary associations, when they exist, and/or when appropriate, state veterinary medical boards. Members of local and state committees are familiar with local customs and circumstances, and those committees are in the best position to confer with all parties involved.**

The Judicial Council may address complaints, prior to, concurrent with, or subsequent to review at the state or local level, as it deems appropriate.

2. **All veterinarians in local or state associations and jurisdictions have a responsibility to regulate and guide the professional conduct of their members.**
3. **Colleges of veterinary medicine should stress the teaching of ethical and value issues as part of the professional veterinary curriculum for all veterinary students.**
4. **The National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners is encouraged to prepare and include questions regarding professional ethics in the**

Disclaimer:

“Lisa Taylor-Austin believes there was merit to her claims that Dr. Deforge negligently cared for her cat, Simba, and that he misrepresented whether he was a Board-certified dental specialist. Dr. Deforge denies these claims and asserts that the Department of Public Health’s veterinary board cleared him of any wrong doing. However, Dr Deforge agreed to pay \$7,500.00 to compensate Ms. Taylor-Austin because he believed the risks inherent in any lawsuit and the cost of missing two weeks from his practice made it imprudent to go to trial.”

Note: My guardian’s costs for my medical care and all legal avenues exceeded \$20,000.