

# E. Texans petition rule stopping animal shelters from giving vaccinations

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Angelina Animal Hospital, Dr. Lindsay Syler (Source: KTRE staff)

LUFKIN, TX (KTRE) -

A new petition is out and circulating on social media in an effort to rescind a rule that stops animal shelters and rescue organizations from vaccinating stray animals.

The petition is targeting the Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, who are the ones that say a shelter should not give vaccinations without a veterinarian.

Nacogdoches Veterinarian Wendy Blount isn't too pleased with the decision made by The Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners last August to no longer classify dogs and cats as herd animals.

"As a veterinarian who works with shelters, I think it is really important for the Texas State Board, which is tasked with protecting the animals in our community to put the interest of the animals first," said Blount.

Veterinarians must now treat the animals as individuals, in which case, they must establish a more personal relationship with a vet to be treated.

This means that shelters are no longer allowed to take in stray animals that they do not own for a set amount of time and cannot treat the animal until it sees a veterinarian first.

"About 90 percent of the dogs and about 98 percent of the cats are never claimed, and so it is protocol or best practice to vaccinate and remove parasites from those dogs before they come into the shelter so they won't spread disease to the other animals," Blount said.

Blount said this is where the problem starts.

According to the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, shelters are not allowed to administer any vaccinations or any medicine to an animal unless they employ a licensed veterinarian.

"Actually in the state of Texas, administering any medication or any vaccine whether over the counter or not to an animal you do not own is considered, is defined by law as the practice of veterinarian medicine," Blount said.

Without those vaccinations, stray animals run the risk of spreading diseases to other animals in the shelter as well, causing a potentially serious chain reaction.

Angelina County Humane Society board member Elaine Hunter said it could even lead to them turning away animals because they can't afford it.

"We hope they rescind this law because I think it will hurt the animals, because so many of these rescues and shelters will not be able to take in as many animals, because of the cost and the results will be something that we really don't want," Hunter said.

If every shelter had to take each animal to the vet to be checked, it could triple the cost of what they're paying now for regular vaccines.

"It is in the best interest of the animals to vaccinate them and remove parasites before coming into the shelter. I think everything possible should be done to not only write the laws and the board rules to support that, but also to enforce the rules in a way that puts the animals first," Blount said.

The [petition](#) currently has 2,732 two votes. Once the petition reaches 3,000 it will then be presented to the board in hopes that they will rescind their decision.

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