

Establishing a Veterinary Client Patient Relationship (VCPR)

What is a VCPR?

The VCPR is the interaction between veterinarians, their clients, and their patients. A legally valid VCPR is required in order for a veterinarian to legally prescribe drugs for use on your farm, especially in their absence. Each State has specific requirements for a legal VCPR. And while a valid VCPR is legally required for access to veterinary drugs, the requirements of a VCPR also play an important role for farms in improving treatment outcomes, preventing residues and effectively addressing animal health and management issues.

Do you have a valid VCPR with a veterinarian?

There are several factors required to establish a legal VCPR between a veterinarian and their client. For example, in Minnesota the following conditions need to be met to satisfy this requirement:

- Your veterinarian assumes responsibility for making medical judgements regarding the health of the animal and you have agreed to follow your veterinarian's recommendations;
- Your veterinarian is familiar with the keeping and care of the animal and has made medically appropriate visits to the farm for examinations;
- Your veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal to initiate a general, preliminary, or tentative diagnosis;
- Your veterinarian is available for timely follow-up in case of adverse reaction or failure of treatment; and
- Your veterinarian maintains records documenting patient visits, diagnosis, treatments, and drugs prescribed, dispensed, or administered.

Do you need to sign a form to satisfy the requirement for a VCPR?

No. It is not required to sign a verification form to acknowledge that a valid VCPR exists. However, some veterinarians may use a verification form to help them maintain a record of clients with whom they have a VCPR. This can also be helpful in the event that a residue does occur; it provides more information to support the producer and veterinarian's efforts in using veterinary drugs appropriately and working to prevent residues as a whole.

Steps to take if you don't have an established VCPR

1. **Reach out!** Contact your veterinarian to set up a meeting to discuss how you will implement the above requirements
2. **Implement!** Together with your veterinarian, decide how you want to meet the requirements and set up a timeline for implementation
 - Take this one step at a time to avoid confusion and to allow time to train employees on any new procedures
3. **Maintain!** Schedule follow-up visits with your veterinarian to review procedures that were put into place. Use these follow-up visits to do the following:
 - Review treatment protocols, approved drug lists, labeling requirements
 - Update your lists, protocols, and procedures to meet current recommendations

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