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**Misleading Veterinary Ballot Initiative Qualifies: Experts Warn of Risks to Pet Safety**

**Denver (August 28, 2024)** – Earlier today, the Colorado Secretary of State’s Office completed its review of petitions submitted for a ballot measure to establish a Veterinary Professional Associate (VPA), or Mid-Level Practitioner in Colorado. Upon completing their analysis, the Secretary of State’s Office confirmed that the proposed ballot measure garnered enough valid signatures to appear on the 2024 Colorado ballot. ***The Keep Our Pets Safe Campaign, while disappointed by this outcome, remains confident that voters will recognize the dangers of this misleading initiative and reject it this November.***

As we approach Election Day, it is crucial for voters to understand the serious implications this measure could have on veterinary care in Colorado. First and foremost, Veterinary Professional Associates (VPAs) are not equivalent to nurse practitioners or physician assistants in human medicine. The proponents of this measure are promoting a dangerous position that would allow individuals with minimal training—primarily through online courses and a one-semester internship—to perform surgeries along with the full spectrum of veterinary medicine. This level of training and hands-on experience is grossly inadequate for anyone entrusted with the health and safety of Colorado pets and animals. Moreover, this measure is being driven by special interests and corporations looking to cut costs at the expense of quality care. Creating this new, unnecessary role is not only misleading but also sets up graduates for limited job security and burdensome student debt, all while funneling profits to colleges and corporate interests.

If passed, this measure would dangerously disrupt Colorado’s veterinary system, lowering standards of care and ultimately putting the safety and wellbeing of Colorado pets and animals at risk. It is critical that voters see through these attempts to prioritize profits over pets and stand against this harmful proposal.

**Veterinary Professionals and Organizations are United in Opposition**

The opposition to this measure includes a broad alliance of respected veterinary professionals and organizations who understand the risks it poses. These experts, who are on the front lines of veterinary care, are raising the alarm and urging voters to reject this measure in November.

**Kelly Walsh, President of the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA)**, emphasizes the threat a VPA would create in Colorado, stating, “Representing over 2,600 veterinary members across the state, the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association opposes this measure because it fails to address the real needs of animal owners, pets, and animals in our state. It puts pets, animals, and their owners in danger

because it allows underqualified, inexperienced individuals to perform surgeries. It misleads voters by disregarding Colorado's competency requirements for veterinary personnel. It undermines the standards for veterinary care in Colorado and threatens pet and animal safety.”

Building on this concern, **Dr. Sandra Faeh, President of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)**, warns voters about the broader public health implications, saying, “This ballot measure attempting to create a ‘Veterinary Professional Associate’ (VPA) would be disastrous for pets and other animals and endangers public health, considering that 75 percent of emerging infectious diseases in humans originate with animals.” She stresses that “the proposed training for this position is completely inadequate and will lead to missed or delayed diagnoses, ineffective treatment and repeat visits, all of which lead to more suffering for the animal and increased cost for the client.”

The concerns raised by CVMA and AVMA are shared by other leading veterinary organizations across the country. These groups have expressed their opposition to the creation of a mid-level veterinary professional.

*Additional Statements from Leading Organizations:*

**American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP):** “The AABP Board of Directors supports the continued use of credentialed veterinary technicians (CVT) in bovine practice. A task force has been developed to provide further guidance on the use of CVTs in bovine practice. The AABP Board of Directors does not support the creation of a midlevel veterinary professional.”

**American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP):** “The AAEP believes that there are acts that should be limited only to licensed veterinarians: diagnosis, prognosis, prescribing, treatment, and management. We recognize and value the considerable knowledge, skill sets and value of veterinary technicians as vital members of the equine healthcare team but understand our roles to be distinct. AAEP does not support the establishment of the mid-level professional at this time, as we do not believe it serves the best interest of our patients, clients, or the public.”

**American Association of Swine Veterinarians (AASV):** “The AASV does not support the creation of a mid-level veterinary professional.”

“Regardless of the veterinary supply and demand question, a MLP has a number of inherent issues that may pose a risk to future veterinary practice or run afoul of regulation. It also ignores the availability of Credentialed Veterinary Technicians (CrVT) and Veterinary Technician Specialists (VTS), who are already recognized and regulated in state-level veterinary practice acts. Utilizing these folks to the extent of their training and ability could provide practices some relief for overworked veterinarians and address some level of understaffing. It is currently unclear exactly how a MLP would or could be used in the delivery of veterinary medicine.”

“There is no structure to provide evaluation and certification for MLPs or even an accredited curriculum. In addition, in order to offer services, every state would have to modify their veterinary practice acts to define their role. Similarly, federal regulations would have to change if MLPs were allowed to prescribe veterinary drugs or use drugs in an extra-label manner. Both of those activities currently require the



involvement of a licensed veterinarian, as does the establishment of a veterinarian-client-patient relationship. Current regulation would also prevent a MLP from performing regulatory animal health certifications such as issuing certificates of veterinary inspection or performing regulatory diagnostic testing.”

*The Keep Our Pets Safe Campaign* stands alongside these organizations in urging voters to reject this harmful measure and protect the integrity of veterinary care in Colorado.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact Mark Truax, Campaign Manager.

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**About Keep Our Pets Safe**

Keep Our Pets Safe is dedicated to protecting pet care and health by opposing dangerous measures that prioritize profits over quality care. We work to ensure that veterinary services remain in the hands of fully trained professionals, safeguarding the well-being of pets across Colorado. For more information, visit [keepourpetsafe.com](http://keepourpetsafe.com).