

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis Approves Bill HB 719 to Address Shortage of Spay/Neuter for Pets Effective July 1, 2023

New Legislation/Veterinarians from Other States to Provide Canine/Feline Sterilization/Routine Preventative Care Under Florida-Licensed Veterinarian Supervision

BRUNSWICK, MAINE, UNITED STATES, June 30, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Florida veterinarians struggling with a dangerous backlog of spay/neuter services will soon be able to call on colleagues from out of state to help, thanks to new legislation signed by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis.



This is groundbreaking legislation that will allow a large population of qualified veterinarians to contribute to sterilization efforts throughout Florida, and it could also serve as a model for other states to increase their spay and neuter capacity in f

The United Spay Alliance announced that the new law authorizes veterinarians who are licensed and in good standing in other jurisdictions to perform spay/neuter surgery and to provide routine preventative medical care at the time of sterilization, provided they work as unpaid volunteers under the responsible supervision of a Florida-licensed veterinarian.

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We are deeply grateful to Florida’s lawmakers and the Governor for passing such a critical and necessary piece of legislation”

Robert Weedon, DVM, MPH

HB 719, sponsored by Senator Colleen Burton and Representative Sam Killebrew, was signed into law by Florida’s Governor and becomes effective July 1, 2023. The new law will streamline administrative procedures and

help address the ongoing shortage of veterinary professionals in the workforce.

“This is groundbreaking legislation that will allow a large population of qualified veterinarians to contribute to sterilization efforts throughout Florida, and it could also serve as a model for other states to increase their spay and neuter capacity in future years,” said Robert Weedon, DVM, MPH. Dr. Weedon, a spay/neuter surgeon in Florida, also serves on the Board of The Alliance for

Contraception in Cats & Dogs and on the [Veterinary Shortage Task Force](#) convened by the United Spay Alliance, two national non-profits focused on expanding access to veterinary care.

According to a recent study published by University of Florida researchers, U.S. veterinarians performed 2.7 million fewer spay and neuter surgeries in the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021. With that many animals still able to reproduce, American cities in coming years could see more dogs and cats on the street and in shelters, throwing the animal welfare system further into crisis. One of the study's co-authors, Julie Levy, DVM, Ph.D., says the increase in unaltered pets has already contributed to rising euthanasia rates since the second half of last year. In the pre-pandemic decades, spay and neuter surgeries had been the primary force in drastically reducing the number of animals euthanized.

Reference and excerpt by [Austin Cannon / Shelter Animals Count](#).

<https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/millions-of-pets-werent-spayed-and-neutered-during-the-pandemic-and-thats-a-big-problem/>

The State of Florida has a significant shortage of veterinarians, impacting spaying and neutering services and general access to veterinary care. Elective procedures such as spaying and neutering are an essential element of access to care and preventive medical services. "We are deeply grateful to Florida's lawmakers and the Governor for passing such a critical and necessary piece of legislation," Weedon said.

"Florida showing the way to increasing needed access to care for spay/neuter services...I would encourage additional States to move forward similarly!" - states [Bob Murtaugh](#), DVM, MS, DACVIM, DACVECC, FCCM.

HB 719 (Killebrew)

S.B. 722/H.B. 719 would amend Chapter 474 Exemptions to Licensure, F.S.S. §474.203, to enable a veterinarian licensed and in good standing in another jurisdiction to provide animal sterilization and preventative wellness services at the time of sterilization, under the responsible supervision of a Florida-licensed veterinarian, as an unpaid volunteer. Florida-licensed supervising veterinarians would be responsible for all acts performed under their responsible supervision. Veterinarians practicing under this exemption are not eligible for a premises permit under F.S.S. §474.215.

About United Spay Alliance

The United Spay Alliance is a national 501(c)(3) not-for-profit animal welfare organization, dedicated exclusively to promoting affordable, accessible, and timely spay/neuter services to solve the cat and dog homelessness crisis. United Spay Alliance convened the Veterinary Shortage Task Force (VSTF) to understand better the ongoing challenges faced by the veterinary community and what animal shelters and rescues may do to support veterinary partners and continue to serve animals. One of the conclusions of the VSTF is to engage retired, semi-retired, or soon-to-be retired veterinarians in the spay/neuter effort.

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