

Frequently Asked Questions About HCCE Permit

Question: How do we go about getting an HCCE Permit?

Answer: The application form is available on the FVMA's web site at www.fvma.com or through the Department of Health at www.doh.state.fl.us/pharmacy. You need to fill out the application and mail it back to the state with the \$255. We recommend you return a completed application to the state as soon as possible. You must designate a qualifying practitioner to serve as the person responsible for the ordering, storing and maintaining of the drugs.

Question: If I am a lone veterinarian and order my drugs under my own name and license number do I need this permit?

Answer: No

Question: Who needs the HCCE Permit?

Answer: Any multi-veterinarian clinic or veterinarian who orders his or her drugs through a corporation or the clinic's name. Veterinarians who order drugs under their own name and dispense them themselves will not need the permit, even if they are a corporation. Any corporate entity that purchases drugs in the corporation name, whether a multi-veterinarian practice or sole practitioner will need this permit.

Question: Do all prescriptions need to be written under the qualifying practitioner's name? For example, if Dr. Bailey is the qualifying practitioner but Dr. Jackson writes the prescription would it have to be under Dr. Bailey's name?

Answer: No. A multi-veterinarian practice with an HCCE Permit can buy drugs for the use (administration and dispensing) of all veterinarians in the practice, and each veterinarian would write his or her own prescriptions.

Question: How can we expedite the permit process?

Answer: State officials said they have added staff and trained them to handle the applications and questions. They also said they hope to have permits sent out as soon as possible.

Question: How can offices that don't have Internet access get a copy of the application?

Answer: Paper copies can be obtained by calling the Department of Health at 850-245-4292 and asking them to mail you an application.

Question: Will veterinarians be sent a bill by the state?

Answer: No. The state will not be sending out bills or notices to individual veterinarians. State officials said they will be sending notices to veterinary associations.

Question: How will this rule affect shelter veterinarians?

Answer: Animal shelters under a special pharmacy permit that allows for the purchase of euthanasia drugs. The shelter will not need this new permit.

Question: If I have my own practice and I am also on the board of a non-profit spay/neuter mobile unit --- do I need a separate permit for the mobile unit?

Answer: No. The HCCE Permit is for the purchase of drugs by a place of business at one physical location.

Question: What are the disciplinary actions?

Answer: All disciplinary actions are listed in Rule 64-F12 of the Florida Administrative Code.

Question: What about veterinarians with satellite offices where they are under one corporation but there are other veterinarians staffing the satellite offices?

Answer: Each address is an establishment that would be purchasing and receiving drugs and would need a permit.

Question: My business is a partnership, not a corporation. Can I apply for the HCCE Permit?

Answer: No. A partnership is not a recognized entity that can apply for the HCCE Permit. The FVMA's legal counsel has suggested that those who are functioning as a partnership should consider becoming a professional corporation or LLC under F.S.S. Chapter 621, but we suggest that anyone who has a partnership may want to consult their own attorney or accountant for more information related to their practice. Veterinarians in a multi-veterinarian practice that do not qualify for the HCCE Permit will have to purchase, maintain, administer and dispense from his or her own individual inventories and under his or her own license number.

Question: How can we get an extension on applying for the HCCE Permit?

Answer: State Department of Health officials have said they will not be giving an extension. The new law goes into effect on January 1, 2009. Officials said the applications will be reviewed in the order in which they are received by the state.

Question: How will this affect semi-retired veterinarians who make farm calls or consult with breeders? They still write prescriptions and order some prescriptions that they use on the farm calls.

Answer: Veterinarians retain the authority to buy, administer, and dispense drugs to their own patients under their own name and license number.

Question: Do I need to send the entire copy of our clinic's articles of incorporation?

Answer: State Department of Health officials said they need a complete copy of your Articles of Incorporation. The concern is that when they verify the information online, the information is not up-to-date.

Question: I am planning on selling my practice after the first of the year but don't have an exact closing date yet, do I still need to get this permit?

Answer: Yes, you would still need to get the HCCE Permit. After the sale, the new owner would also have to make sure they contact the state about the change to the HCCE Permit.