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Recent California Legislation Clears the Path for Veterinary Cannabis

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Last month our client alert covered the increasing popularity of cannabis products for pets in the face of regulatory uncertainty. This month we highlight recent California legislation that protects veterinarians who recommend cannabis therapies or supplements for animal use. California Assembly Bill 1885 amended the California Veterinary Medicine Practice Act and the California Medicinal and Adult-Use Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act to prohibit the California Veterinary Medical Board from disciplining a veterinarian who recommends cannabis as a therapy or health supplement for an animal, unless the veterinarian is employed by or has an agreement with a cannabis licensee.

In addition, the law requires regulatory action by the California Veterinary Medical Board and the California Department of Cannabis Control. The Board must adopt written guidelines for recommending cannabis by January 1, 2024 and post these guidelines to the Board's website. The Department must promulgate regulations for cannabis products intended for animal use no later than July 1, 2025. Marketing and sale of cannabis products for animals is prohibited before the Department's regulations take effect, and all cannabis products intended for animal use will be required to comply with the Department's regulations. Assembly Bill 1885 passed with the support of the California Veterinary Medical Association and was signed by Governor Newsom on September 18, 2022.

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