



RICHARD J. CODEY
Acting Governor

New Jersey Office of the Attorney General

Division of Consumer Affairs
State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners
124 Halsey Street, 6th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102

RECEIVED and FILED
NEW JERSEY STATE BOARD OF
VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS
on this date of: 2/17/06
PETER C. HARVEY
Attorney General

KIMBERLY S. RICKETTS
Director

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 45020
Newark, NJ 07101
(973) 504-6500

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

February 16, 2006

By Certified and Regular Mail

Thomas Tullio, D.V.M., Medical Director
VCA/Freehold Animal Hospital
3700 Route 9 South
Freehold, New Jersey 07728

Re: I/M/O THOMAS TULLIO, D.V.M., Medical Director
VCA-FREEHOLD ANIMAL HOSPITAL
Complaint Number: 04-108

Letter of Admonishment In Lieu of Disciplinary Proceeding

Dear Dr. Tullio:

This letter is to advise you that the New Jersey State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") has had an opportunity to review a complaint it received, filed by Sherrie Puzak, a former employee of your hospital, VCA/Freehold Animal Hospital ("Hospital"), concerning your hospital's handling of a cat later diagnosed as rabid in or about November 2004.

Specifically, the information reviewed by the Board included, but is not limited to, the following documents:

1. A complaint filed, on or about December 10, 2004, by Sherrie Puzak, as well as any and all attachments and exhibits; and
2. A correspondence, dated December 17, 2004, from Thomas Tullio, D.V.M., Michael Cummings, D.V.M., Suzie Whiting, Suzanne Shindle and Mindy Feldman., to the Board, as well as any and all attachments and exhibits.

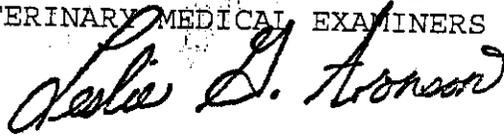
Upon review of all available information, the Board has determined that there is insufficient cause in this matter to warrant the filing of formal disciplinary charges. Notwithstanding this decision, the Board, however, asked me to convey to you its concerns with regard to this matter.

In reviewing this matter, the Board found that a stray cat was admitted into your hospital in or about November 2004. The cat was examined, treated for maggots and vaccinated and later adopted by another employee of the Hospital. A few months later, the cat was returned to the Hospital with complaints of "acting weird." The cat was hospitalized and a cage card was allegedly placed on the cat's cage that advised "Rabies-vs-Neurologic." Additionally, other signs were also allegedly placed on the cage. On November 13, 2004, the cat's health deteriorated and she was euthanized. Later, testing determined that the cat was positive for rabies.

Ms. Puzak alleges that she was not told by Hospital officials or her employers that a rabid cat was housed in the facility. In your December 17th letter to the Board, you maintain that employees were told of the situation, that signs were posted and that a meeting was held to discuss this matter. While the Board has determined to refrain from initiating any formal disciplinary action in this matter, it has concluded that the Hospital failed to adequately inform and/or engaged in a lack of communication resulting in the failure to inform all employees of a positive rabid test on a cat housed in the Hospital once that information became available. The Board strongly suggests that the Hospital establish appropriate procedures in order to notify all employees of a positive rabid test on an animal in the Hospital and to comply with all applicable statutes and regulations governing these types of situations in order to avoid this occurrence in the future.

As you may be aware, the Board is obligated to review every complaint received from consumers in order to assure that veterinarians licensed to practice in this State are complying with the applicable statutes, regulations and accepted standards of practice. Notwithstanding the concerns expressed in this letter, the board has determined not to initiate any formal disciplinary action against you at this time. The Board suggests that you consider the issues raised in this correspondence and comply with the directives contained herein. This matter will now be considered closed by the Board and, as such, this letter will be a matter of public record.

NEW JERSEY STATE BOARD OF
VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS



By: _____

LESLIE G. ARONSON
Executive Director

cc: Deputy Attorney General Olga E. Bradford