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To Whom it may Concern in the AVMA,

I have been a member of AVMA for 33 years and a practicing veterinarian for all those years. I would like to add my comments on dentistry and encourage you to leave the current description on Veterinary Dentistry the way it is without any changes.

I agree that dentistry in the equine or small animal should be in the hands of a trained veterinarian or licensed veterinary technician. Professionals are best qualified to assess the patient’s needs and to “do no harm”.

I agree that analgesia and proper restraint are important components of veterinary dentistry. However I believe that the requirement of general anesthesia will be detrimental to our patients and the practice of dentistry.

I have seen too many geriatric pets with horrible dental problems whose owners are justifiably unwilling to take the risk associated with anesthesia. I have treated many patients and have greatly improved their health by cleaning teeth without anesthesia or, when necessary, referring them to a veterinary dental practice for anesthesia and extractions. Unnecessary anesthetic events can do harm to our patients and to require this is to contribute to their illness. Alternatively, patients will forgo dental care and we will be contributing to their suffering, over-using antibiotics, and compromising the veterinary oath.

We have the training to help our clients make safe and wise decisions for their animals. To regulate our practice in this way is clearly not the mission of AVMA.

Sincerely,

Marjorie M. Lewter, DVM