WV Board of Veterinary Medicine
The American Board of Veterinary Specialties
Effective June 12, 2026

A veterinarian may represent himself or herself as a specialist only if he or she is board certified. A veterinarian shall restrict claims for specialization to those disciplines for which there is a specialty board approved by a certifying agency recognized by the Board. A veterinarian may not use the term specialist for an area of practice for which there is not recognized certification. A diplomate of any certifying organization recognized by the Board may claim only a specialty for the class of animals in which he or she specializes, and not for medical specialties in which he or she is not board-certified. The Board shall annually, before January 1st, provide a list of approved certifying agencies for the next full calendar year.

Below is a list of AVMA- Recognized Specialty Organizations with a very simple descriptions of what these specialists do.

Anesthesia and analgesia: veterinary specialists who are experts at assessment and mitigation of anesthetic risks, delivery of anesthetic and analgesic drugs, maintaining and monitoring physiologic well-being of the anesthetized patient, and providing the highest levels of perioperative patient care including pain management.

Animal welfare: veterinary specialists with advanced training and experience in animal welfare.

Behavior: veterinary specialists with advanced knowledge of animal behavior and behavior modification.

Dentistry: veterinarians who specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of dental, oral, and maxillofacial diseases.

- Equine dental

Dermatology: veterinary specialists with advanced training and expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of allergy and diseases affecting the skin, ears, nails and/or hooves of animals.

Emergency and critical care: veterinary specialists who work exclusively in both emergency rooms and intensive care units to care for animals that are often the "sickest of the sick".

Internal medicine, which includes specialties of:

- Cardiology
- Small animal internal medicine
- Large animal internal medicine
- Neurology
- Oncology
- Nutrition

Laboratory animal medicine: veterinary specialists working in research or in practice, making sure laboratory animal species (rabbits, rats, mice, etc.) receive proper care.

Microbiology: Veterinarians who specialize in research, teaching, and/or diagnosis of infectious diseases. Specialties include:

- Virology
- Immunology
- Bacteriology/Mycology
- Parasitology

Ophthalmology: veterinary specialists who study diseases and conditions of the eye.

Pathology: veterinary specialists practicing microscopic and clinical pathology to protect and improve animal, human and environmental health to benefit society.

- Anatomic pathology
- Clinical pathology

Pharmacology: veterinary specialists who study how medications/drugs affect animals.

Poultry: veterinary specialists who work with chickens, turkeys, ducks, and other fowl, usually in food production settings.

Preventive medicine: veterinary specialists improving animal, human, and environmental health through surveillance, recognition, outbreak investigation, and management of animal diseases; prevention and control of zoonotic diseases and foodborne illnesses; reduction of bites, injuries and other environmental and occupational human health hazards related to animals; promotion of food protection and wholesomeness; and promotion of humane animal care and the use of animals in animal-facilitated therapy.

- Epidemiology

Radiology: veterinary specialists who focus on the study of x-ray, ultrasound, computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and other imaging procedures that allow us to see "inside" an animal's body; radiation oncologists specialize in the treatment of cancer patients using radiotherapy

- Radiation oncology
- Equine diagnostic imaging

Sports medicine and rehabilitation: veterinary specialists who focus on returning animals to normal function after injury, lameness, illness, or surgery.

- Canine
- Equine

Surgery: veterinarians who specialize in performing surgery. A certified surgeon will be certified in either small animal or large animal surgery. Within these groups, many surgeons will focus their work in a sub-category, but they are not limited to them:

- Orthopedics: these surgeons focus on the bones, joints, ligaments, muscles, and tendons that make up the body's skeletal system.

- Soft Tissue surgery: these surgeons focus on the internal organs and non-bone tissues of the body.
- Neurosurgery: these surgeons focus on the brain, spinal cord and other parts of the nervous system.

Theriogenology: veterinary specialists who diagnosis and manage conditions affecting animal reproduction.

Toxicology: veterinary specialists who study the effects of poisons and other toxic products on the body (and how to treat animals affected by these toxins).

Veterinary practitioners: veterinary specialists with extensive and advanced training in specific animal species and practice areas:

- Shelter medicine
- Reptile and amphibian
- Exotic companion mammal
- Canine and feline
- Equine
- Fish (provisionally recognized March 2023)
- Food animal
- Dairy
- Swine health management
- Avian
- Beef cattle
- Feline

Zoological medicine: veterinary specialists who work with zoo collection animals, free-living wildlife, aquatic species, and companion zoological animals.

- Aquatic animal medicine
- Zoo animal medicine
- Zoological companion animal medicine
- Wildlife population health