



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF
VETERINARY ANESTHESIA
AND ANALGESIA ®

American College of Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia

P.O. Box 1100, Middleburg, VA, 20118
www.acva.org

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December 10, 2013

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To: Kate Knutson DVM
AAHA President 2013-2014

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On behalf of the American College of Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia, the ACVAA Board of Directors would like to make a statement in reference to a recent article entitled “AAHA dental anesthesia mandate comes under fire” by Mr. Ken Niedziela in the October 2013 edition of the Veterinary Practice News (VPN). The primary focus of the article is whether Professional Outpatient Preventive Dentistry (POPD) can be done effectively in fully awake cats and dogs. Although Mr. Niedziela interviewed both opponents and proponents of this controversial subject, his conclusion was that anesthesia-free POPD is a more favorable approach to good dental health for companion animals.

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The Board of Directors of the ACVAA sees some important issues related to POPD that we feel require our strong objection. Specifically, we question the ethics of performing dental work in conscious patients due to the associated restraint methods and lack of analgesia. We therefore ask whether the benefits of POPD would, in fact, outweigh the risk of general anesthesia.

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The Board of Directors of the American College of Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia agrees with and supports the American Animal Hospital Association Standard that all dental cleanings for dogs and cats should be performed under general anesthesia with endotracheal intubation. This is in line with the other high standards of care which AAHA strives to support and to reward in the form of AAHA certification for veterinary practices.

Veterinarians concerned about the risk of anesthetizing a patient for dental work are encouraged to engage the assistance of a Diplomate of the ACVAA. This may be done in one of many ways. The veterinarian

may consult a diplomate of the ACVAA to assist them in selecting drugs, support and monitoring techniques appropriate for the individual patient, may find a board-certified anesthesiologist who will travel to their practice to provide direct patient care, or may refer that patient to a specialty practice or veterinary teaching hospital where the patient's anesthetic management will be overseen or directly managed by a board-certified veterinary anesthesiologist.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lesley J. Smith".

Lesley J. Smith DVM, DACVAA
Chair, ACVAA Board of Directors
Clinical Professor of Anesthesiology and Section Head Anesthesia and
Pain Management
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