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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR <u>Ezzell</u>	LAST UPDATED _____
	ORIGINAL DATE <u>2/21/25</u>
SHORT TITLE <u>Equine Dental Maintenance</u>	BILL NUMBER <u>Senate Bill 412</u>
	ANALYST <u>Sanchez</u>

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
NMLB	No fiscal impact	Indeterminate but minimal	Indeterminate but minimal	Indeterminate but minimal	Recurring	General Fund
BVM	No fiscal impact	Indeterminate but minimal	Indeterminate but minimal	Indeterminate but minimal	Recurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.
 *Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency Analysis Received From
 Board of Veterinary Medicine (BVM)
 Livestock Board (NMLB)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Senate Bill 412

Senate Bill 412 (SB412) amends Section 61-14-14, NMSA 1978 of the Veterinary Practice Act. The bill proposes adding an exemption for equine dental maintenance, which would allow individuals certified by the International Association of Equine Dentistry or another board-approved certification entity to perform specific dental procedures on horses without being licensed veterinarians. The exemption would include the removal of enamel points, smoothing, contouring, and leveling of dental arcades and incisors, as well as the removal of deciduous and mobile teeth.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns if enacted, or June 20, 2025.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SB412 is not expected to result in direct fiscal impacts on state agencies. Analyses from both the New Mexico Board of Veterinary Medicine (BVM) and the New Mexico Livestock Board (NMLB) indicate no anticipated increases in expenditures or revenue changes for their respective agencies. The bill does not contain appropriations or require additional state funding for implementation.

However, SB412 could have indirect economic effects on veterinarians, equine dental practitioners, and horse owners. By exempting certified equine dental practitioners from the requirements of the Veterinary Practice Act, the bill may reduce costs for horse owners who would otherwise seek veterinary services for routine dental maintenance. This change could shift revenue from veterinarians to non-veterinary equine dental providers, potentially affecting the income of veterinary practices that offer equine dental services.

The BVM has raised concerns regarding potential risks associated with the administration of tranquilizers and the adequacy of dental procedures performed by non-veterinarian practitioners. If improper procedures result in complications, horse owners could incur additional costs for corrective veterinary care. Additionally, any increase in demand for regulatory oversight of certified equine dental practitioners could present administrative considerations, though no state agency has identified an expected fiscal impact in this regard.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

SB412 proposes an amendment to the Veterinary Practice Act that would exempt certain certified practitioners from its requirements when performing equine dental maintenance. The bill establishes certification through the International Association of Equine Dentistry or another board-approved entity as the qualifying standard for this exemption.

The New Mexico BVM has expressed concerns that the bill would create the first exemption for a specific veterinary procedure, which could lead to similar requests for exemptions in other areas of animal care, such as farrier services, chiropractic treatments, or acupuncture. Additionally, the board notes that equine dental procedures often require sedation, and the bill does not address whether certified equine dental practitioners would be authorized to administer tranquilizers, which are currently regulated substances. The board also highlights the challenge of ensuring procedural quality because horse owners may have difficulty assessing whether a dental procedure was performed thoroughly.

The bill does not alter existing regulatory authority over veterinary practices beyond the scope of equine dental maintenance or establish new state oversight mechanisms for certified equine dental practitioners. It remains unclear how enforcement or consumer protections would apply in cases of improper or inadequate dental procedures performed under this exemption.

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