



11:46 AM

Today

Something has been bothering me a while, and it's really around Mickaboo decision making/site maintenance/consistency so not really for the Discuss list. But important enough to bring up here and potentially remedy. Short version: 1) No one seems to know who Dr. Sip is, she's not seeing new patients, and she's not board certified. 2) The required class teaches that we should have a board-certified avian vet; the website lists a bunch of Mickaboo-rec'd vets; not all of them are board certified.

I think some consistency is in order. And remove Dr. Sip because a) she's not taking new patients and b) she doesn't practice emergency medicine, and the whole point of establishing a new vet relationship is the baseline for when an emergency does come up. Sip's referral was to someone at an emergency clinic who doesn't really take non-emergency cases. Not helpful. (Also she refused to answer new-patient questions I had for her instead wanting me to fill out like this hourlong intake form, and when I suggested I just had a couple questions to ask that would save everyone time, she said she's not taking new patients and booking out over a month to see existing ones.) If **anyone** knows this person (I asked around and no one did, no reviews online either), they know she's not an avian specialist either.

Anyway just throwing this out there, because it's hard enough to care perfectly for our feather critters without being introduced further confusion on vets by Mickaboo. If we teach they have to be board certified then our list should reflect that. Or teach something else.

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Pamela Lee 12:06 PM
 @Tammy Azzaro @Michelle Yesney


Tammy Azzaro 12:41 PM
 Thank you for reaching out. I agree there are inconsistencies in our requirements, recommendations, and resources. We do need to update our site and documents and one of the important points we need to reflect is that we have never required board certification. In fact, many of the vets we use most regularly are not board certified, and, from what I understand, the certification is being discontinued, so it will be impossible to find avian board certification soon, anyway. We will look into it and get it done as soon as humanly possible.
 In the meantime, if you have any questions on veterinary recommendations, always feel free to reach out to one of us personally.

Also sent to the channel



Today at 8:44 AM

No, board certification is absolutely not being discontinued. And it's not just one board. There's ABVP, ACZM, ECZM. The number of vets getting certified is actually growing. Board certification remains one of the best indicators of veterinary specialist excellence--though not the only one. (edited)

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Tammy Azzaro 1 hour ago

As I said, it is **my understanding** that it may be discontinued. I was given that information by two avian vets, and they know more than I do, so :-/ I am aware of all of the different specialties, and I wasn't referring to zoological certifications, only the ABVP in avian practice. Hopefully that won't happen. However, my personal experience has been that it is a fairly **poor** indicator of expertise. Just because a veterinarian gets boarded doesn't necessarily mean that they are going to provide more quality service/positive outcome to our birds. It does, however, indicate degree of interest, which is a much bigger indicator of a positive outcome for our patients. I've had several vets tell me that they felt that their ability suffered through the attainment of board certification because they had to spend so much of their time with their head in a book as opposed to a bird in their hand.

Yesterday at 12:49 PM

It is preposterous to state that additional training makes you a worse practitioner of medicine.

👍 1

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7 replies

Yesterday at 1:11 PM

Certification is an ongoing requirement to pay a fee and pass an exam, there may be training materials available as well.

👍 1

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Yesterday at 1:39 PM

To achieve avian certification in California, veterinarians must first complete a veterinary degree and then pursue advanced training and experience in avian medicine, potentially including a residency or postgraduate training program, and ultimately become board-certified by the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners (ABVP).

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Yesterday at 1:58 PM

Yes absolutely, just wondering if any of the training comes from the certifying agency itself or if they just review a person's one time existing credentials. If you have to re-certify every 3 years, maybe they also provide ongoing materials as we learn more about avian medicine. (edited)

Also sent to the channel

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Tammy Azzaro

Yesterday at 2:13 PM

Well, preposterous to you or not, two of our most experienced and knowledgeable avian vets have said that, and I'm sure there are more who feel the same. Nobody is saying that board certification equals a bad vet, it's just not the end-all-be-all decision maker when one is looking for a good vet for your bird. For every extraordinary boarded avian vet like Dr Speer, there are several who are ABVP certified that I would never trust with my birds. I know we all want to believe that there is a test that we can put somebody through or initials we can look for that can ensure that we are making the right vet decision, but the reality is that there isn't, and nothing beats practical experience.

Also sent to the channel

Yesterday at 5:23 PM

The two avian vets who claim that ABVP Avian practice certification is going to be discontinued are apparently not aware of the factual reality. It makes you wonder what else they are unaware of.

Unlike members of organizations like AAV, which require only a fee to join, ABVP board-certified specialists must recertify every ten years and meet ongoing annual requirements. This includes an average of 25 hours of continuing education (not from the certifying agency) per year (250 hours per decade), as well as activities such as symposium attendance, peer-reviewed publications and lectures. Certification isn't about passing a test and paying a fee — it's about staying current with evolving veterinary science to ensure best practices, so that, for instance, you don't keep recommending Harrison's high potency for African greys when it's been found to contribute to heart disease. Amongst other things.



Sarah Lemarié reacted with face_vomiting:

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that as these old-timer vets retire, we should be moving toward using only ABVP vets. It is a minimum level educational standard and I'm not sure why anyone would have a problem with that, then why use a veterinarian at all? I don't like to go to vets that graduated from what I consider to be inferior vet schools. No, I haven't worked at any of the avian vets, so I don't

While many non-certified veterinarians are competent, and some certified ones may not maintain high standards, board certification ensures a minimum level of ongoing education and exposure to current best practices — oversight that practitioners with only an “interest in birds” do not have.

The ABVP is officially recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) to certify veterinarians in specific areas of specialty care. Every three years, the ABVP itself is reviewed by the AVMA's board of veterinary specialties to make sure it continues to meet the highest standards for how it certifies and recertifies vets. I'm sorry, but using these rigorous standards as a metric to rate vets is, at the very least, as valuable as word of mouth and personal experience, even if that experience is extensive. It offers the additional advantage of reducing both actual and perceived conflicts of interest and nepotism.



Tammy Azzaro Yesterday at 6:46 PM

Our vets most certainly do keep up with “evolving veterinary science”, whether they’re certified or not. We also choose vets who take that information, pair it with practical experience and common sense.

I just had a “board certified” avian vet tell me they routinely euthanize birds who test positive for bornavirus. That’s NOT a vet I would send our birds to for care.

What’s the end game of this continued conversation?

I believe we’ve all agreed that there are some fabulous boarded vets, and some fabulous unboarded vets.

The fact that there are some vets who believe that the abvp certification may be cancelled isn’t something that we need to waste our time harping on—maybe they’re wrong—maybe they’re right—either way, nothing we can do about that and where they stand on that certainly doesn’t indicate their degree of medical knowledge!

We will continue to choose and recommend veterinarians who we have faith in, and those whose skill, knowledge and ethics meet our standards, boarded or not. (edited)

Also sent to the channel



Yesterday at 8:19 PM

This begs the question, though: who ensures that veterinarians are truly keeping up with evolving science and applying that knowledge with practical experience and sound judgment? Who determines which “outcomes” are successful and why, and what measures that success?

That’s the role of independent board certification — to establish and uphold a minimum standard of competency, and to identify potential ethical concerns, such as the misuse of FDA-indexed products for prohibited extra-label purposes. Yes, the idea of routinely euthanizing parrots with abv is egregious. But there’s also a remedy for that. They should be reported to the ABVP, which has the authority to take away their certification.

Today



Sarah Lemarié 12:28 PM

Guys, this isn't the place for postulating about the state of Avian Veterinary board certification, or weaponizing Tammy's extensive experience against her with baseless claims of conflict of interest. The tone of these posts with the underlying accusations they contain is extremely unwelcome and destructive.

Pursuing ABVP certification after DVM qualification is not at all easy. Residencies are hard to find, and have a huge impact on life plans and choices. There is a skew to taking on fresh graduates often times. It is not easily accessible, affordable, or even in some cases desirable for many skilled veterinarians; one of whom is **active on this server as one of our most valuable medical resources**. Your comments are being read, and they have triggered an immediate reaction. The comments and claims made above are so disconnected from the lived reality of veterinarians working in exotics and avian medicine and their day to day experience, making professional career decisions based on their own interests, and frankly, wellbeing. They are uninformed, hugely judgmental, and very disappointing.

Affordability and opportunity to pursue certification aside, “There is research out there that shows if you are certified you are more likely to be sued so your liability insurance increases, and you are more likely to be reported to Medical Board - so increased stress as well. And suicide and severe depression are issues in the vet field already, to the point that I know 5 exotic specialists that stopped practicing exotics as they needed a break from it all. And I know 2 specialists that did kill themselves.” <- directly from a qualified avian vet that we work with.

Our veterinary staff community deals with enough daily stress and grief in their day job that they do not need to hear uninformed judgement coming from the peanut gallery in their volunteer and rescue community. If you would like to learn more about the personal tradeoffs, quality of life sacrifice, financial burden, risks and benefits and career path impact that comes with pursuing board certification, take the time to get to know some medical professionals and be open to their informed input. Making indirect allegations of the sort suggested above is honestly, shocking to me.

We largely have a very warm, supportive, curious and well engaged community who are receptive to information and keen to learn from our professional medical contacts. Dismissing their real life experience like this based on zero professional credentials, and making accusations to boot, is not going to be tolerated.

Please keep comments thoughtful, respectful, and constructive. Or take a break. Thank you.

Yesterday



Michelle Yesney 2:38 PM

Thank you, Sarah, for your intercession. I think you summarized the situation very thoroughly.



Thursday at 3:07 AM

Very well said. 🙌🙌

Friday at 1:56 PM

I'm sorry for my post unleashing the tsunami. Weaponizing is a very strong word, and I don't see that. I apologize for my role in this, but it was literally the other thing you posted about—a warm, curious, engaged, supportive community—which was where I was coming from. I'm trying to, personally, come up with an aging game plan for my quasi-seniors. Also if I adopt or foster in the future, it will be only older birds.

I asked **everyone** I know in and out of Mickaboo about Dr Sip, and no one had heard of her or knew how she was on the rec list. She moved back here like a decade ago, not like last year....

And yes I can read a website. I did (obviously) read her site, including the loooooong intake forms, and I didn't want to spend an hour+ filling those out for 2 birds just to find out it's someone I don't want to work with, so I placed the call to ask totally valid questions. I thought Mickaboo would want to know that she's not seeing new patients and won't answer basic questions, and that we are teaching board certification in the class. That is all.

I am a warm and curious person.

At the end of the day, we ALL need to remember that we're here for parrots: stewardship, doing right by them. I'm amazed at the sheer dedication of all of you, as I total maybe 4 volunteer hours a month. If I post something here, it is out of curiosity and desire to do better.



Sarah Lemarié Friday at 2:03 PM

Questions are definitely encouraged, and I really hope this one thread won't have a chilling effect on that! Education is a major pillar of Mickaboo's work, and we do our best to frame joining the community as a place to find support and helpful information. The other, later comments vaguely suggesting Tammy had a conflict of interest, and insisting board certification be considered a minimum requirement for our vets as though all vets should be working towards it as a minimum standard were where we ran into some challenging assertions and tone, IMHO. But the points have been made and I hope the feedback from one of the vets who supports us the most has been insightful. Let's move on. 👍



Friday at 2:26 PM

I can't speak whatsoever to the certifications. I mean, it could truly be as bunk as the Realtor Code of Ethics, which is NEVER enforced, or like organic certification, which a lot of small farms can't afford, tho they are growing organic. FWIW I would like a more open dialogue about local vet experiences w/o it feeling so "hush." I'm scared to name mine, and I don't think anyone should feel that way. As someone who broadcasts Mickaboo messages via PS/HV, I need to feel like the message is consistent across the board. That is all. :)



Sarah Lemarié Friday at 11:38 PM

There's no safe or easy way for Mickaboo to do this — but I am very happy to discuss with staff or volunteers in the future. And I totally understand why you'd ask!!