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Acting Governor Guadagno Signs Bipartisan “Betsy’s Law”

Tuesday, September 15, 2015

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Trenton, NJ – This afternoon, Acting Governor Kim Guadagno signed the bipartisan “Betsy’s Law” (A-1186/S-903), which requires veterinarians at all for-profit veterinary facilities to provide written notification to a pet owner if the veterinary facility does not provide supervision for animals after normal business hours by someone on the premises.

“By enacting ‘Betsy’s Law,’ we have a chance to prevent tragic accidents. This bipartisan legislation will help veterinarians continue to keep faith with pet owners by giving them the information they need to make the best decisions for their pets,” said Acting Governor Guadagno. “That information may mean the difference between a simple vet visit and a tragedy.”

“Betsy’s Law” was named for a 16-month-old Rottweiler who was accidentally strangled during an overnight stay at a veterinary hospital after minor surgery when her collar caught on the cage. Madeleine Kayser, Betsy’s owner, was never informed that the animals in the hospital did not have after-hours supervision. Ms. Kayser has worked with the bill’s sponsors to support this legislation since Betsy’s death in 2007.

“When pet owners leave their pet in the care of a veterinary facility, they assume the animal is being supervised around the clock and receiving the best of care,” said Senator James W. Holzapfel, one of the bill’s primary sponsors. “The intent of this new law is to prevent similar tragic incidents in the future by better informing pet owners of a facility’s operating procedures.”

To facilitate the requirements of “Betsy’s Law,” the bill requires for-profit veterinary facilities to post their normal business hours in a conspicuous location that is easily visible to the public. The bill also allows for the “unsupervised” notification to be provided as a sign, part of a sign, or on an intake form, using particular font sizes and language.

The Acting Governor was joined at the Toms River Animal Facility for the bill signing by Toms River Mayor Thomas Kelaher and three of the bill’s primary sponsors: Senator Holzapfel (R-Ocean), Assemblyman Gregory P. McGuckin (R-Ocean), and Assemblyman David W. Wolfe (R-Ocean). The bill was also sponsored by Assemblyman Carmelo G. Garcia (D-Hudson) and Assemblyman Reed Gusciora (D-Hunterdon and Mercer).

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