

To: NRHA Board of Directors
From: NRHA Professionals (see names below)
Re: Proposed NRHA Medications Policy

The undersigned NRHA professional riders have each read the following letter and are in agreement to its content and intent. Many of us have expressed opinions personally to board members and wish to further communicate those opinions by this letter. We are all fully capable of reviewing the information presented here and independently chose to include our names on this document.

As prominent members of our association, we feel that it is our responsibility to directly convey our opinion concerning the proposed medications policy to the Board of Directors. We respect and appreciate the amount of effort and time the medications committee has dedicated to this issue. However, we feel that this proposed medications research policy falls short of its intent and strongly urge you as Board members to vote no in August. This is not to say that we don't see a need for further discussion on the subject of a medications policy, but feel that the implementation of this policy now would further exacerbate the turmoil that our association is in.

We suggest that efforts be made to consult our leading equine veterinarians and ask what they see as our biggest problems, if any, within the industry. What do they do for our horses before our major events? What are the most common injuries or physical problems our horses experience and how are they treated? We feel strongly that if asked, a substantial amount of information regarding what medications trainers use on their horses could be obtained. A suggestion would be to send questionnaires to our professionals and nonpros and simply ask them what and when they use medications, if any, why they use these medications and what effect they believe these medications have. If this procedure was anonymous, it is our contention that the same amount of information could be collected as the declaration forms outlined in the medication proposal, at a fraction of the cost to our association and its members. It can be argued that not everyone will fill these forms out, but the ones that are filled out will come from people that are committed to finding a plan that works for our horses and riders. The declaration forms outlined in the medications proposal will not contain credible information if the participants aren't supportive of the policy. For example, the proposed declaration forms may be grossly overstated, they may be understated (so few tests will be conducted, that it won't take long to figure out that the chance of being tested is very remote), and the information declared may just be wrong. Additionally, since the first year of this plan has no punitive phase, one third of the information obtained should be considered irrelevant to any legitimate research study. We believe that a large number of these declaration forms won't contain any credible information at all.

We understand from communications with members of the Board of Directors, that they feel we have a "perception" problem both within and outside the association (PETA, other equine associations, etc) due to the lack of a medications policy. We would rather stand in defense of our organization and tackle this issue head on with a policy that works

for our horses, rather than one that skirts the issue. We feel that the proposed medications policy does little to improve our credibility as an organization. It has to be admitted that the proposed policy has little merit unless all of its participants are on board. We are quite sure that the organizations that are scrutinizing our techniques can see this fact as well. It would behoove us to better utilize our time, energy, and money to develop a real medications policy that works for reiners and thus restore the credibility we have with our own members. We see two options concerning the implementation of a medications policy. We can choose to do nothing or we can choose to do something; but choosing to do something that accomplishes nothing should not be an option and that is how we view the final outcome of this proposal.

As professionals we have talked with our peers, our owners, and our non pro clients to determine their opinions on this issue. Our association is in a state of flux at the present time. We feel that this proposal further alienates the NRHA leadership from the general membership. We should and do care about their concerns. They look to us for leadership and clarification on tough subjects like the ones we have faced over the last six months in the NRHA. We feel that the presentation and timing of this policy was handled poorly. Some Board of Directors have shared that they have not heard the discontentment nor understand the opinions expressed by our members. We find this attitude incredibly arrogant and dismissive. This is exactly the reason why the confidence of our general members has been lost. The phrase that comes to mind is “when you are in a hole; quit digging”. We suggest to you that you are in a hole. Our membership is neither ignorant nor stupid as they have at times been treated in the past few months. They are passionate about the problems facing the NRHA because they care about it – just as much as you do. Despite the good intent of this proposed policy, our members will not support this and that fact alone negates any findings that come from this research. Bad information IN can only lead to bad information OUT.

We understand that the Medications Committee was already informed by the Chairperson of the Professional Committee that the professionals are in support of this proposal. We feel that this information is not inclusive of a great number of us and that has brought about the necessity of this letter. The professionals listed below ask that you consider further options as outlined here and table this discussion for further debate. We are very appreciative of the time and effort that goes into such a proposal but respectfully ask you as Board members to oppose this medications policy. Thank you for your consideration.

Professionals Opposed to Proposed Medications Policy

Professional	Location
Shawn Florida	Ohio
Andrea Fappani	Arizona
Brian Bell	North Carolina
Rueben VanDorp	Texas
Francois Gauthier	North Carolina
Clint Haverty	Texas

Casey Deary	Texas
Matt Lantz	Michigan
Terry Thompson	Texas
Randy Schafhauser	Arkansas
Brent Loseke	Texas
Sam Schafhauser	Arkansas
Mark Turner	Indiana
Abigail Mixon	Oklahoma
Richard Wheatley	Georgia
Patti Brownshadel	Texas
Jamie Bissell	Georgia
Nathan Piper	Texas
Robin Schoeller	Germany
Tim Katona	Michigan
Steve Archer	Texas
Ronnie Wayne	South Carolina
Mark Rafacz	Florida
Bub Poplin	Colorado
Todd Martin	Texas
Drake Johnson	Colorado
Brad Kelsall	Florida
Tracy MeReynolds	Texas
Bret Walters	Indiana
Steve Schwartzenberger	Colorado
Troy Koehl	Texas
Sharon Davis Crawford	Michigan
Keith Tidmore	Georgia
Dale Bicknell	Ohio
Shane Brown	Colorado
Randy Fowler	Indiana
Roi Yellin	Israel
Gene Munger	Michigan
Kelly Sapp	North Carolina
Linda Hitt	Colorado
Jason Torpey	Indiana
Connie Stoney	Colorado
Chip Stewart	Georgia
Rick Walker	Tennessee
Herm Sherwin	Georgia
Bradley Pagh	Florida
Bill Thomas	Michigan
Mark Guynn	Colorado
Shannon Fowler	Indiana
Lance Shockley	Colorado
Roger Barral	Texas
Julie Marks	Georgia

Jake Stephens
Adam Partee
Ray Conrad
Terry Wegener
Scott Buckley
Dustin Allen
Paul Lentshke

Colorado
Georgia
Texas
Colorado
Texas
Texas
Texas