



THE COLLEGE OF  
VETERINARIANS  
OF ONTARIO

# SUMMARY REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE REFORM CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

## **Background on the Consultations**

The College Council has been engaged in strategic discussions regarding the need to consider reform to the *Veterinarians Act* since 2013. To progress this work, it commissioned an oversight advisory group, three working groups, in-depth research, and broad-based consultations. Included in the approach to consultation have been specific opportunities for the public to respond to key areas of debate. Comments and opinions received for each public consultation have been fed back into the College's analysis and discussion process to help shape Council's final recommendations.

This report provides a brief summary of the perspectives raised by those who participated in each separate consultation.

Consultations included the following topics:

1. Single Screening Process for Investigations
2. Expanded Public Register
3. Mandatory Quality Assurance Program
4. Interim Suspensions
5. Mandatory Reporting of Dismissal or Resignation Related to Incompetence or Incapacity of a Member
6. Publicizing a Notice of Hearing
7. Objects of the College

It should be noted that, while all consultations garnered veterinarian perspective, consultations (4), (5), and (6) received significant attention from the general public.

# CONSULTATION FEEDBACK: SINGLE SCREENING PROCESS FOR INVESTIGATIONS

**Consultation Period:** May 19, 2016 – June 27, 2016

**Submissions:** 24 submissions

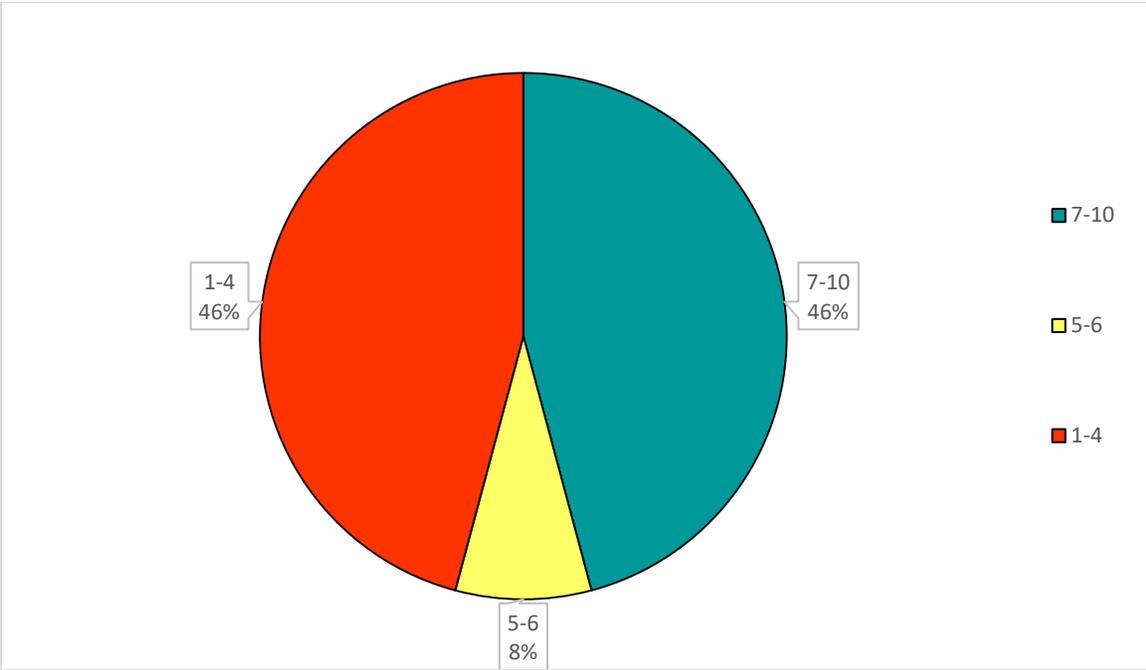
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### Overview of the Feedback:

Respondents who took the survey (rather than simply providing comments) were divided as follows based on the responses received to the question asking respondents to rank their support of the concept on a scale of 1 to 10:

- 1 - 4: critical of the concept
- 5 - 6: neither in favour of the concept nor critical of it
- 7 - 10: in favour of the concept

The following chart illustrates the breakdown of the responses received:



## **Additional Comments:**

- *Its time to make this transparent.*
- *Streamlining the process would be very helpful and should shorten the wait time for a matter to be resolved.*
- *Ensure that robust investigation of complaints is not sacrificed in order to speed up the resolution process.*
- *If this will result in a faster resolution to issues, particularly if it can reduce the associated costs, I am entirely in favour of this concept.*
- *Giving the power to the CVO to investigate veterinarians without a complaint seems unjustified and highly stressful to veterinarians.*
- *What is the accountability of the Council? None*

Following its review, Council directed that the College move forward on including this concept in its final proposal to the Ministry.

## **Appendix: Consultation Backgrounder:**

### [Consultation: Single Screening Process](#)

#### [Veterinarians Act: Legislative Reform – What do you think?](#)

##### [What is the concept?](#)

A single screening process and resolutions pathway for all concerns, complaints and reports that are brought to the College's attention by any source.

##### [Why is the College considering changes to this concept?](#)

The College currently has two distinct screening processes for matters brought to its attention – the Complaints Committee and the Executive Committee. Complaints are clearly defined and are usually made by a member of the public. Executive matters are broad-based and include issues raised anonymously but verified, matters in the media, reports of incapacity, etc.

These two intake processes are supported by different investigation authorities and different abilities to request a Registrar's inquiry or report. For example, the current Complaints process can only appoint an investigator if it halts its review and requests a separate review by the Registrar; the Committee has no investigative authority. This is an inconsistent use of authority and resources and lengthens the process for all involved.

The College's efforts to use a voluntary alternate dispute resolution process have also been challenging. Its voluntary nature is counterintuitive to the needs of a complaints department in resolving matters with the most appropriate process.

##### [What is proposed?](#)

- Screening would be conducted by a single screening committee. The current Complaints and Executive Committees' roles would be folded into a single screening committee.
- Cases that are considered frivolous and vexatious or outside of the College's jurisdiction (ie. employment law) could be dismissed at intake.

- There would be a mandatory alternative dispute resolution process in certain circumstances. Examples include refusal of service, financial disputes, misunderstandings related to invoices or communication generally, peer to peer disputes (not related to employment), and obtaining a copy of a record or prescription.
- The introduction of a Specified Continuing Education or Remediation Program (SCERPs). There would no longer be voluntary undertakings.
- Appeals to the Review Board (an arm's length agency) would be retained.

#### What are the benefits?

The proposed model assists all parties involved in a matter before the College in the following ways:

- There is one triage or intake process which is streamlined and transparent.
- There is the ability to appoint an investigator in any case as necessary.
- Alternate dispute resolution would be mandatory in certain cases facilitating negotiated decisions which contributes to greater satisfaction on outcome for all involved.
- Maintains the arm's length appeal process to assure the accountability of the College.