



## **SPEAKING FRANKLY**

### ***A Report on the Public Community Reference Panel***

September 2021

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#### **BACKGROUND**

As a component of its Strategy 2020 objectives, the Council of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario formed a public advisory panel to assist with its work. The Public Community Reference Panel is the second iteration of this group which has now existed since 2017. The Public Community Reference Panel's specific mandate includes:

- to provide early advice to the College on emerging policy matters
- to provide feedback on the clarity of draft policy to the general public
- to provide input on the public communication strategy
- to identify emerging trends related to the animals, animal care and public perspective

The panel is intended to meet at least three times a year, once face-to-face with Council. Due to the pandemic, temporary amendments to this approach have been.

This report summarizes key areas highlighted by the panel and outlines opportunities for Council consideration.

A video teleconference meeting of the Public Community Reference Panel was held on September 24, 2021.

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#### **KEY AREAS**

(A) Telemedicine

- Veterinarians are stretched thin; telemedicine helps
- Importance of ensuring that telemedicine does not undermine the VCPR and/or in-person examination
- Concerns about addressing adverse effects at a distance
- College should help facilitate different ways to improve access to care
- Proposed revisions to the policy appear to be moving in the right direction
- Telemedicine is an important tool for triage
- Do not want to steer the public into seeking unaccountable services

(B) Caveat Emptor/Buyer Beware

- Potential for the College to develop public resources related to this topic
- Public wants choice until something goes wrong – then want accountability
- Human health has more robust approach and funding and is still largely unsuccessful
- Potential to use veterinarians to help deliver messages
- Need to avoid perception of professional self-interest

(C) Trends or Issues to Raise for Consideration

- Utilizing the RVT skillset to its full potential
- One Health
- Social anxiety and the welfare of pandemic pets
- Increased veterinary training in animal behaviour
- Scope creep – who can and cannot perform certain procedures
- Veterinary shortage
- Zoonotic diseases
- Biosecurity

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**SUMMARY**

The Council is grateful to the members of the community reference panel for their candid comments and willingness to engage with the profession as it aims to instill confidence in veterinary regulation. All information and identified opportunities will be considered for both immediate and future planning.