



THE COLLEGE OF
VETERINARIANS
OF ONTARIO

REPORT ON CONSULTATION

Topic: Professional Practice Standard Veterinary Euthanasia
Consultation Period: July 6 – August 19, 2016
Submissions: 32 submissions

Background on the Consultation

The draft of the revised Professional Practice Standard on Veterinary Euthanasia was presented to Council in March 2016. Following discussion and feedback, the draft document returned to Council in June 2016 where Council approved the draft standard to be circulated for consultation.

General questions were posed as part of the consultation process:

- Is the standard clear and understandable regarding professional expectations for veterinarians?
- Are there suggestions for additions or changes to the standard?
- Does the standard protect the public interest?

Overview of Feedback

Clarity of professional expectations

28 respondents completed this question. 89% of respondents indicated yes the standard clearly establishes professional expectations for all veterinarians who perform veterinary euthanasia.

Adequate protection of public interest

79% of respondents indicated yes the standard adequately protects the public interest.

Need for additional practice expectations in the standard

25% of respondents indicated yes the standard needed additional practice expectations to be helpful for veterinarians to ensure they provide safe, quality veterinary medicine when performing euthanasia.

Additional Comments

The following quotes, summarized from comments received, reflect issues raised during the consultation:

- *It should be made clear that veterinarians who report to the OSPCA are exempt from prosecution for breach of privacy, as they are when reporting other types of abuse*
- *Euthanasia is mostly a very hard time for the whole family and most of times upset when have to loose at early age of pet. It depends person to person how they can take this one. Hopefully may be considering to offer them Grief educator/session is an another option.*
- *Many times a client has made their decision to euthanize for various reasons- the poor QOL is obvious or for financial reasons, treatments are not possible- does the veterinarian have to go through all treatment options and alternatives and prognosis? The client is usually very distraught and I find this a rather callus criterion to be met when it is obvious treatments will not be considered.*
- *The act of terminating life involves a long and careful discussion with clients. The public interest should be protected, non veterinarians being able to access T-61 and end life is not what the public expects, they likely assume that veterinarians are performing these services. This should change to protect the public.*
- *Could use clarification as to what is meant by having a written euthanasia protocol - does that just mean something like this PPS? Or do we need a decision algorithm and step-by-step "how to"? If so, is there any standardized version of this, or do we each need to write one?*
- *Offer a quiet room to let the client regain their senses before letting them leave and drive in great distress!*
- *Some veterinarians still forego catheter placement. This adds to stress to the animal from restraint. It increases the risk of extravascular leakage resulting in delays in sedation or potentially death. Some vets forego sedation. While euthanasia may be quick, it seems inhumane to simply inject lethal medication into a frightened, stressed, potentially painful animal. These practices are done to save money. Given how small these costs are, I would submit these practices are barbaric.*
- *Technicians, support staff and non-veterinarian managers often have strong attitudes in favor of euthanasia. While we are all entitled to our opinions, these individuals often take great liberties in vocalizing their opinions not just within the clinic environment creating significant animosity but to clients. This is absolutely unacceptable and standards should make it very clear that euthanasia is a veterinarian-client only decision.*

Council March 2016 Discussion and Decision

Council reviewed the consultation feedback and the draft standard. Many of the comments received during the consultation were helpful in drafting the Guide to the Professional Practice Standard on Veterinary Euthanasia. The guide includes items such as: guiding principles regarding veterinarians many responsibilities in this area, a sample practice protocol, a decision-making tool, suggestions for handling emotional scenarios with sensitivity, and considerations related to food-producing animals.

Council approved the draft Professional Practice Standard on Veterinary Euthanasia.