



THE COLLEGE OF
VETERINARIANS
OF ONTARIO

REPORT ON CONSULTATION

Topic:	Professional Practice Standard Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship
Consultation Period:	December 15 – February 16, 2016
Submissions:	14 submissions from licensed members 1 submission from a stakeholder

Background on the Consultation

The draft of the revised Professional Practice Standard on the Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) was presented to Council in October 2015. Following discussion and feedback, the draft document was approved by Council, with several changes, for consultation. Following the Council meeting, College staff amended the draft standard to better reflect the nuances in Regulation 1093 and returned the revised version to the Executive Committee for consideration. The Executive Committee decided to return the draft standard to Council for direction. At the December 2015 meeting, Council approved the draft of the revised VCPR standard to be circulated for consultation.

General questions were posed as part of the consultation process:

- Is the VCPR standard clear and understandable with regard to the public expectations?
- Are there suggestions for additions or changes to the VCPR standard?
- Does the VCPR standard protect the public interest?

Overview of Feedback

Responses to questions were recorded on a five-point rating scale with one being a low score and five being a positive response.

Clarity of professional expectations

9 respondents completed this question. 77% of respondents scored the standard with a 1 or 2 rating on a five point scale with 1 being unclear and 5 being very clear.

Adequate protection of public interest

33% of respondents indicated yes the standard adequately protects the public interest.

Need for additional practice expectations in the standard

63% of respondents indicated yes the standard needed additional practice expectations to be helpful for veterinarians to ensure they provide safe, quality veterinary medicine within a valid VCPR.

Additional Comments

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

- *The VCPR should include direction for dealing with clients who are in arrears of payment, or who wish to have service performed but are unable to pay*
- *while the one year requirement was not evidence based...it was "common sense" based. It has been the standard for human medicine and veterinary medicine for years...*
- *On herd basis there must be contact with each herd on a continuous basis and MORE frequent basis than currently exists. The sale of drugs with no CURRENT information about a herd will be increased. The removal of the requirement to visit a herd at least one time per year will promote drug sales "over the counter".*
- *The vagueness of this draft leaves wide potential for abuse by veterinarians and serious harm to patients whose owners will refuse to have annual examinations if not required.*
- *Leaves too much open to individual assessment of appropriateness and timeliness of examination.*
- *I am not sure how the standard addresses geographically isolated regions in which veterinary care may not be readily available or when provided is based on outreach programs to those regions that are usually conducted on a yearly basis.*
- *Reinstate the annual exam policy at least in companion animal.*

Council March 2016 Discussion and Decision

Council reviewed the consultation feedback and the draft standard as revised. Many of the comments received during the consultation were helpful in drafting the Guide to the Professional Practice Standard on the VCPR. The guide includes items such as: guidance regarding termination of the VCPR; potential issues that may arise when multiple veterinarians have a VCPR with a client; guidance to determining "recent and sufficient" knowledge of an animal; acknowledgement that some subgroups have industry standards that set out specific timelines for assessments/examinations; and guidance as to what constitutes a "sufficient assessment".

Council approved the draft Professional Practice Standard on the Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship as amended.