

Summary of Discipline Committee Hearing



DR. EDISON BARRIENTOS

Hearing Date: July 15, 2014

ALLEGATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT

- failed to maintain the standard of practice of the profession
- signed or issued a veterinary certificate, report or similar document without ascertaining, or taking reasonable measures to determine the accuracy of its contents
- an act or omission relevant to the practice of veterinary medicine that, having regard to the circumstances, would be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional

BRIEF SUMMARY

A large-breed dog was the member's long-standing patient. The dog had a history of bilateral tibial-plateau-leveling osteotomy and chronic musculoskeletal pain in his hind legs and had been prescribed meloxicam for some time.

In an effort to find a less expensive source of meloxicam, the member issued a prescription for meloxicam to be obtained at a pharmacy. However, rather than issuing a prescription for 7.5 mg once per day, the member wrote the prescription for 75 mg once per day.

The pharmacy called the member to confirm the prescription, which he did. The client gave meloxicam to the dog in the amount prescribed for two days.

The client called the member as the dog was unable to walk. The member went to the client's home and found the dog recumbent, tachycardic and with pale mucous membranes. When the member saw the drug bottle, he realized that he prescribed a grossly excessive amount of meloxicam and he immediately advised the client.

The member took the dog to the clinic where he was treated for acute renal failure. However, the dog arrested and died not long after his admission.

DECISION

The member pleaded and was found guilty with respect to the allegations. The College and the member had negotiated an Agreed Statement of Facts, including an admission of professional misconduct.

PENALTY

- Reprimand
- Suspension of the member's licence to practise veterinary medicine for two months, one month to be remitted if the member completes a one day mentoring session dealing with practice management, including the proper management and recording of medication
- The mentor shall provide a report on issues discussed and the member's compliance with relevant standards of practice following the mentoring session
- A condition and limitation is imposed on the member's licence to practise veterinary medicine requiring the member to undergo two practice audits addressing practice management issues, including prescribing medication and proper documentation
- The member will pay costs to the College of \$2,000
- Pursuant to legislation, this matter is published including the member's name

PANEL'S REASONING

The panel agreed the member failed to maintain a standard of practice by prescribing in excess by a factor of 10. When prescribing infrequently, the standard of practice can be met by rechecking the dosage. One should have a sense of the correct magnitude of the dose, when prescribing a drug frequently.

The panel also agreed the member issued a veterinary certificate or document without reasonable measures to determine the accuracy of its contents. The inaccuracy was evident in the written prescription.

Finally, the panel agreed the member's conduct would be regarded by veterinarians as unprofessional. He failed to verify the dosage, even when called by another professional, which should have been a flag to do so.

The parties had agreed upon penalty and presented it as a joint submission.

The penalty emphasizes remedial action by decreasing the suspension length for participation in rehabilitation, while maintaining the emphasis on the importance of professional conduct. The panel recognized that the member did readily console the client, and admit immediately his mistake, upon recognizing the likely problem.