



THE COLLEGE OF
VETERINARIANS
OF ONTARIO

POLICY STATEMENT

Satellite Facility

Published: October 2015

Introduction

In November 2012, Council established a Shelter Medicine Task Force (SMTF) to examine animal welfare issues related to shelter care in Ontario and to make policy recommendations.

The SMTF Report was published in September 2013, and one of its recommendations was to permit Accredited Companion Animal Hospitals or Offices to seek, for the purpose of establishing an accredited satellite facility at a shelter, an exemption to the “self-contained facility requirement” (as required by the *Minimum Standards for Veterinary Facilities in Ontario*) through the authority of the Accreditation Committee.

The public interest rationale for this recommendation is to remove any unnecessary regulatory barriers to improve access to veterinary services, inclusive of spay-neuter procedures, to shelter animals in Ontario.

The establishment of a satellite facility is intended to mitigate the risks associated with the transportation of shelter animals to and from accredited veterinary facilities for treatment by:

- Reducing the associated costs to the shelter which ultimately would allow more animals to receive necessary veterinary care.
- Eliminating the chance of contagions being introduced to the companion animal hospital – which reduces the risk to animal and public health.
- Reducing transport stress on animals.

Purpose and Scope

This Policy Statement applies to all veterinarians who are considering overseeing a satellite facility that is linked with his/her Companion Animal Hospital or Companion Animal Office. Examples of acceptable satellite locations include: satellite facilities located in shelters,

charitable organizations (Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides), and centers housing animals that are not individually owned by the public.

Veterinarians must only provide veterinary treatment at a satellite facility according to the circumstances set out in this policy. Veterinarians wishing to provide this type of service must comply with the terms of an acceptable Acknowledgement and Undertaking with the College of Veterinarians of Ontario (CVO) signed prior to providing this service.

Conditions for Obtaining and Maintaining Exemption

1. The satellite facility must be located at a shelter that does not already have a veterinarian on staff.
2. The satellite facility must be inspected as part of the accreditation of the veterinarian's Companion Animal Hospital or Office.
3. The satellite facility is prohibited from offering services to members of the public. It must be used solely for the care of the animals owned by the shelter for which the veterinarian provides services.
4. The satellite facility must use the same facility name as the veterinarian's Companion Animal Hospital or Office.
5. The veterinarian or shelter is not permitted to advertise to the public, in any way, the veterinary services being provided at the satellite facility.
6. The veterinarian is responsible for the education of shelter staff with respect to standard operating (management) procedures (SOP) and treatment procedures that are undertaken when the veterinarian is not on site. An example of an SOP would be a document that details how and where after-hours care can be accessed.
7. The veterinarian is required to establish a veterinarian client patient relationship with the shelter that is acting as the owner of the shelter-housed animals.
8. The veterinarian must ensure the availability of equipment and pharmaceuticals as appropriate for the veterinary services being provided at the satellite facility.
9. No controlled drugs are permitted to be kept at the satellite facility.
10. Since the satellite facility is linked to the veterinarian's accredited facility, a shelter staff member falls into the category of a "person involved in a member's practice of veterinary medicine". Therefore, shelter staff may be seen as auxiliaries and may act upon specific direction by the veterinarian. The veterinarian will be responsible for the care provided by those auxiliaries.
11. If the satellite facility is linked to a Companion Animal Office (as opposed to an accredited Hospital), spay-neuter surgeries are not permitted to take place at the satellite facility. In this scenario, veterinary services at the satellite facility are limited to wellness and preventative care.
12. Prior to providing any care at the satellite facility, the veterinarian must sign an Acknowledgement and Undertaking with the CVO agreeing to these conditions.

Legislative Authority

Veterinarians Act, R.S.O. 1990, s. 17(3), 17(4)

SAMPLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND UNDERTAKING

College of Veterinarians of Ontario (“CVO”)

-And-

DR. First and Last Name

I, DR. (First and Last Name), acknowledge that the *Minimum Standards for Veterinary Facilities in Ontario* normally require that a Companion Animal Hospital or Office be located in a self-contained facility. In exchange for the Accreditation Committee of the CVO providing me with an exemption from that usual requirement, I acknowledge and undertake as follows:

1. I undertake to :
 - a. Provide veterinary services at the satellite facility only to the animals owned by the shelter.
 - b. Only provide those services and care that is permitted with this arrangement.
 - c. Refrain from offering to provide to the public veterinary services at the satellite facility.
 - d. Refrain from naming or advertising the satellite facility.
 - e. Establish and maintain a valid VCPR with shelter clients.
 - f. Implement standard operating procedures for properly trained shelter staff to follow in my absence.
 - g. Have available at the satellite facility, equipment and pharmaceuticals appropriate for the veterinary services being provided to shelter animals.
 - h. Refrain from keeping controlled drugs at the satellite facility.
 - i. Contact the College if my arrangement with the shelter has changed and the satellite facility is no longer operating.
 - j. Comply with the *Veterinarians Act*, O. Reg. 1093 (including maintaining medical records in accordance thereof), and CVO By-laws.

2. I acknowledge that The College has exclusive discretion to revoke this arrangement at any time.

3. I further acknowledge that failure to comply with this Undertaking, once signed, may be viewed as an act of professional misconduct for which the CVO may take action against me as set out in the *Veterinarians Act*.

I acknowledge that I have signed this Undertaking freely and voluntarily and have been informed of my right to obtain legal counsel in advance of signing this Undertaking.

Date

Signature, Veterinarian

College publications contain practice parameters and standards which should be considered by all Ontario veterinarians in the care of their patients and in the practice of the profession. College publications are developed in consultation with the profession and describe current professional expectations. It is important to note that these College publications may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained. The College encourages you to refer to the website (www.cvo.org) to ensure you are referring to the most recent version of any document.