



THE COLLEGE OF  
VETERINARIANS  
OF ONTARIO

# PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE STANDARD

## *Informed Client Consent*

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### Introduction

Informed consent is the legal and ethical foundation on which professionals deliver services. From a public protection perspective, informed client consent is the basis on which veterinarians and clients confirm the veterinary services that will be provided. Consent may be implied or explicit and explicit consent may be verbal or in writing. Informed client consent is obtained throughout the course of the Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR).

### Definition

**Client:** Client means, with respect to a veterinarian, the owner of an animal that is being treated, an authorized representative of the owner or an individual who the veterinarian reasonably determines is acting in the interest of the animal.

### Practice Expectations

A veterinarian meets the *Professional Practice Standard: Informed Client Consent* when he/she:

1. Obtains consent from a client who is over the age of 18.
2. Ensures the consent relates to the diagnostic procedure(s), intervention(s) or course of treatment.

3. Provides comprehensive information to the client including:
  - the differential and/or definitive diagnoses;
  - the nature of the proposed diagnostic procedure(s), intervention(s) or course of treatment;
  - the proposed benefits, common side effects and any serious risks;
  - other reasonable alternative courses of action including the risks/benefits of each; and
  - the consequences if the proposed action is refused.
4. Answers all questions and ensures that the client understands the information provided.
5. Discloses if auxiliaries or other veterinarians may provide some or all of the care of the animal(s).
6. Provides an estimated cost of the intervention, using a range when appropriate.
7. Indicates in the medical record that consent was obtained and, for interventions or courses of treatment that are of higher risk, obtains consent in writing where feasible.
8. Understands that revealing information concerning a client, an animal, or any professional service performed for an animal to a person other than the client or another member treating the animal is not permitted without the client's consent, except when doing so is required or authorized by law.

## Guide to the Professional Practice Standard

A separate *Guide to the Professional Practice Standard: Informed Client Consent* has been developed by the College. The Guide to the Professional Practice Standard can be found on the College's website at [www.cvo.org](http://www.cvo.org).

## Legislative Authority

R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 1093: General s. 17(1)6; 18; 22(1)9.1; 33(1)(a); 44 (*Veterinarians Act*)

## Other References

The following can be found on the College's website at [www.cvo.org](http://www.cvo.org):

*Guide to the Professional Practice Standard: Informed Client Consent*

*Professional Practice Standard: Medical Records*

*Guide to the Professional Practice Standard: Medical Records*

*Position Statement: The Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship*

## Resources

The following can be found on the College's website at [www.cvo.org](http://www.cvo.org):

Sample Informed Client Consent Form

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](http://www.cvo.org)) to ensure you are referring to the most recent version of any document.