



SPEAKING FRANKLY

A Report on the Veterinary Practice Advisory Panel

October 2020

BACKGROUND

As a component of its Strategy 2020 objectives, the Council of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario formed a veterinary practice advisory panel to assist with its work. The veterinary practice advisory panel's specific mandate includes:

- to provide early advice to the College on emerging policy matters
- to provide feedback on the implementation of draft policy
- to provide input on the communication strategy with the veterinary community
- to assist in the identification of risk areas in practice
- to identify emerging trends and challenges in practice

The panel aims to meet at least three times a year, once face-to-face with Council.

This report summarizes key areas highlighted by the panel at its most recent meeting, and outlines opportunities for College consideration.

This teleconference meeting of the Veterinary Practice Advisory Panel was held on October 22, 2020.

KEY AREAS

(A) Current Practice Expectations Amidst a Global Pandemic

- Shelters using telemedicine more since onset of pandemic
- High levels of resiliency amongst veterinary clinics/staff
- Public less understanding of clinics only allowing staff/animals inside
- Huge increase in work demand for provincial frontline veterinarians
- Use of prescribing via telemedicine alone has risen. Especially helpful in aiding rural/remote/vulnerable clients

(B) Consultation – Conflict of Interest

- Questions regarding steering
- Difference between steering and referrals
- Questions about perceived conflicts of interest

- Current provisions are complicated and hard to understand
- Defining what constitutes a benefit
- Potential for the influence of corporations on individual professional judgement
- Questions around drug rebates and incentives

(C) Consultation – Use of Non-Conventional Therapies in the Practice of Veterinary Medicine

- Questions about the accreditation/credentials of non-veterinary providers
- Need for College to educate the public about their options (i.e. caveat emptor)
- Difference between science-based and those therapies that are not supported by any evidence
- Focus appears to be on professional judgement and informed client consent

SUMMARY

The Council is grateful to the members of the advisory panel for their candid comments and willingness to engage with the profession as it aims to instill confidence in veterinary regulation. All information and identified opportunities will be considered for both immediate and future planning.