



THE COLLEGE OF
VETERINARIANS
OF ONTARIO

Strategy 2020 Outcomes Report

In March 2017, the Council of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario approved a new strategic framework for launch in 2017. Titled Strategy 2020, the plan highlighted five key objectives as the focus of Council's attention. This report serves as a public report on the progress achieved over the last 3 years based on the vision for each objective set at the time.

Objective 1

Advance public voice in regulatory policy.

By 2020 the College has increased public involvement in its discussion on matters of public policy. Public voice aims to include animal owners, non-animal owners, and industry.

College communication strategies incorporate multi-pronged approaches to capture attentive engagement. Analytics speak to progress in this area.

Overall engagement with the College by veterinarians has remained strong and continually improved. Strategic Objective 2. Promote professionalism and self-regulation in the practice

Progress

The College has successfully launched several initiatives aimed at advancing public voice in its work. A public advisory panel was launched in 2018 to assist Council with early advice on its many policy and communication initiatives. These sessions are summarized, in documents titled Speaking Frankly, and posted publicly on the College website. New forms of online public input have been sought through Asking Canadians. Perspectives from these sources have been valuable in shaping Council's decisions.

Multiple communication strategies are used to encourage active engagement with our work. While more conservative in our approach, we have added Facebook, LinkedIn articles, podcasts and Twitter to our regular tools of the website, newsletter, and e-updates. A quarterly public newsletter has been introduced as well and now has a solid readership of close to 1000

members of the public. Veterinarians also engage with the public newsletter and share it with their clientele.

Engagement with the veterinary community remains strong. Our election call and process is robust with high levels of voter activity. Consultations, whether targeted or broad based, elicit thoughtful and helpful comments to shape policy. Volunteer opportunities at the College are met with a high number of interested veterinary applications. The calibre of veterinary contribution to the work of the College in all areas is remarkable.

Objective 2

Promote professionalism and self-regulation in the practice of veterinary medicine.

By 2020 the profession has embraced a focus on professionalism and self-regulation, understanding its many component parts in daily practice – ethics, quality assurance, and quality improvement. Greater attention is given to veterinary competence in non-technical skills, inclusive of practitioner health and resilience.

Data shared by the College, with the profession, focuses on patterns of risk and areas for attention to potential harm reduction. College programs, resources and supports, including individual remedial actions, are built to assist the profession in achieving professionalism that promotes public protection.

Veterinarians collaborate with the College in identifying issues of professionalism and the regulation of veterinary medicine that require leadership and public attention.

Progress

Over the past three years the College, through its focus on quality practice, has made distinct progress in highlighting professionalism and ethics as key pillars of any profession. A refreshed code of ethics and decision making tools have been published, along with materials outlining a professionalism framework.

The Peer Advisory Conversation program has now been validated and finalized, ready for launch in 2020. This is the first quality assurance program for veterinary medicine of its kind in North America. Beyond the medicine, this program also focuses on non-technical skills (communication, leadership, etc.) and practitioner wellness which are key features of continuing competence. Veterinarians, who have participated in the program, speak positively of their experience and the value.

A new Facility Accreditation model has finished its development stage and is approved for piloting in 2020. The popular Peer Review of Medical Records program has also been refreshed and strengthened as a quality assurance tool.

The College has fully adopted a risk based approach to its work. At the staff level a Risk Analysis and Mitigation Team works in concert with the Governance, Audit and Risk Committee of Council to regularly address patterns of risk and their regulatory solutions. Data mining is improving as is the ability to report out publicly on trends and implications for the profession and the public to consider. The next phase – Outcome Focused Regulation - was launched in December 2019.

While the College and its Council have embraced risk based thinking, this remains new for the profession. The College has continued work to do in its leadership of the profession, and more specifically how it might collaborate to better identify and reduce risk and potential patient harm.

Objective 3

Achieve commitment to the Legislative Reform of the *Veterinarians Act*.

By 2020 the College has presented its position on legislative reform to government. Its position is well understood by all government parties and all key stakeholders.

The Council has engaged a multitude of interested individuals and groups in the discussion of a changing legislative framework. The opportunities and the concerns for proceeding with a reform agenda are clearly articulated.

The Council has achieved a commitment from government to proceed with reform, and timelines have been set.

Progress

After years of development and research, inclusive of significant public consultation, the College sent recommendations for reform of the current Veterinarians Act to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in February 2018. This work has been advanced in collaboration with the Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians and has benefited from multi stakeholder interest and input.

A Legislative Reform Implementation Advisory Group has been struck to oversee the details and coordination of new regulations when an implementation date becomes clearer.

Meetings with the Ministry continue to indicate support for reform of the legislation. Timelines and an actual process for implementation have not yet been established.

Objective 4

Ensure agility in public access to veterinary medicine.

By 2020 the Council has established multiple mechanisms to actively monitor and engage broad-based dialogue on the changing components of the practice and delivery of safe

veterinary medicine. This discussion incorporates the views of practice owners, species groups, industry, and regulatory medicine.

Technology is at the forefront of this dialogue and the College understands and incorporates changes to delivery modes and treatment techniques in all policy considerations.

Current and future access to safe veterinary care by the public is key to balancing debates on agile systems and a need for standard setting.

Progress

Beyond the traditional methods of engaging with the veterinary community to understand the current and emerging issues in practice, the College has been intentional about broadening its outreach over the past three years. A new Practice Advisory Panel has been established with 12 members representing the breadth of practice and facility ownership. This Panel, which meets three times per year to provide the Council advice on a variety of policy and communications matters, has been very effective in ensuring that our work is relevant, practical and clear. Summary reports can be found on the College website. Outreach efforts have also included the pharmaceutical industry, branches of provincial and federal government, distributors, species associations and of course, the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association. The College enjoys strong relationships that assist with supporting standard setting that mitigate risks in practice and protects the public.

The College is viewed internationally as a leader in innovation in relation to veterinary practice. Telemedicine continues to evolve as do the College rules to assure agility. The College leads an international Innovation and Technology Advisory Group that meets three times per year to explore and consider the next frontier of veterinary medicine. These discussions continue to inform and advance our work.

Objective 5

Champion One Health initiatives through veterinary leadership.

By 2020 the Council has continued to demonstrate its role in stewardship by leading One Health activities that intersect veterinary medicine and human health.

The College is viewed as a contributor and partner at One Health tables, including the promotion of relevant supports and resources to veterinarians and the public.

The College is regularly sought for its opinion on emerging issues related to animal welfare, public health and veterinary medicine.

Progress

Over the course of this strategic plan, Council has continued to place One Health issues as a priority. After completing a second Growing Forward funded project focussed on antimicrobial

stewardship, the College embraced support of federal initiatives to strengthen veterinary oversight of antibiotic prescribing. Numerous articles, podcasts, and visual resources have been produced to support veterinarians in this animal and public health role. Further, the College worked with producer groups to assure solutions were found for situations such as dispensing to rural farms, VCPR protocols with bee producers, and access to appropriate services for urban farmers.

To enhance our reach, the College began hiring a Master of Public Health student each summer to research and develop articles on animal health and welfare, and on One Health. These materials support our public newsletter in particular.

Importantly, the Council set its first three year animal welfare agenda. This produced work in the area of the humane handling and restraint of animals by veterinarians, a revised position on pain management, and advice to the Ministry of the Solicitor General on new animal welfare legislation (PAWS Act).

Finally, the College collaborated with the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association and the Ontario Veterinary College to host an inaugural Future of Veterinary Medicine Symposium attended by close to 100 veterinarians and industry partners. This exciting two day session will culminate in a report and leadership action plan.