



THE COLLEGE OF  
VETERINARIANS  
OF ONTARIO

## SPEAKING FRANKLY

### *A Report on the Public Advisory Panel*

October 2020

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#### BACKGROUND

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

- to provide early advice to the College on emerging policy matters
- to provide feedback on the clarity of draft policy to the general public
- to provide input on the public communication strategy
- to identify emerging trends related to the animals, animal care and public perspective

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

This report summarizes key areas highlighted by the panel and outlines opportunities for Council consideration.

A teleconference meeting of the Public Advisory Panel was held on October 23, 2020.

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#### KEY AREAS

(A) Use of Non-Conventional Therapies in the Practice of Veterinary Medicine

- Proposed statement is clear
- Suggested addition of a statement that veterinarians need to adhere to science/evidence
- Difference between veterinary and non-veterinary providers of non-conventional therapies and the level of accountability associated with each

(B) Caveat Emptor – Lines and Boundaries in Accessing Animal Care

- Potential for the College to develop public resources
- Public wants choice but also accountability
- Public assumes all activities/products have oversight
- Public does not know what it does not know
- Potential for veterinarians to help communicate risks
- Need to avoid perception of professional self-interest

(C) Pros and Cons of Being a Panel Member

- Mostly benefits
- Suits the concept of One Health
- Enjoyed appearing before Council
- Workload was manageable, less than expected
- Felt College used feedback received

(D) Trends or Issues to Raise for Consideration

- Public interest in zoonotic diseases
- Public interest in self-governance and regulation
- The continuing importance of animal welfare
- Shortage of medication and supplies and potential disruptions to public access
- Public concern about veterinary well-being and work-life balance related to emergencies and practising in the new normal

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**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.