



SPEAKING FRANKLY

A Report on the Public Advisory Panel

May 2019

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 May 22, 2019.

KEY AREAS

(A) Complementary and Alternative Medicine – How Might You Define it?

- Area of change and consideration for all health professions
- Many therapies listed in the current position statement are now considered mainstream (i.e. chiropractic, rehabilitation, and massage)
- There are also many available alternative therapies outside those listed in the position statement (i.e. naturopathy, homeopathy, oils, etc.)
- The public will seek out alternative therapies without first consulting a veterinarian
- Suggestion that there may be value in the College outlining the knowledge required to properly offer alternative therapies, as well as providing clarification on oversight, efficacy and risk
- Need for more clarity in the referral process
- Important to still take a hardline on areas of known high risk
- May be beneficial for the position statement to move towards an integrative therapy approach

(B) Travelling Council Meetings – Ideas on How Best to Engage with the Public?

- Travelling meetings are a good idea, especially for transparency
- Potential to reach out to local professional, commodity, and interest groups to garner more interest
- Importance of providing clarity on type of topics to be discussed
- Suggestion that advertising include the College's mandate to reflect its public interest priority
- Potential to livestream to reach a larger audience

(C) What Would the Public Like to Understand About Veterinary Fees?

- Clarity on what goes into setting a fee and that the College does not set fees
- Clarity on the costs of drugs (i.e. fees associated with administration, prescribing, dispensing, etc.)
- Reasoning behind inconsistency of fees across the province
- Understanding the cost and value of veterinary care
- More transparency on the services and products that are provided, and costs related to referring
- More transparency related to costs before services are rendered

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.