



## **AGENDA ITEM 6.4**

### **TOPIC: Mandatory Quality Assurance Program**

#### **Overview**

The College is proposing the development of regulation language related to a mandatory quality assurance program as permitted by Sections 32-34 and 93 (1) 34 of the *Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024*.

#### **Relevant Sections**

An overview of the relevant sections of legislation, regulation, by-law, and policy related to quality assurance programs (both current and future) has been attached to this cover sheet as Appendix “A”.

#### **History of College Work Related to Quality Assurance**

##### **Current Framework**

The College’s quality assurance program ensures the ongoing quality and safety of veterinary medicine in the province, to mitigate risks to the public, and to instill public confidence in veterinary medicine and regulation of the profession.

The College’s current quality assurance program is voluntary.

The College’s Quality Assurance Committee is established under Sections 9 (1) 9 and 10 (2) of the *Veterinarians Act* which permit Legacy Council to establish and appoint such other committees as it considers necessary through By-Law.

Section 13.01 (2) of the College’s By-Laws provide further detail related to the Quality Assurance Program including their responsibility to research, develop, review, and make recommendations to Legacy Council respecting matters of quality assurance programs for licensed members, including continuing education, professional development, practice review, and peer-review programs.

Legacy Council then reviews these recommendations and determines when and how to implement them. This has included the peer advisory conversation and the peer review of medical records.

##### **Inclusion in Legislative Reform**

The College’s 2018 Concept Paper entitled “Achieving a Modern Approach to the Regulation of Veterinary Medicine” contained several recommendations related to the creation of a mandatory



quality assurance program for all licensed members in Ontario. These recommendations were made in recognition of the importance of continuing competence for professionals and in reflection of quality assurance being a demonstrated effective regulatory tool to ensuring ongoing quality and safety within veterinary practice.

These recommendations were made after several rounds of consideration and conversation amongst both the College's Working Groups and Legacy Council, including extensive background research and two rounds of public consultation.

### **Inclusion in the *Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024***

The *Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024* reflected these recommendations and created the framework for the installment of a mandatory quality assurance program. This included:

- Recognition of the Quality Assurance Committee as a statutory committee;
- Inclusion of statutory wording related to a quality assurance program including the ability to establish a program that requires members to participate in:
  - continuing education or professional development that,
    - Promotes continuing competence and continuing quality improvement;
    - Addresses changes in practice environments; and
    - Incorporates standards of practice, advances in technology, changes made to entry to practice competencies and other relevant issues;
  - Self, peer, and practice assessments;
  - Mechanisms for the College to monitor members' participation in, and compliance with, the quality assurance program; and
  - Such additional components that the College determines would be useful in furthering the aims of the quality assurance program.

This wording provides a strong basis for the program, and the Transition Council is now in the position to develop a proposed regulatory concept related to a mandatory quality assurance program that builds off this framework.

### **What Would This Look Like?**

Both veterinarian and veterinary technician members would be required to participate in the mandatory quality assurance program. Members would not be required to complete all aspects of the program every year. Frequency of requirements would be determined by the Quality Assurance Committee and would be clearly outlined in College Policy.



## Proposed Recommendations Related to Mandatory Quality Assurance

Within a regulatory concept related to a mandatory quality assurance program it is proposed that the following two (2) recommendations be incorporated. Each of these recommendations has been developed based on extensive research and conversation including advice obtained from the College's legal team.

### Definitions

It is proposed that a regulatory concept related to a mandatory quality assurance program contain several definitions designed to assist with clarity around the program, its oversight, and its application. This includes:

**Assessor:** Assessor means a person appointed by the Committee under Section 33 of the Act for the purpose of the quality assurance program.

**Program:** Program means the quality assurance program authorized by Section 32 of the Act.

**Stratified Random Sampling:** Stratified Random Sampling means a sampling where groups of members are:

- (a) Removed from the pools of members to be sampled, or
- (b) Weighted to increase or decrease the likelihood of their being selected.

### Outlining Different Aspects of the Program

It is proposed that a regulatory concept related to a mandatory quality assurance program contain language designed to provide additional details related to the program in the following areas:

#### *Assessors*

To outline that the Quality Assurance Committee may appoint assessors for the purpose of the program with knowledge and experience in the practice of the profession, quality assurance activities, investigation or assessment techniques, or the public interest.

#### *Continued Professional Development*

To outline that every member shall participate in continuing professional development activities, and maintain a portfolio of such activities, in the form and manner specified by the Quality Assurance Committee.



### *Self-Assessments*

To outline that every member shall participate in self-assessment activities, and keep records of such activities, in the form and manner specified by the Quality Assurance Committee.

### *Peer and Practice Assessments*

To outline that a member is required to undergo a peer or practice assessment, or both, if:

- The member's name is selected at random, including by stratified random sampling;
- The member has been referred by the Quality Assurance Committee; or
- If the member is selected on the basis of criteria specified and published by the Committee at least three months before the member is selected.

## **Discussion**

These recommendations are now being presented to Transition Council for its review and discussion related to next steps. To aid in this discussion, Transition Council is encouraged to consider the following questions:

- Is there anything unclear or missing in these proposed recommendations?
- Do the proposed recommendations seem logical?
- Do the proposed recommendations raise any concerns?
- Do the proposed recommendations raise any thoughts or considerations related to unintended consequences?

## **Options**

Following discussion, Transition Council may elect to:

1. Direct that the recommendations be approved for public consultation as presented or amended; or
2. Direct that the recommendations be returned to College staff for further review and development; or
3. Other.

## **Attachments**

1. Appendix A - Relevant Legislation, Regulation, By-Law and Policy Sections – Mandatory Quality Assurance Program
2. Appendix B - Draft Concept – Mandatory Quality Assurance Program (for reference).

## Mandatory Quality Assurance Program

### Relevant Sections of Legislation, Regulation, By-Law, and Policy

#### **Current Framework Under the *Veterinarians Act***

“by-laws” means the by-laws made under this Act;

**3** (1) The principal object of the College is to regulate the practice of veterinary medicine and to govern its members in accordance with this Act, the regulations and the by-laws in order that the public interest may be served and protected.

#### **Idem**

(2) For the purpose of carrying out its principal object, the College has the following additional objects:

1. To establish, maintain and develop standards of knowledge and skill among its members.
2. To establish, maintain and develop standards of qualification and standards of practice for the practice of veterinary medicine.
3. To establish, maintain and develop standards of professional ethics among its members.
4. To promote public awareness of the role of the College.
5. To perform such other duties and exercise such other powers as are imposed or conferred on the College under any Act.

**9** (1) The Council may pass by-laws relating to the administrative and domestic affairs of the College not inconsistent with this Act and the regulations and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may pass by-laws respecting the following matters:

9. Providing for the appointment, composition, powers, duties and quorums of additional or special committees.

(continues on next page)

## Current Framework in College Policy

The College has an existing policy document related to Quality Practice Program:

[Position Statement: Quality Practice Program](#)

[By-Laws College of Veterinarians of Ontario](#)

### 13.01 – Quality Assurance Committee

(2) The Quality Assurance Committee shall research, develop, review, and make recommendations to the council respecting matters of quality assurance programs for Licensed Members, including

- (i) continuing education,
- (ii) professional development,
- (iii) practice review, and
- (iv) peer-review.

### Future Framework under the *Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024*

**32** A quality assurance program established by the regulations shall be aimed at assuring the quality of the practice of the members and promoting continuing evaluation, competence and quality improvement among the members and the regulations establishing the quality assurance program shall prescribe,

- (a) continuing education or professional development that,
  - (i) promotes continuing competence and continuing quality improvement among members,
  - (ii) addresses changes in practice environments, and
  - (iii) incorporates standards of practice, advances in technology, changes made to entry to practice competencies and other relevant issues in the discretion of the Council;
- (b) self, peer and practice assessments;
- (c) mechanisms for the College to monitor members' participation in, and compliance with, the quality assurance program; and
- (d) such additional components that the College determines would be useful in furthering the aims of the quality assurance program.

Quality Assurance Committee

Function of the Committee

**33** (1) The Quality Assurance Committee shall administer the quality assurance program in accordance with the Act and the by-laws.

Powers of the Committee

(2) The Quality Assurance Committee may do one or more of the following:

1. Require individual members whose knowledge, skill and judgment have been assessed under section 34 and found to be unsatisfactory to participate in specified continuing education or remediation programs.
2. Direct the Registrar to impose terms, conditions or limitations for a specified period to be determined by the Committee on the licence of a member,
  - i. whose knowledge, skill and judgment have been assessed under section 34 and have been found to be unsatisfactory, or
  - ii. who has been directed to participate in specified continuing education or remediation programs as required by the Committee under paragraph 1 and has not completed those programs successfully.
3. Direct the Registrar to remove terms, conditions or limitations before the end of the specified period referred to in paragraph 2, if the Committee is satisfied that the licensee's knowledge, skill and judgment are now satisfactory.
4. If the Quality Assurance Committee is of the opinion that a member may have committed an act of professional misconduct or be incompetent or that the member's fitness to practise may be impaired, refer the matter to the Investigations and Resolutions Committee and disclose the name of the member and allegations against the member to the Investigations and Resolutions Committee.
5. Appoint assessors, with such qualifications as may be prescribed, for the purposes of the quality assurance program.

Notice

(3) The Quality Assurance Committee shall deliver notice to the member if the Committee refers a matter to the Investigations and Resolutions Committee under paragraph 4 of subsection (2).

Notice

(4) No direction shall be given to the Registrar under paragraph 2 of subsection (2) unless the member has received notice of the Quality Assurance Committee's intention to give such direction and is given at least 14 days to make written submissions to the Committee.

Written submissions

(5) The Quality Assurance Committee shall consider any written submissions received in accordance with subsection (4) before giving a direction to the Registrar.

Compliance with Quality Assurance

Co-operation by members

**34** (1) Every member shall co-operate with the Quality Assurance Committee and with any assessor and shall,

- (a) permit the assessor to enter and inspect the veterinary facility where the member practises;
- (b) produce, at the request of the Committee or assessor, any records in respect of the member's practice of veterinary medicine and permit the assessor to inspect such records;
- (c) deliver to the Committee or assessor the information or records in respect of the member's practice of veterinary medicine the Committee or assessor requests in the form the Committee or assessor specifies;
- (d) confer with the Committee or assessor if requested to do so by either of them; and
- (e) participate in a program designed to assess the knowledge, skill and judgment of the member, if requested to do so by the Committee.

Inspection of premises

(2) Every person who controls a veterinary facility where a member practises, other than a private dwelling, shall allow an assessor to enter and inspect the veterinary facility.

Inspection of records

(3) Every person who controls records relating to a member's care of animals shall allow an assessor or the Committee to inspect the records.

Exception

(4) Subsection (3) does not require an animal's owner or the owner's representative to allow an assessor or the Committee to inspect records relating to the animal's care.

**93** (1) Subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the Council may make regulations,

34. establishing and governing a quality assurance program for the purposes of section 32 and setting out qualifications for assessors appointed as part of a program;



## Concept Chart - Quality Assurance

Section	Main Objectives	Primary Concepts	Additional Information	Transition Comments	Intended Outcomes
<p>This column outlines the specific section of regulation.</p>	<p>This column provides an overview of the College’s main objectives for the section of regulation.</p>	<p>This column provides a more in-depth description of the objectives sought and the associated reasoning.</p>	<p>This column provides any additional specific information required to ensure clarity.</p>	<p>This column highlights any relevant transition matters requiring consideration.</p>	<p>This column outlines the College’s intended outcomes for the specific section.</p>
<p><b>Quality Assurance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the structure outlined in the <i>Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024</i>.</li> <li>Outline definitions relevant to the program.</li> <li>Provide an outline of the different components of the program.</li> </ul>	<p><b>General</b></p> <p>The College is proposing the development of regulatory language related to the mandatory quality assurance program established under Sections 32-34 and 93 (1) 34 of the <i>Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024</i>.</p> <p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Mandatory quality assurance is an effective regulatory tool to ensure the ongoing quality and safety of professionals in practice and to support them in maintaining competency throughout their careers. A mandatory quality assurance program allows for the College to collaborate with members to assess those areas where development of additional knowledge, skills, and judgement may be appropriate, and assure both the public and the profession that members are practising in a manner consistent with the College’s standards of practice. A mandatory</p>	<p>Members would not be required to complete all aspects of the mandatory quality assurance program every year. Frequency of requirements would be determined by the Quality Assurance Committee and would be clearly outlined in College Policy.</p>	<p>The College can currently collect information related to quality assurance and continuing professional development under the <i>Veterinarians Act</i> but has not been able to require its completion. The <i>Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024</i> allows for the College to implement a mandatory program.</p>	<p>Installment of a regulatory framework that provides clear expectations and promotes safe and current practice of veterinary medicine in Ontario.</p>

Section	Main Objectives	Primary Concepts	Additional Information	Transition Comments	Intended Outcomes
		<p>quality assurance program also provides a positive learning experience for members and be a useful tool to allow for the College to identify and provide support and resources to areas where data demonstrates higher risks of harm or potential harm to both animals and the public.</p> <p><b>Definitions</b></p> <p>The College is proposing that regulation language contain several definitions designed to assist with clarity around the mandatory quality assurance program, its oversight, and its application. This includes the definitions of assessor, program, and stratified random sampling.</p> <p><b>Outlining Different Aspects of the Program</b></p> <p>The College is proposing that regulation language be developed that provides additional details related to the mandatory quality assurance program in the following areas:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Assessors</i></p> <p>To outline that the Quality Assurance Committee may appoint assessors for the purposes of the program with knowledge and experience in the practice of the profession, quality</p>			

Section	Main Objectives	Primary Concepts	Additional Information	Transition Comments	Intended Outcomes
		<p>assurance activities, investigation or assessment techniques, or the public interest.</p> <p><i>Continued Professional Development</i></p> <p>To outline that every member shall participate in continuing professional development activities, and maintain a portfolio of such activities, in the form and manner specified by the Quality Assurance Committee.</p> <p><i>Self-Assessments</i></p> <p>To outline that every member shall participate in self-assessment activities, and keep records of such activities, in the form and manner specified by the Quality Assurance Committee.</p> <p><i>Peer and Practice Assessments</i></p> <p>To outline that a member is required to undergo a peer or practice assessment, or both, if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The member’s name is selected at random, including by stratified random sampling;</li> <li>• The member has been referred by the Quality Assurance Committee; or</li> </ul>			

Section	Main Objectives	Primary Concepts	Additional Information	Transition Comments	Intended Outcomes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the member is selected on the basis of criteria specified and published by the Committee at least three months before the member is selected.</li> </ul>			