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THE COLLEGE OF  
VETERINARIANS  
OF ONTARIO

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## **SPEAKING FRANKLY**

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

March 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 March 11, 2020.

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#### **KEY AREAS**

(A) Feedback on New Website Platform

- Website is appealing, contains great information, and is easy to navigate
- Difficulties in using the “find a veterinarian” search engine
- Podcasts and videos are useful, entertaining, and informative
- Desire for more information related to current hearings
- Interest in expanded search options for “find a veterinarian”

(B) What Does the Public Want to Know about Cannabis and Animal Care?

- The College's material on this topic offers clear and useful information
- Importance of having messaging that speaks to safety and efficacy
- Pressure from animal owners to have more information and guidance
- Difference between prescribing and offering advice
- Signs of accidental consumption by an animal
- Highlighting the importance of professional advice and accountability

(C) Modernizing the *Veterinarians Act* and Regulations – What Should the College Consider?

- Desire to see interprovincial alignment on topics such as animal welfare, animal abuse, and cosmetic surgery
- Importance of sound rationale for procedures and positions
- Importance of moving towards modernization to ensure increased clarity and transparency
- Need for legislation to be reflective of today's issues and emerging treatment options
- Need to recognize ancillary services and animal health technicians

(D) Trends or Issues to Raise for Consideration

- Coronavirus
- One Health
- Zoonotic diseases
- Ongoing availability and potential shortage of veterinary drugs
- Telehealth

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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.