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Snapshot of the Profession

5,700+ licensed veterinarians **1,750+** accredited veterinary practices*

*The new accreditation model no longer includes facility types. An accredited practice may include multiple veterinary facilities, including mobiles.

For more data about the veterinary profession and facilities, please visit the 2024 Supplementary Data Report.



Welcome

A close-up photograph of a male veterinarian with a well-groomed brown beard and mustache. He is wearing a dark blue short-sleeved scrub top and bright blue nitrile gloves. He is holding a large snake with a patterned brown and tan skin. The background is a blurred clinical setting with light-colored walls and a window.

Our 2024 Annual Report provides an overview of our focus, priorities and accomplishments in the past year. It's a historic time as the College embraces its new legislation and its evolution into the College of Veterinary Professionals of Ontario!

The College of Veterinarians of Ontario regulates the practice of veterinary medicine in Ontario. We serve the public by understanding the risks involved in the practice of veterinary medicine and working with our partners to reduce the potential for harm to animals and people. We welcome the opportunity to help you understand the role of the College.

What we do

Licensure: Veterinarians are required to meet licensure requirements and practise competently. Our Public Register helps the public make informed choices about veterinary care.

Accreditation: Veterinary facilities are inspected and accredited to ensure they contain equipment needed for patient care.

Quality: Veterinarians are encouraged to engage in ongoing quality improvement and to demonstrate professionalism throughout their careers.

Standards: The College sets standards that support the public's access to safe, quality veterinary medicine. We demonstrate compassion and provide exceptional customer service.

Investigations: The College addresses concerns or complaints about the conduct of veterinarians.

Vision

Public confidence in veterinary regulation.

Our principles

We strive to be: Transparent • Reliable • Relevant • Independent
• Compassionate • Inclusive • Accountable

History in the making



2024 – what a year! And what a roller coaster!

With the strong leadership of the Ontario government, the *Veterinary Professionals Act* received Royal Assent on June 6. While 12-plus years in the making, the legislation took only 12 weeks to pass through the various phases of the legislative process. This fast-paced period was intense, and exciting; it was also testament to all of the good work done in preparation.

It has been incredibly rewarding to work with our many partners along this journey. With over 30 organizations actively engaged in shaping the outcome, we have spent much time conversing across the industry, confirming our understanding, building consensus, and cementing a common vision for the future. In particular, we are grateful for our open and collegial relationships with the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association and the Ontario Association for Veterinary Technicians.

As with all change management initiatives, we are in the middle of a transition as we complete the work of the *Veterinarians Act* and develop the supporting regulations and by-laws for the new *Veterinary Professionals Act*.

Pictured: Dr. Wade Wright, President
Jan Robinson, Registrar and Chief Executive Officer



As tennis great Arthur Ashe said “Success is in the journey not the destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome”.

To that end, we now have two Councils, a Legacy Council and a Transition Council, focused on delivering on their specific mandates with the public interest at the centre of their decisions.

This opportunity to create and implement a new piece of legislation that sets the stage for the future of the veterinary profession is a rare privilege. Our new foundation of “one profession, two professionals” aims to provide the public and their animals with a modern approach to quality and safety in animal health care. We have a rich history on which to build — almost 150 years worth! Shaping our next regulatory “guide book” is a task the College is handling with great care.

Over the next 18 months or so, we will move toward full proclamation of the *Veterinary Professionals Act*. Broad consultations will be prominent during this time and we look forward to continuing to use all voices to make great decisions on behalf of the public and the profession. We welcome the collective desire to get this right.

2024 has been a special year. Thank you to everyone as we celebrate every milestone along the way.

Foundation

Towards modernization

Moving towards the College of Veterinary Professionals of Ontario

The College welcomes its new legislation, the *Veterinary Professionals Act*, which received Royal Assent in the Ontario legislature on June 6, 2024. The new framework modernizes the regulation of the veterinary profession in Ontario. The *Veterinary Professionals Act* represents the biggest update to the regulation of veterinary medicine in Ontario in over 30 years.

The *Veterinary Professionals Act* includes:

- Team-based care
- Licensed veterinary technicians
- Authorized activities
- Formal quality assurance
- Modern governance

Transition Council established

As outlined in the new Act, the Transition Council has been appointed to support the development of the College of Veterinary Professionals of Ontario (CVPO).

The *Veterinary Professionals Act* provides the Transition Council with the ability to propose regulations, and develop by-laws and standards that will come into effect with the establishment of the CVPO. The Transition Council includes 13 licensed veterinarians and five public member positions, all of whom are members of the CVO Legacy Council, and three Registered Veterinary Technicians, appointed by the Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians.

Further information: cvo.org/modernization





Strategy 2026

Championing reform has been the primary focus throughout 2024, however, work continues on all strategic priorities. The College is moving through the second year of Strategy 2026.

Championing legislative reform to affirm an agile future

The *Veterinary Professionals Act* provides a modern framework to the regulation of the veterinary profession in Ontario. The College, along with the Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians (OAVT) and the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association (OVMA), worked collaboratively on modernization to strengthen public protection and more accurately reflect current veterinary practice.

The *Veterinary Professionals Act* is the most significant update to the regulation of veterinary medicine in over 30 years.

The new legislation:

- Includes veterinary technicians as licensed members
- Introduces an authorized activity model that outlines what activities constitute the practice of veterinary medicine and who is permitted to perform them
- Maintains veterinarians' primary responsibility for the oversight of the practice of veterinary medicine
- Recognizes non-veterinary animal care providers
- Enhances governance
- Develops a formal quality assurance program
- Streamlines the complaints and resolutions process

Supporting the Transition Council: The College supports the work of the Transition Council and the Legacy Council. The Transition Council is focused on proposing regulatory concepts, and drafting by-laws and standards to support the College of Veterinary Professionals of Ontario. The Legacy Council tends to member matters and the operations of the College.

Accreditation standards for veterinary facilities in Ontario: This year, the College introduced a new accreditation model and implemented new standards for veterinary facilities. The new standards are flexible to the various ways veterinary services are provided across Ontario. This new approach moves away from a one-size-fits-all approach to a model that adapts to the evolving nature of veterinary practice in Ontario. The new standards effectively mitigate risks that are relevant to each facility's services. Since the change, the College has noted an increase in new practices and received a positive response from facility directors. The accreditation model and standards were approved by Council and launched October 1, 2023.

The Accreditation Committee regularly reviews the accreditation standards to ensure they remain up to date and reflect veterinary practice.

This review and revision of the accreditation standards will include incorporating principles of diversity, equity and inclusion.



Mitigate risk

Partnering for improved access to veterinary services

Access to veterinary services is central to animal health and welfare. An increase in public demand for veterinary services and a shift in working hours have contributed to challenges impacting access to veterinary services across North America.

Limited licensure: In collaboration with the other veterinary regulators across Canada, the College has been developing new competency assessment tools that will allow experienced internationally educated veterinarians to seek a limited licence in equine, production animal, or companion animal practice. This new licensure pathway, once approved, will assist in qualifying more veterinarians more quickly. These individuals will receive general licences with limitations enabling them to practise in those areas where they have demonstrated competencies. The tools have been developed and are currently being piloted by candidates and assessors in Ontario and Alberta. Tools are being tested for validity, reliability, and defensibility, and that they ensure

the College is maintaining its essential duties related to public protection. We look forward to receiving the evaluation report to determine if these tools are suitable as a new pathway to licensure in Ontario.

Team-based care: The College is working with our partners to share opportunities that will strengthen teamwork between veterinarians and veterinary technicians, under the *Veterinary Professionals Act*. Several communications have been published with a focus on team-based care. The College is attentive to leadership and partnership opportunities to influence discussions and actions around team-based care.

Balancing available health care options and client access to veterinary care: In 2023, the College Council approved its position on balancing access to veterinary care with options. Council's position is that veterinarians consider available care options along a spectrum that requires the veterinarian and the client to weigh various factors to determine the appropriate course of action in every case. The choices along a spectrum will vary depending upon circumstances and may include end-of-life decisions. Council supports and encourages all veterinarians to determine, with their clients, the appropriate care options for each

presenting case. This year, the College shared communications, including articles, a town hall, and a podcast, to reinforce the value in practising along a spectrum of care and also to emphasize that the College does not require or expect a gold standard of care.

Language skills evaluation project: A project is underway to set new language benchmarks for veterinary medicine in Ontario so the College can meet its legislated requirements under the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act* related to language proficiency testing.

Jurisprudence exam: The College completed revision of the Jurisprudence Exam, guided by an Advisory Group supporting the continuous improvement of the exam. A revised version of the exam was introduced in July 2024. The College also began offering the jurisprudence exam in specific testing windows in the spring of 2024. The move to exam windows enables the College to find a balance with offering the exam regularly, while ensuring the exam remains current and relevant. With the introduction of exam windows, the exam re-attempt policy was revised; applicants are permitted one exam attempt in a single exam window.

Advancement

Creating space for innovation and technology

The future of veterinary medicine in Ontario is dependent on understanding, appreciating, and supporting innovation and emerging technology. The College has a long history of embracing technology and ensuring new approaches are encouraged in a safe environment.

Embracing innovation and the digital age in veterinary medicine:

In March, the College Council approved a position statement on embracing innovation and the digital age in veterinary medicine. In this age of innovation, where the advancement of technology and the emphasis on precision medicine are at the forefront, the Council takes a principled approach to determining the risks of digital innovation in veterinary practice. The Council encourages innovation and urges the profession to be attentive to data privacy; potential biases which may exist in the analysis of data; prelaunch testing when making use of new tools; and the explainability of the outcomes produced by the tool. A guide for the profession to support the position is in development.

Innovation panel: The Ontario Veterinary Regulatory Innovation Panel continues to meet and is exploring initiatives to support the public's access to safe, quality veterinary care.

Regulatory sandboxes: The Ontario Veterinary Regulatory Sandbox is a Council initiative which supports problem-solving through innovative strategy. It permits the exemption of certain regulatory requirements to test new products, services or ways of practising veterinary medicine on a time limited basis and with appropriate safeguards for public protection. The regulatory sandbox provides an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of new models with consideration for future changes to regulations. Council has approved sandbox proposals which bring innovative approaches to the delivery of veterinary care throughout Ontario.



Promoting the importance of One Health

The College Council recognizes the importance of broader animal and human health initiatives within its strategic considerations. A One Health approach to public policy has been gaining momentum for several years; its importance for animals, humans and the environment is increasingly recognized in broader society. While the College must consider how veterinary regulation intersects with the broad array of issues that are constantly evolving, Council remains committed to its role as a convenor and influencer of discussion and action.

One Health promotional kit: A One Health Promotional Kit, an initiative of the One Health Working Group, was launched early in 2024 to help veterinary teams engage clients in One Health conversations. The kit includes posters and social media graphics to encourage companion animal clients to provide more relevant information about their health and environment in conversations with their veterinary teams. The kit is provided in conjunction with the OVMA and OAVT.

Farm family checklist: The health of farm families sparked development of a new and easy-to-use checklist that will improve conversations between family members and their health care team, which includes veterinarians. With information around animal exposure, zoonotic diseases, water sources and food supply, health care providers will have a broader awareness and understanding of the potential risks and be equipped to promote better health care for farm families. The checklist is available on the College website and is shared with the support of various partners in the agriculture industry.

Community vaccinator program: The College has been exploring work related to community vaccinator programs. A national guide on this topic is anticipated and will provide discussion consideration for next steps. Conversations are ongoing in this area.

Emergency preparedness: The College continues to forge a relationship with the Emergency Management Office to support understanding the role of the veterinary profession in declared emergencies, particularly those emergencies related to climate change.

Antimicrobial stewardship: The College remains attentive to its commitment to provide education on the role of veterinary teams in antimicrobial stewardship. While the federal government has had a Pan-Canadian plan for many years to address antimicrobial pharmaceutical use in animals, to protect people, animals and trade markets, its first plan was overshadowed by the global pandemic. The plan was refreshed in 2023 and is now having increased attention with an oversight Committee now being led by Animal Health Canada.

Council has approved a strategy for the College to use its position and influence to develop a specific strategy that will bring meaningful change to antimicrobial prescribing patterns by veterinarians in Ontario.

Focusing regulation on people and context

The College recognizes its trustworthiness is built on its competence, its honesty, and its reliability. Its impact, however, is built on its relationships. These relationships include recognizing veterinary well-being, compassion, and inclusivity. These are areas where the College continues to develop skills.

Ontario Collaborative for Well-Being in Veterinary Medicine:

The College has partnered with the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians, and the Ontario Veterinary College to form the Ontario Collaborative for Well-Being in Veterinary Medicine. The collaborative is developing and promoting an integrated approach to health and well-being for veterinary teams in Ontario.

The collaborative, established in 2022, is focused on:

- Increasing awareness and importance of mental health
- Breaking down the stigma around mental health in veterinary medicine
- Promoting access to training and skills development for veterinary teams in areas that support mental health in veterinary medicine
- Implementing joint initiatives that support the health and well-being of veterinary teams



People

Grief resources: The College continues to offer a supportive webinar for grieving pet owners. The College has engaged Homewood Health to provide a one-hour session to assist participants in navigating and processing their grief. The presentation aims to help participants understand the grief process, learn healthy ways to cope with the loss and start on a healing process, and includes question and answer time with a professional. The presentations are offered quarterly and are attended by 24 individuals, on average. Better managing grief will allow those that choose to file a complaint to better engage in the complaints process and deescalate the level of emotion that is sometimes present in these complaints.

Compassionate regulation: The College seeks opportunities to enhance its relationship with the public and its licensed members. This work includes exploring opportunities that create a more positive experience for our customers. A refreshed version of our Service Charter will be published soon.

IDEA action plan: In the second year of the College's action plan on inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility, we focused on training for Council, committee and staff. Topics explored have included anti-racism, micro-aggressions, unconscious bias, and allyship.

Navigator role: A number of strategies have been implemented over the last couple of years to

attempt to manage the volume of complaints at the College. One strategy that has been implemented is the Complaints Navigator role. Focused on customer service and evolving from our commitment to compassionate regulation, the navigator role communicates with all involved in the complaint to clarify the process and its potential outcomes, provide resources and set reasonable expectations.

Although the current complaints process is not optimal, by providing support to those involved with the process we can bring compassion to a challenging area for all involved. The role of the Navigator has now been implemented into our usual processes and divided between the Associates on our Investigations team.



Assuring impact



Impact Strategy Unit

The unit develops strategies to implement new or revised Council policies. In measuring impact, the unit reviews the goal of the policy, identifies methods for implementation, and sets an evaluation plan.

Areas moving through the outcomes-focused regulation framework:

- **Role of facility directors:** To assist facility directors in their role, various communication tools support their understanding of the new accreditation model. Tactics include a dedicated facility director newsletter, a guide to understanding the accreditation model, webinars, and sample inspection checklists.
- **Management of drugs:** This initiative endeavours to change behaviour on veterinary teams to improve drug management. The Lock Label Locate campaign was launched in November 2022 and has supported positive changes related to drug disposal and attentiveness to drug management. New informative podcasts focused on prescribing and dispensing have also been added and have been well-received.
- **Peer Review of Medical Records:** Medical records are central to safe quality medicine and provide the basis for the continuity of veterinary care. The Peer Review of Medical Records (PRMR) supports veterinarians in meeting the standards for medical record keeping that ensure optimal veterinary care can be continued. The annual aggregate report highlights opportunities for all veterinarians to enhance their record-keeping practices. The report incorporates the results from a participant survey and the scoring results from those practices who have completed the PRMR.

- **Establishing the Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR):** The VCPR is the foundation of effective clinical veterinary medicine and animal care. A new video, checklist and learning module have been developed to assist veterinary teams with clarity on the components of establishing a VCPR in day-to-day practice.
- **Evaluation of remedial undertakings:** This initiative analyzes the impact of remediation on improving a veterinarian's practice. Reports from 2020 and 2022 demonstrate the approach to remediation is working. Analysis on recent data continues.
- **Building a culture of safety:** A culture of safety supports the profession's ability to discuss mistakes and risks in practice and to learn from these events. Research and awareness continue.
- **Embracing humility in veterinary practice:** Research on cultural humility continues as part of our work on professionalism. The aim is to build understanding of cultural humility and establish an approach to professional conduct that supports antiracism, equity and allyship.



Relationships

Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Statements

To the Members, College of Veterinarians of Ontario

Opinion – The summary financial statements of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario, which comprise the summary statement of financial position as at September 30, 2024 and the summary statement of operations for the year then ended, are derived from the audited financial statements of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario for the year ended September 30, 2024.

In our opinion, these accompanying summary financial statements are a fair summary of the audited financial statements, in accordance with the criteria disclosed in the summary financial statements.

Summary financial statements – The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor’s report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario and the auditor’s report thereon.

The audited financial statements and our report thereon – We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the financial statements in our report dated December 4, 2024.

Management’s responsibilities for the summary financial statements – Management is responsible for the fair summarization of the audited financial statements in accordance with the criteria disclosed in the summary financial statements.

Auditor’s responsibility – Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are a fair summary of the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Canadian Auditing Standard (CAS) 810 “Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements”.

Guelph, Ontario
December 4, 2024

RLB
Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| ASSETS | | |
| Current | | |
| Cash | \$ 518,261 | \$ 225,493 |
| Investments | 4,623,338 | 5,464,018 |
| Accounts receivable | 61,202 | 13,640 |
| HST receivable | 180,954 | 45,525 |
| Prepaid expenses | <u>152,604</u> | <u>213,419</u> |
| | 5,536,359 | 5,962,095 |
| TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS | <u>\$ 1,566,032</u> | <u>\$ 1,768,603</u> |
| | <u>\$ 7,102,391</u> | <u>\$7,730,698</u> |
| LIABILITIES | | |
| Current | | |
| Accounts payable and accrued liabilities | <u>\$ 628,203</u> | <u>\$ 793,641</u> |
| NET ASSETS | | |
| INVESTED IN TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS | 1,566,032 | 1,768,603 |
| UNRESTRICTED | <u>4,908,156</u> | <u>5,168,454</u> |
| | <u>6,474,188</u> | <u>6,937,057</u> |
| | <u>\$ 7,102,391</u> | <u>\$ 7,730,698</u> |

Criteria Applied in the Preparation of the Summary Financial Statements

The criteria applied by management in the preparation of these summary financial statements are as follows:

- a) the information in the summarized financial statements is in agreement with the related information in the complete financial statements; and
- b) the summarized financial statements contain all the information necessary to avoid distorting or obscuring matters disclosed in the complete financial statements, including the notes therein.

Management determined that the statement of changes in net assets and the statement of cash flows do not provide additional useful information, and as such has not included them as part of the summary financial statements.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| REVENUES | | |
| Registration fees | \$ 6,112,665 | \$ 5,927,401 |
| Accreditation fees | 275,420 | 132,811 |
| Penalties and other | 245,393 | 101,269 |
| Interest income | 236,834 | 227,237 |
| Corporation fees | 193,124 | 193,900 |
| Application and examination fees | 125,876 | 127,189 |
| | <u>7,189,312</u> | <u>6,709,807</u> |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Salaries | \$ 3,544,978 | \$ 2,998,333 |
| Legal | 689,251 | 1,048,366 |
| Special projects | 632,626 | 201,553 |
| Office facilities | 511,579 | 460,693 |
| Council and committees | 465,763 | 473,284 |
| Information management system | 446,930 | 479,385 |
| Amortization | 202,571 | 185,960 |
| Interest and bank charges | 186,857 | 174,876 |
| Investigations and hearings | 157,551 | 170,928 |
| Insurance | 146,252 | 111,389 |
| Communication | 130,281 | 64,986 |
| Networking and representation | 127,520 | 111,918 |
| Quality assurance | 100,359 | 62,494 |
| Exam administration | 85,897 | 143,662 |
| Premises inspections | 82,937 | 71,606 |
| Office | 67,887 | 77,357 |
| Accounting and audit | 45,100 | 55,820 |
| Policy development | 14,447 | 196,367 |
| Professional health program | 13,395 | 27,298 |
| | <u>7,652,181</u> | <u>7,116,275</u> |
| (DEFICIT) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES for the year | (462,869) | (406,468) |
| NET ASSETS beginning of the year | <u>6,937,057</u> | <u>7,343,525</u> |
| NET ASSETS end of the year | <u>\$ 6,474,188</u> | <u>\$ 6,937,057</u> |



**Public confidence
in veterinary regulation.**

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For more information on the College and its Council, visit: CVO.org