



THE COLLEGE OF  
VETERINARIANS  
OF ONTARIO

## SPEAKING FRANKLY

### *A Report on the Public Community Reference Panel*

May 2022

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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 Community Reference Panel is the second iteration of this group which has now existed since 2017. The Public Community Reference 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 is intended to meet at least three times a year, once face-to-face with Council. Due to the pandemic, temporary amendments to this approach have been made.

This report summarizes key areas discussed by the panel at its most recent meeting in May 2022 and outlines opportunities for College consideration.

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#### KEY AREAS

##### (A) Collaborative Care

The College was looking to gain a better understanding of the public's perception of collaborative care. Comments from the Panel included:

- Open dialogue in any team is essential
- Accountability may be shared, but is traditionally with the veterinarian
- Collaboration allows for the inclusion of more technology and knowledge
- Defining the veterinary team is challenging
- Medical records are important when several care providers are on the care team
- Large animal practice often involves a team of care providers (examples: nutritionist, farriers)

## (B) After-hours Care

The College sought the Panel's feedback on their expectations for after-hours care and identify their perception on its provision. Comments from the Panel included:

- Access to emergency care is difficult to find
- Wait times at emergency clinics are often long
- Some clinics require an existing relationship before providing after-hours care
- Students, visitors to town, vacationers, all face difficulty with access to care
- Telemedicine can determine what is most urgent, but cannot solve all emergencies
- There is a potential for RVTs to have a bigger role in providing emergency care
- Labour shortages are a problem for many clinics
- The pandemic has made providing after-hours care more difficult

## (C) Strategic Planning

The College asked Panel members to share ideas and suggestions for the future of College Council planning as it begins preparing for Strategy 2026. Comments from the Panel included:

- Utilization of staff in new ways
- Challenge of attracting new veterinarians
- Veterinary staff welfare including mental wellness
- One Health
- Empowering clients to be engaged
- Role of veterinarians in disease prevention and management
- Connection between the veterinary medicine community and the public health community
- The use of technology in veterinary medicine

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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.