



SPEAKING FRANKLY

A Report on the Veterinary Practice Community Reference Panel

September 2021

BACKGROUND

As a component of its Strategy 2020 objectives, the Council of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario formed a veterinary practice advisory panel to assist with its work. The Veterinary Practice Community Reference Panel is the second iteration of this group which has now existed since 2017. The Veterinary Practice Community Reference Panel's specific mandate includes:

- to provide early advice to the College on emerging policy matters
- to provide feedback on the implementation of draft policy
- to provide input on the communication strategy with the veterinary community
- to assist in the identification of risk areas in practice
- to identify emerging trends and challenges in practice

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 highlighted by the panel at its most recent meeting, and outlines opportunities for College consideration.

This teleconference meeting of the Veterinary Practice Advisory Panel was held on September 16, 2021.

KEY AREAS

(A) Telemedicine

- Telemedicine is here to stay
- All professions are faced with questions related to virtual services
- Historical jurisdictional boundaries are no longer feasible
- Proposed revisions are realistic
- Clients will recognize quality of telemedicine services
- Telemedicine allows for care to be more accessible
- Veterinarians are overwhelmed; telemedicine helps relieve some pressure
- Concerns about unlicensed veterinarians offering services in Ontario
- Telemedicine is a benefit to the practice of veterinary medicine
- Need to educate clients on their different options

- Proposed approach is a step forward – but may still be behind the times

(B) Veterinary Wellness

What current wellness issues in the profession do you think the College should be paying attention to?

- Anxiety in new and recent graduates
- Enhanced pressures and vulnerability when entering practice
- Moral distress and compassion fatigue
- Diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging
- Intraprofessional judgement amongst veterinarians
- Overall veterinary team culture
- Difference between urban and rural practice
- Capacity issues
- Changing client expectations

What role do you think the College has in supporting veterinary wellness?

- Continue to offer current resources
- Handle wellness concerns in a non-disciplinary manner
- Increased resources related to veterinary wellness
- Highlighting College's learning modules as a tool for wellness
- Survey of veterinary practices to garner potential solutions
- More direct research on underlying causes

The feedback received from the panel on veterinary wellness has been provided to the Quality Assurance Committee.

Due to time constraints trends for consideration were earmarked for future discussion.

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.