

# INFO SHEET

# **Regulation of the Veterinary Profession in Ontario**

# **INTRODUCTION**

The College of Veterinarians of Ontario (CVO) regulates the practice of veterinary medicine in Ontario to protect the public interest. The CVO is not a school or university and is financed in full by the licence fees of veterinarians in Ontario. The CVO licenses veterinarians, inspects and accredits veterinary facilities and investigates complaints and concerns with veterinarians. The CVO also establishes and maintains standards of practice and disciplines veterinarians who are guilty of professional misconduct.

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#### **How the CVO works**

In Ontario, the Veterinarians Act, Regulation 1093 under the Act, the by-laws and the Minimum Standards for Veterinary Facilities in Ontario regulate the veterinary profession. The Veterinarians Act falls under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

The CVO has statutory committees, non-statutory committees and ad hoc committees appointed by council as required. Committees are comprised of council members, other veterinarians and members of the public, called public members. Public members are appointed by the provincial government and participate and vote in all decisions made by the CVO's council and committees. The statutory committees of council (executive, registration, complaints, discipline and accreditation) carry out the aims of the CVO as described in the Veterinarians Act.

The decisions made by the CVO's registration, accreditation and complaints committees can be appealed to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board. This is a provincial body, comprised of people not in the health professions, that reports to the legislative assembly through the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

### Council

This committee includes 13 veterinarians elected to council by their peers through regional elections. The committee also includes four public members. The council sets the strategic directions for the College, approves policy decisions, regulation and by-law amendments, examines issues identified by members of the CVO and the public and implements strategies such as striking task forces or ad hoc committees.

#### **Executive committee**

This committee proposes policy changes, makes recommendations to council, identifies the need for registrar's investigations and reviews recommendations from committees. It reviews the results of registrar's investigations and recommends appropriate resolution or disciplinary action. As well, the executive committee can order a Board of Inquiry when concerned that a veterinarian may be impaired.

# **Registration committee**

Under the Veterinarians Act, the registrar issues licences to applicants who meet the licensing requirements described in the regulation. These are not reviewed by the registration committee. Applicants whose applications do not meet the requirements of the regulation can seek exemptions and these are referred to the committee for review. The committee, when assessing applications for registration, maintains standards of entry level competence that ensures both public protection and equitable access to The committee is also the profession. responsible for the CVO local examination; administering and marking the exam are administrative functions performed by the registration co-ordinator.

# **Complaints committee**

Through this committee, the CVO investigates specific complaints about veterinarians related to the practice of veterinary medicine. complaints process begins with a written letter of complaint to the CVO. Staff review all new cases. Cases deemed suitable are selected for mediation and any mediated solutions are approved by the complaints committee. If the complaint is not mediated, the letter of complaint is forwarded to the veterinarian who must respond in writing to the CVO and send in all pertinent material. All material relevant to the complaint is forwarded to the complaints committee. The committee discusses the case and votes on a decision. The complaints committee does not have the jurisdiction to award money or damages.

## Discipline committee

The discipline committee may be directed by the executive or the complaints committee to conduct hearings to determine allegations of professional misconduct or serious neglect regarding a member or former member of the CVO. Panels of three to five members conduct these tribunals. Each panel must have at least one public member. Discipline hearings are generally open to the public. However, the discipline panel can direct that all or part of a hearing be held in camera to protect confidential matters.

#### **Accreditation committee**

The Minimum Standards for Veterinary Facilities in Ontario are established by the Council of the College under the authority of the Veterinarians Act, 1989.

Premises accreditation protects the public by providing an environment and essential equipment that meet defined standards for the animal patient's health care. A veterinarian is required to invest substantial time and resources to establish premises that meet the standards.

The registrar issues or renews a certificate of accreditation to members whose premises meet the standards required under the Veterinarians Act. The committee reviews requests for exemption from particular minimum standards by members. The accreditation committee, premises inspectors, CVO staff and practising veterinarians work together to maintain and enhance the quality of veterinary premises standards that exist in Ontario.

INFO SHEETs of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario provide veterinarians and the public with information about the governance of veterinarians in Ontario or contain practice parameters and standards that should be considered by all Ontario veterinarians in the care of their patients, dealings with their clients and the welfare of their staff.

It is important to note that these INFO SHEETs may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional activities have been maintained.

The College of Veterinarians of Ontario regulates veterinarians in Ontario in the public interest.