



## **Ensuring Professional Self-Regulation of Veterinary Medicine in ON**

The College of Veterinarians of Ontario is mandated to regulate the Ontario veterinary profession **in the public interest**. The College does this in place of the government; in other words, it is the College’s Council (comprising licensed, elected veterinarians and appointed members of the public)—and not the government—that must “**maintain and develop standards of knowledge and skill**” among its members (*Veterinarians Act*, sec. 3(2)).

Members must qualify for the licence to practice veterinary medicine, and entry-level requirements must be met as per the Act. On becoming licensed with the CVO, members have the right to practice veterinary medicine, but they also assume the responsibilities associated with this right—including the responsibility to **maintain competency**. Members must maintain and enhance their knowledge, skills, and judgment in order to uphold all standards of professional practice. In other words, they must engage in “Continuing Professional Development” or CPD.

In order to be accountable to the public in this regard, the CVO must monitor and report on the CPD of its members. The vast majority of veterinarians in Ontario do participate in significant amounts of CPD each year. Members already submit their CPD Summary Sheets to the College each year, noting their total hours of activity completed.

However, submitting hours is not enough. The CVO must also be able to **assess** the CPD activity undertaken to ensure that it meets acceptable standards of the profession. Therefore a CPD Cycle with tools that members employ to plan, track, and reflect on their ongoing educational experiences was developed—one that the College can **peer-review** in order to:

- (a) support members in their efforts to maintain current levels of and develop new knowledge and skills; and
- (b) assure the public that standards are being maintained.

The Quality Assurance Program of the CVO oversees the CPD Cycle Program. The steps involved will eventually include:

1. development of the CPD Cycle Tools in consultation with the membership (by survey, focus groups, and pilot projects);
2. drafting of regulations that outline the requirements of members to participate in and document their CPD;
3. requiring members to make annual declarations of compliance with the requirements; and
4. conducting random audits of members’ CPD documentation to verify and encourage participation in appropriate CPD activities.

The CVO will continue to work in partnership with members to develop programs as part of its legislated mission to protect the public interest and assure the competent and ethical practice of veterinary medicine in Ontario.