



PRESS RELEASE

The College of Veterinarians of Ontario and the Toronto Humane Society

Recent news stories about euthanasia practices at the Toronto Humane Society have led to many questions about the governance of that organization, and about the role of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario (CVO) in overseeing these practices.

The CVO is the regulatory body that governs the practice of veterinary medicine in the province of Ontario. It does this by licensing qualified veterinarians and regulating their professional practice, as well as by accrediting veterinary facilities that operate in Ontario. The CVO administers the *Veterinarians Act* and Regulation 1093 under that Act.

Regulation 1093 permits veterinarians to be employed by a humane society operated in accordance with the *Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*. In order to avoid a professional conflict of interest, there must be a written contract that gives the employed veterinarian responsibility for all decisions relating to the quality of his/her professional services and the health of the animals. Veterinarians working for a humane society must adhere to this regulation, or they may be investigated by the CVO for professional misconduct. Further, since the *OSPCA Act* was amended and proclaimed on March 1st, veterinarians must now report cases of suspected abuse or neglect to the OSPCA, which has its own authority to investigate as appropriate.

The CVO does not have jurisdiction over the Toronto Humane Society itself or any other OSPCA-affiliated facility, other than through the oversight of the individual veterinarians who work there. Where there is sufficient evidence to initiate an inquiry, the CVO will conduct an investigation into any allegations that a veterinarian has failed to meet the requirements of the profession, but until any such allegations are completely investigated by the CVO and unless referred to the Discipline Committee for a hearing, the confidentiality provisions of the *Veterinarians Act* prevent the CVO from providing further comment on the situation at the Toronto Humane Society.

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