



Press Release

Toronto Humane Society Veterinary Clinic

The College of Veterinarians of Ontario is the statutory body that regulates the practice of veterinary medicine in Ontario.

Part of the College's mandate is to accredit veterinary facilities in accordance with the Minimum Standards for Veterinary Facilities in Ontario. A copy of those standards can be found at

<http://www.cvo.org/uploadattachments/Minimumstandardsaugust2007.pdf>. A

sample inspection form can be found at

<http://www.cvo.org/pdfs/categories/CAH.pdf>. This form is sent to the facility prior to the inspection to assist them in complying with the requirements.

The normal accreditation period for a veterinary facility is five years. The purpose of inspecting and accrediting veterinary facilities is to ensure that the facilities meet the physical and documentary requirements set out in the Minimum Standards. The inspectors do not assess or investigate the medical care given to individual animals (if any) at the facility, nor do they assess the standards of practice of veterinary medicine. As is the case with all professions in Ontario, investigations based on these standards can only be undertaken where certain criteria are met, such as the existence of a formal complaint.

Some time ago, the College issued a certificate of accreditation to the Toronto Humane Society Veterinary Clinic on the basis that it complied with the physical and documentary requirements contained in the Minimum Standards. In the event that the College learns that any facility may no longer comply with the requirements under the *Veterinarians Act*, it initiates an investigation and, in appropriate cases, a hearing takes place to determine what if any action should be taken.

While the College regulates veterinary facilities and the practice of veterinary medicine, it is important to note that it does not regulate the proper care of animals in shelters, zoos or other animal facilities. Consequently, the inspection of the Toronto Humane Society Veterinary Clinic was, as is normal, restricted to the veterinary facility only. The College only accredits veterinary facilities where such facilities offer veterinary services to the public. Should any hearings take place regarding any such facility, or against a veterinarian who may have provided veterinary care, those hearings will be public subject to any order the Panel hearing the matter may make.

The College is required by law to investigate complaints that raise concerns about veterinary care or accredited facilities. However, it is important to note that unless a hearing before either the Discipline Committee or the Accreditation Committee of the College takes place, in the absence of the consent of the relevant person or facility the College is prevented by law from disclosing any information with respect to any investigation, complaints, or proceedings against veterinarians or facilities that have been accredited: see for reference sections 29, 31 and 38 of the *Veterinarians Act*.

The College appreciates that issues arise from time to time that generate public interest but the *Veterinarians Act* imposes significant restrictions on what information the College is permitted to disclose.

Any further inquiries should be addressed to Martin Fischer, Investigator/Practice Resource Officer, etc.