



AGENDA ITEM 11.1

TOPIC: Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) and Informed Client Consent (ICC)

Note on Approach

The following cover sheet combines the topics of the VCPR and of informed client consent into one agenda item for Transition Council's review and consideration. This approach is intentional and is designed to help facilitate a conversation based on consultation feedback as well as additional guidance (including legal advice) that the College has received since these regulatory concepts were publicly circulated.

In particular, the information contained in this cover sheet has been developed based on recognition of the inherent strength that exists in remaining with how member obligations prior to providing veterinary care (currently referred to as the VCPR and informed client consent) are currently outlined in Section 18 of Regulation 1093 of the *Veterinarians Act (VA)*.

Further, the information contained in this cover sheet highlights that the current detachment of the VCPR and informed client consent from after-hours veterinary care in the VA remains a highly advisable approach to be taken under the *Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024 (VPA)*. While these three concepts have often been interpreted as being intertwined, and in many cases end up directly connected within clinical practice settings, further research and consideration has shown that their continued regulatory separation is required to ensure that they remain enforceable in all circumstances.

Further information related to the regulatory concept on after-hours veterinary care including any advisable pivots in approach based on direction received on VCPR and informed client consent will be provided to Transition Council when the topic is presented for review and consideration in June 2025.

Given this, the information and examples contained in this cover sheet have been developed to reflect the updated guidance that the College has received related to the VCPR and informed client consent while also striving to maintain Transition Council's original intent and direction related to these topics whenever feasible.

History of Topics

General Information

Current Regulatory Framework

Section 18 of Regulation 1093 under the VA outlines the obligations that a member must meet before providing veterinary services to an animal(s) or group of animals.

18. (1) A member shall comply with the standards of practice of the profession in the performance of veterinary services. O. Reg. 233/15, s. 12.

(2) A member shall not provide veterinary services in respect of an animal unless the member has,

(a) been retained by the owner of the animal, an authorized representative of the owner or an individual who the member reasonably determines is acting in the interest of the animal;

(b) advised the client that the member will only provide services in accordance with the standards of practice of the profession;

(c) reached an agreement with the client as to the scope of the services to be provided by the member; and

(d) obtained the consent of the client for each service to be provided.

Within College Policy, subsection (2) (a) to (c) have been referred to as the VCPR. The College's *Professional Practice Standard: Establishing, Maintaining, and Discontinuing a VCPR* has provided the framework for these obligations since the 2000s and has included elements such as:

- The introduction of the term VCPR;
- The requirement for a VCPR to be established by a veterinarian;
- The requirement for a veterinarian to inform a client on how a VCPR will be maintained;
- The ability for a VCPR to be maintained by the veterinary team working through the veterinary facility where it was established; and
- How a VCPR is to be discontinued.

College Policy has also been employed to refer to subsection 2 (d) as informed client consent. The College's *Professional Practice Standard: Informed Client Consent* has outlined how to meet this obligation since the 2000s and has included elements such as:

- The need to obtain consent prior to providing a service or set of services;
- The need to provide comprehensive information to the client including differential or definitive diagnosis, risks and benefits, and other reasonable courses of action;
- The need to provide an estimated cost; and

- The importance of answering all client questions and ensuring understanding.

The *Professional Practice Standard: Informed Client Consent* is silent on whether a veterinarian can delegate the obtainment of informed client consent. This means that it is currently possible for an auxiliary (including a veterinary technician) to obtain informed client consent under a veterinarian's supervision and delegation.

Overall Approach Thus Far

The inclusion of veterinary technicians as members of the College of Veterinary Professionals of Ontario (CVPO) under the *Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024 (VPA)* presents the opportunity to more accurately reflect the one profession, two professionals model within the requirements related to the VCPR and informed client consent. Regulatory concepts related to these topics were developed based on this opportunity.

Legislative Framework

Current Framework

Section 18 (2) (a) to (c) of Regulation 1093 made under the *Veterinarians Act (VA)* requires veterinarians to form a professional relationship with a client and their animal(s) prior to providing a singular or group of veterinary services.

Section 18 (2) (d) of Regulation 1093 made under the *VA* requires that a member obtain the consent of a client for each veterinary service provided.

Framework under the VPA

Section 93 (1) 23 of the *VPA* permits the development of regulation language related to the VCPR and informed client consent.

Development of Regulatory Concept by Transition Council

VCPR

Transition Council reviewed and forwarded for public consultation a regulatory concept related to VCPR in January 2025. This concept included:

1. Separate Regulatory Section for VCPR

Transition Council proposed that VCPR be given its own specific section within the regulation to allow for clarity surrounding their separate requirements, as both the VCPR is essential to the safe and accountable practice of clinical veterinary medicine.

2. Enhanced Recognition that the VCPR is Maintained by the Veterinary Team Working Through an Accredited Facility

Transition Council proposed the development of regulation language that formally recognizes within regulation that once established, a VCPR is maintained by the entire veterinary team associated with an accredited veterinary facility.



3. Both Types of Members Permitted to Establish a VCPR

In recognition of the VCPR's association with the veterinary team at an accredited facility, Transition Council proposed the development of regulation language that permits both types of members to establish a VCPR. VCPRs would be required to be formed through an accredited veterinary facility and in accordance with facility policies established by the Veterinary Facility Director.

4. Connection Between the VCPR and After-Hours Veterinary Care

As the provision of after-hours veterinary care by veterinarian members remains one of the core public expectations related to the delivery of clinical veterinary medicine, Transition Council proposed the development of regulation language that clearly outlines its connection to the VCPR. With this recognition, the Transition Council also proposes that a veterinary technician member only be permitted to establish a VCPR if there is a veterinarian member(s) on the veterinary team associated with the accredited veterinary facility who then assumes responsibility for the delivery of after-hours veterinary care services as well as management of any adverse reactions.

5. Ongoing VCPR Requirements

Transition Council proposed the development of regulation language that carries forward the current VCPR requirements contained in Regulation 1093 under the *Veterinarians Act* including that a member must be retained by the owner or authorized representative of the animal(s) or group of animals, that the member must advise that they will only provide services in accordance with the standards of practice for the profession, and that an agreement is reached between the member and potential client regarding the scope of services to be provided.

Informed Client Consent

Transition Council reviewed and forwarded for public consultation a regulatory concept related to VCPR in January 2025. This concept included:

1. Separate Regulatory Section for Informed Client Consent

Regulation 1093 under the *Veterinarians Act* currently contains one section that outlines both the requirements that must be met before veterinary services may be provided and informed client consent. As both the VCPR and informed client consent are essential to the safe and accountable practice of clinical veterinary medicine, Transition Council proposed that informed client consent be allotted its own specific section within the regulation to allow for clarity surrounding its specific requirements.

2. Both Types of Members Permitted to Obtain Informed Client Consent

In recognition of the one profession, two professional model that will see both types of members delivering veterinary services to clients, Transition Council proposed the

development of regulation language that both veterinarians and veterinary technicians be permitted to obtain informed client consent if it is for an activity that they are permitted and competent to perform including the ability to share all necessary information. The obtaining of informed client consent must occur through an accredited veterinary facility and be collected in accordance with facility policies established by the Veterinary Facility Director.

3. Ongoing Informed Client Consent Requirement

Transition Council proposed the development of regulation language that the current requirement in Regulation 1093 under the *Veterinarians Act* for a member to obtain informed client consent prior to the delivery of a specific service or set of services carry forward to the new regulation.

4. Continuation of Regulatory Exemptions

In recognition of the different situations and circumstances in which members may be practising clinical veterinary medicine, Transition Council proposed the development of regulation language that the current list of instances when veterinary services can be provided without informed client consent in Section 18 (3) of Regulation 1093 made under the *Veterinarians Act* continue under the new regulatory framework. The draft concept also proposes the inclusion of other regulatory exemptions previously discussed by Transition Council, including members working under another piece of federal or provincial legislation.

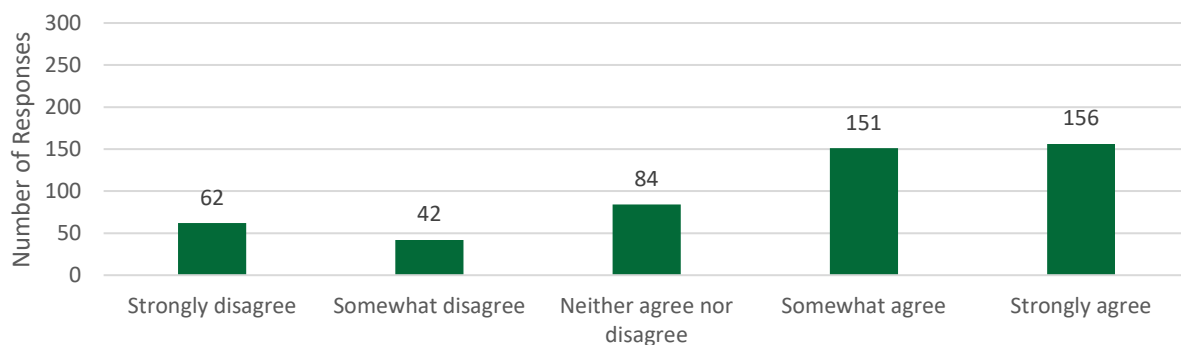
General Consultation Feedback

VCPR

A regulatory concept related to VCPR was included in the list of concepts that were circulated for public consultation from February 11 to April 16, 2025.

The following quantitative responses were received related to VCPR:

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with a statement about VCPR on a Likert scale of responses from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”. The figure below presents the results of 495 responses to the statement “*The proposed approach to VCPR is appropriate.*”.



In addition to the quantitative data, the following qualitative trends were noted:

- Comments related to the allowance for veterinary technician members to establish a VCPR to have the potential for broadening access to care
- General support for the proposed new approach
- Requests for clarity on the required frequency of client interaction to maintain a VCPR
- Questions related to whether clients will understand the proposed new approach
- Questions related to the responsibility for adverse reactions and after-hours care when a veterinary technician establishes the VCPR

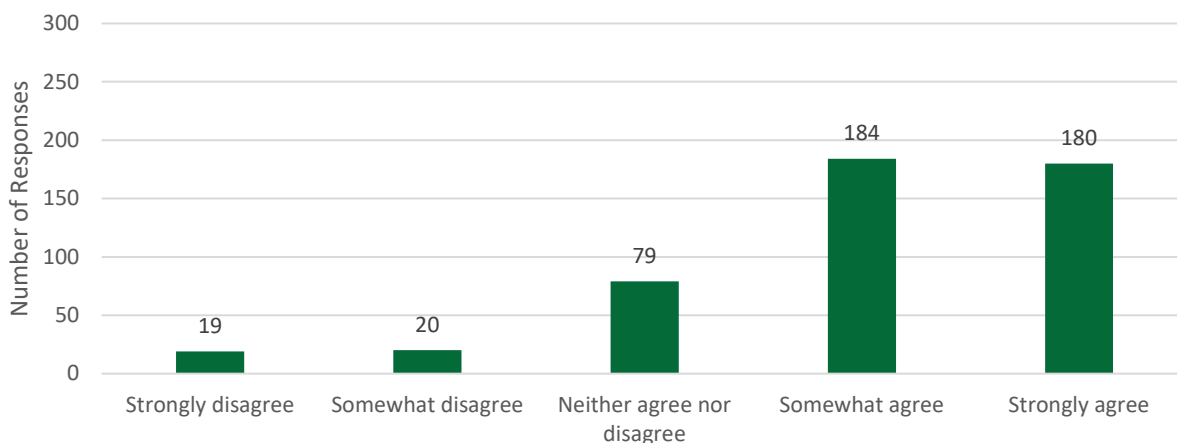
For more information on this consultation feedback, please refer to pages 50-51 of the full consultation report.

Informed Client Consent

A regulatory concept related to informed client consent was included in the list of concepts that were circulated for public consultation from February 11 to April 16, 2025.

The following quantitative responses were received related to informed client consent:

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with a statement about Informed Client Consent on a Likert scale of responses from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”. The figure below presents the results of 482 responses to the statement “*The proposed approach to informed client consent is appropriate.*”.



In addition to the quantitative data, the following qualitative trends were noted:

- Requests for clarity related to whether obtaining informed client consent may be delegated
- Requests for clarity on the types of consent required (verbal, written)
- Questions about available training for obtaining informed client consent

For more information on this consultation feedback, please refer to page 52-53 of the full consultation report.

Consultation Feedback from Key Partners

VCPR

Ontario Veterinary Medical Association (OVMA)

In its April 15, 2025, submission the OVMA shared:

- Firm opposition to the regulatory concept as proposed;
- Recommendation that the establishment of a VCPR remain the responsibility of a veterinarian;
- Comments that the concept as proposed would remove a veterinarian's ability to choose who, when and how to treat, taking away decision-making abilities while also assuming all responsibilities;
- Questions related to whether potential changes to the term VCPR will lead to complications and confusion in other jurisdictions understanding the model.

Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians

In its April 16, 2025, submission the OAVT shared:

- Support and appreciation for the inclusion of veterinary technicians in the establishment of the VCPR
- Provides a comment related to whether veterinary technician members should have the ability to establish a VCPR independently, provided they meet the same requirements as an accredited veterinary facility with respect to the provision of after-hours care.

Other Submissions

- Support for the proposed regulatory concept allowing veterinary technician members to establish a VCPR
 - o Animal Shelter Professionals of Ontario (ASPO)
 - o Ontario Federation of Agriculture
- Requests for clarity on after-hours care requirements when veterinary technician members establish a VCPR
 - o ASPO
- Requests for clarity on how the establishment of the VCPR when done by a veterinary technician will work in practice
 - o Alberta Veterinary Medical Association
- Suggested removal of the requirement for the member to declare they will "provide services in accordance with the standards of the profession" from the proposed regulation language
 - o Ottawa Humane Society
- Suggestion that the establishment of the VCPR remain a veterinarian-only activity

- Ontario Association of Bovine Practitioners
- ProVet Alliance
- Request that the proposed regulatory language for VCPR acknowledge farmers in rural and remote areas may not have regular contact with their veterinarian
 - Ontario Sheep Farmers

For more information related to these submissions, please refer to the beginning of page 131 of the full consultation report.

Informed Client Consent

Ontario Veterinary Medical Association (OVMA)

In its April 15, 2025, submission the OVMA shared:

- Support for the regulatory concept
- Request for the consideration of informed client consent and it's intersection with other provisions in legislation such as the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019*

Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians

In its April 16, 2025, submission the OAVT shared:

- Support and appreciation for the inclusion of veterinary technicians in the obtainment of informed client consent

Other Submissions

- Support for the regulatory concept
 - Ontario Federation of Agriculture
- Suggestion that veterinary technicians be given the ability to obtain informed client consent on behalf of a veterinarian for certain procedures such as in high volume spay/neuter clinics using a template
 - Ottawa Humane Society
- Requests that obtaining informed client consent only remain a delegable activity
 - Alberta Veterinary Medical Association
- Questions about how veterinary technicians obtaining informed client consent will work when a diagnosis is involved
 - Ontario Association of Bovine Practitioners

For more information related to these submissions, please refer to the beginning of page 131 of the full consultation report.

Further Information Gathered Based on Consultation Feedback

VCPR

1. Confirmation of the Connection between the VCPR and Veterinary Facilities

The intention of the regulatory concept was to create opportunity to formally recognize that, once established by a member, a VCPR “lives” with the veterinary facility and is maintained (or discontinued) by the veterinary team practising out of the facility.

Informed Client Consent

1. Ability for Veterinary Technician Members to Obtain Informed Client Consent

The regulatory concept for informed client consent was designed to only permit members (both veterinarians and veterinary technicians) to obtain informed client consent for services that they themselves are permitted and competent to perform. This is in recognition of the fact that informed client consent requires the ability to fully understand the procedure(s) to be provided and the potential benefits and risks associated with performance. The regulatory concept also tied the obtaining of informed client consent to a veterinary facility and the policies established by the Veterinary Facility Director. This means that if facility policies dictated that only veterinarian members obtain informed client consent, then a veterinary technician member would not be able to do so.

Both Topics

1. Clarity on Accountability

The regulatory concepts related to the VCPR and informed client consent were developed to highlight the importance of maintaining a consistent accountability framework that would require both veterinarian and veterinary technician members under the VPA to meet these obligations prior to providing veterinary services. As part of this recognition, these concepts mentioned the importance of continuing to ensure that veterinary clinical practice and authorized activities occur through accredited veterinary facilities and in accordance with the facility policies established by the Veterinary Facility Director. In making this connection, the intention of the regulatory concepts was to highlight that a member would only be able to meet these obligations if they were met through processes that they themselves were authorized to use within their practice setting. For example, if a facility’s policies did not permit the use of initiation or orders by veterinary technician members, then these members could not establish the obligations associated with a VCPR or obtain informed client consent at that facility.

2. Questions Related to Specific Requirements for VCPRs and Informed Client Consent

The College often receives questions related to how to approach the establishing, maintaining, and discontinuing of VCPRs as well as the obtaining of informed client consent. Outside of the framework established in Regulation (which has remained at a higher level to allow for agility in interpretation as the profession advances and adapts) guidance related to these types of questions has been provided through the College’s Professional Practice Standards developed

by the College's Council as well as their associated Guides. This has been a long-standing and well engrained approach, and it is the intention of the College is to continue this process under the *VPA*.

Additional Context to Assist with Decision-Making

Since the regulatory concepts related to the VCPR and informed client consent were circulated for public consultation, the College has engaged in additional in-depth review and consideration of these concepts as presented. This has included conversations with a variety of partners – including the College's legal team – and has resulted in a repositioning of the approach being presented related to the VCPR and informed client consent while also striving to maintain as many of Transition Council's original intentions as possible.

As part of this work, the College has recognized that there is an inherent need to maintain agility within regulation language while also not inadvertently tying these important obligations to time and place interpretations. It has become increasingly apparent that a continued integrated approach to the obligations that a member must meet prior to providing veterinary services would be beneficial to the longevity and adaptability of these concepts.

In particular, a secondary review of the language already contained in Section 18 of Regulation 1093 made under the *VA* has indicated a strong preference for the continued use of the language as currently written to allow for the maintenance of current approaches, including those related to professional misconduct, while also leaving room for further interpretation and guidance by future Councils of the CVPO. This includes the ability to adapt policy approaches related to the naming of these obligations (VCPR vs. under the care of a veterinary team), methods of obtainment (in-person vs. virtual) and increased opportunities to incorporate and promote intraprofessional collaboration.

(see next page)

18. (1) A member shall comply with the standards of practice of the profession in the performance of veterinary services. O. Reg. 233/15, s. 12.

(2) A member shall not provide veterinary services in respect of an animal unless the member has,

- (a) been retained by the owner of the animal, an authorized representative of the owner or an individual who the member reasonably determines is acting in the interest of the animal;
- (b) advised the client that the member will only provide services in accordance with the standards of practice of the profession;
- (c) reached an agreement with the client as to the scope of the services to be provided by the member; and
- (d) obtained the consent of the client for each service to be provided.

Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allows for veterinarians and veterinary technicians to meet the obligations outlined in 18 (2) (a) – (c) (VCPR). - Allows for both types of members to meet the obligation outlined in 18 (2) (d) (informed client consent)
standards of practice of the profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allows for Councils of the CVPO to maintain and/or develop policies related to the obligations outlined including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Requirements for obligations to be met through a veterinary facility; o Ability for veterinary teams at veterinary facilities to maintain obligations; and o Ability to assign titles and/or names to these obligations.
scope of the services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires members to clearly outline the types of services that they (or their team) are able to provide.

The current wording in Section 18 would also permit the continuation of regulatory exemptions.

The one area where this amended approach would result in a pivot away from the original regulatory concepts proposed by Transition Council relates to the formal connecting of certain member obligations (VCPR) and after-hours veterinary care. While these concepts are often intertwined, further research has confirmed that there are instances where a members' obligations under Section 18 (2) (a) to (c) can be met but no after-hours veterinary care requirements yet invoked. (For example, a member has met the obligations to form a relationship with the client but has not yet treated the animal). While outside the norm of day-to-

day clinical practice, these instances are possible and therefore it is appropriate that the obligations that must be met prior to providing veterinary care remain separate from the requirement for a member to provide after-hours veterinary care.

As noted above, more information related to any potential amendments to the regulatory concept on after-hours veterinary care will be provided in June 2025 and will be informed by any direction that Transition Council provides related to this agenda item.

Given these findings, Transition Council is now being asked to consider the following amendments to the regulatory concepts for VCPR and informed client consent:

1. That the regulatory concepts related to the VCPR and informed client consent remain one regulatory concept as currently found in Section 18 of Regulation 1093 under the VA;
2. That the previous proposal for specific members' obligations (VCPR) and after-hours veterinary care to be formally connected be removed and considered as two separate concepts; and
3. That additional guidance related to how these obligations are met by members be further clarified through CVPO policy.

For a full review of the proposed amendments, please see the full chart attached as Appendix A.

Transition Council Discussion

The information contained in this cover sheet is being presented to Transition Council for its review and discussion related to next steps. To aid in this discussion, Transition Council is encouraged to consider if any further clarification or additional information is necessary prior to providing its direction.

Potential Direction

Based on this review and discussion, Transition Council may direct:

1. That the regulatory concept be approved for submission to OMAFA as presented or amended;
2. That the regulatory concept be returned to College staff for further work and consideration; or
3. Any other direction as determined by Transition Council.

Attachments

1. Appendix A – Regulatory Concept on VCPR and ICC (as amended).

Concept Chart – Members’ Obligations Prior to Providing Veterinary Services
(Veterinarian Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) and Informed Client Consent)

Section	Primary Concepts Confirmed by Transition Council	Additional Information	Date of Confirmation
This column outlines the specific section of regulation.	This column provides a description of the objectives sought and the associated reasoning.	This column provides any additional specific information required to ensure clarity.	This column outlines when Transition Council confirmed the concept as well as any additional questions raised.
Members’ Obligations Prior to Providing Veterinary Services (VCPR and informed client consent)	<p>General</p> <p>Transition Council is proposing the continuation of regulation language related to members’ obligations prior to providing veterinary services (currently referred to as the VCPR and informed client consent in College Policy) as outlined in Section 18 of Regulation 1093 under the <i>Veterinarians Act (VA)</i>.</p> <p>This continuation is being proposed under Section 93 (1) 23 of the <i>Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024 (VPA)</i>.</p> <p>This regulation language will apply to both veterinarian and veterinary technician members.</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>The College of Veterinary Professionals of Ontario (CVPO) will be responsible for providing overarching</p>	<p>This regulatory concept has been developed based on the one profession, two professionals model outlined in the <i>VPA</i>.</p> <p>Additional details related to the VCPR, including how it is maintained and discontinued, as well as the obtainment of informed client consent will be able to be developed through College Policy.</p> <p>The term “veterinarian-client-patient relationship” will also be able to be</p>	<p>Transition Council confirmed the proposed regulatory concepts related to the VCPR and informed client consent in January 2025.</p> <p>Further amendments were considered in May 2025.</p>

Section	Primary Concepts Confirmed by Transition Council	Additional Information	Date of Confirmation
	<p>requirements for the practice of veterinary medicine in Ontario.</p> <p>Overview</p> <p>Section 18 of Regulation 1093 under the VA outlines the obligations that a member must meet before providing veterinary services to an animal(s) or group of animals.</p> <p>These are currently referred to as the VCPR and informed client consent in College Policy.</p> <p>Continued Regulatory Section for Members Obligations Prior to Providing Veterinary Services</p> <p>Section 18 of Regulation 1093 under the VA currently contains one regulatory section that a members' obligations prior to providing veterinary services. These are currently referred to as the VCPR and informed client consent. Transition Council proposes that the wording found in Section 18 be carried forward under the VPA to allow for the maintenance of current regulatory approaches while also leaving room for further interpretation and guidance by future Councils of the CVPO. This includes the ability to maintain and/or adapt policy approaches related to the naming of requirements (ex. VCPR vs. under the care of the veterinary team), methods of obtainment (in-person vs. virtual), and increased opportunities for intraprofessional collaboration.</p>	<p>revisited through College Policy as it is not currently outlined in either the <i>Veterinarians Act</i> or the <i>VPA</i>.</p> <p>The outlined approach related to the obtainment of informed client consent by both types of members has been informed by current allowances for veterinarians or those working under their delegation and supervision.</p>	

Veterinarian Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) - Appendix A

Section	Primary Concepts Confirmed by Transition Council	Additional Information	Date of Confirmation
	<p>Both Types of Members Required to Meet Obligations</p> <p>In proposing the carrying forward of current regulatory language, Transition Council confirms its intention to require both types of members (veterinarians and veterinary technicians) to meet these obligations. This will include the ability to establish a VCPR and obtain informed client consent in accordance with CVPO policy.</p>		