

SPEAKING FRANKLY

A Report on the Veterinary Practice Community Reference Panel

October 2023

BACKGROUND

As a component of its Strategy 2020 objectives, the Council of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario formed a veterinary practice advisory panel to assist with its work. The Veterinary Practice Community Reference Panel is the second iteration of this group which has now existed since 2017. The Veterinary Practice Community Reference Panel's specific mandate includes:

- to provide early advice to the College on emerging policy matters
- to provide feedback on the implementation of draft policy
- to provide input on the communication strategy with the veterinary community
- to assist in the identification of risk areas in practice
- to identify emerging trends and challenges in practice

The Panel is intended to meet at least three times a year, once face-to-face with Council.

This report summarizes key areas discussed by the Panel at its most recent meeting in October 2023 and outlines opportunities for College consideration.

KEY AREAS

(A) Cultural Humility with Dr. Kim Lambert and Emily Ewles

College staff Dr. Kim Lambert and Emily Ewles provided an overview of ongoing work related to the topic of cultural humility and its place in veterinary practice. The Panel was asked to consider their own practice, and discuss how cultural humility may already be utilized. Comments from the Panel included:

- Training and education on the topic are important, but sharing and understanding lived experience is also required.
- Working in the community and seizing opportunities for volunteerism can expand understandings.
- Connections with other people allow for learning and support.
- Communication and soft skills training are needed.
 - However, veterinarians tend to select technical skill training when presented with learning options.
- Open conversation on the topic raises awareness of it.
- Awareness is also starting at a younger age and can even be found in high schools.
- Some workplaces include mandatory training in certain areas of this topic.

(B) Veterinary Acupuncture

The College was interested in hearing from the Panel how best to communicate the published *Position Statement: Veterinary Acupuncture* to both veterinarians and other non-veterinary animal care providers. Comments on the developed materials from the Panel included:

- The document reads clearly and is well put together.
- Communication of materials to veterinarians is challenging, it becomes lost in emails.
 - Reaching the public is often even more difficult.
- Is there an opportunity for clinics to share this information?

(C) Emergency Management and Animal Welfare

The College was interested in hearing from Panel members on the role they as veterinarians may play in emergency management planning and animal welfare. Comments from the Panel included:

- Large animal emergency evacuation plans are heard of more commonly than small animal.
 - What capacity do small animal clinics have to assist in larger scale emergencies?
- Planning for emergencies before they occur is critical.
 - For example, communication plans to activate during fires.
- Emergency management also requires high levels of coordination with different groups.
 - For example, the government, the public, and other organizations.

(D) The New College Website

The College was interested in hearing feedback on the new design of the College website. Panel members were asked to review a number of pages and provide their feedback on the clarity and accessibility of the information. Comments from the Panel included:

- The pages look modern and fresh.
- The Find a Veterinarian page is helpful and easy to be found.
- The new search function provides more relevant results.

(E) Trends for Consideration

Panel members have the opportunity to raise any current trends or issues within the veterinary sector that they believe should be raised for the College's consideration. Comments from the Panel included:

- Veterinarians working on commission has become an increased topic of discussion lately related to potential conflicts of interest and public perception.

SUMMARY

The Council is grateful to the members of the Panel for their candid comments and willingness to engage with the profession as it aims to instill confidence in veterinary regulation. All information and identified opportunities will be considered for both immediate and future planning.