

Veterinary Stewardship of the Responsible Use of Antimicrobials Drugs in Animals

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Introduction

Antimicrobial resistance is a complex and evolving global public health issue. Resistance to antimicrobial drugs is increasing as a result of the cumulative effects of their widespread and extensive use in both animal and human medicine. This position statement has been developed to assist the public and veterinarians in understanding the College Council's position related to promoting and supporting veterinary stewardship, both at the level of the profession and of the individual veterinarian, in the responsible use of antimicrobial drugs in animals.

Position Statement

The authority to prescribe drugs is a privilege that is afforded to few professions. The right to both prescribe and dispense is afforded to even fewer. With this right comes the responsibility to prescribe and dispense in accordance with the standards of practice for the profession.

The increase in antimicrobial resistance has placed an even higher societal duty on the veterinary profession to act as stewards with respect to the prudent and responsible use of antimicrobial drugs.

Every veterinarian has a valuable role to play in the effort to combat antimicrobial resistance and to preserve the effectiveness of antimicrobial drugs and their availability for both veterinary and human use. As part of good stewardship, the College expects a veterinarian to assume an active leadership role by ensuring their understanding of the need for antimicrobial oversight, the existing government directives, the evolving science related to pharmaceuticals, and the most appropriate current use of antimicrobial drugs with a specific species.



A veterinarian must only prescribe antimicrobial drugs within a veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) and where strong clinical evidence demonstrates medical need.

The College encourages its licensed members to be aware that responsible use of antimicrobial drugs is crucial for preserving their efficacy. It is important for veterinarians to be vigilant in their oversight and to remain ever-cognizant that there are risks as well as benefits associated with antimicrobial use for the greater public good.

The College endeavors to support veterinarians with resources that advance antimicrobial stewardship when performing any professional activity. The College will continually seek to understand and assume its role with partners at the provincial, national, and international level to combat the spread of antimicrobial resistance.

Resources

World Organization for Animal Health, Antimicrobial Resistance (<https://www.woah.org/en/what-we-do/global-initiatives/antimicrobial-resistance/>)

Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, *Veterinary Oversight of Antimicrobial Use – a Pan-Canadian Framework of Professional Standards for Veterinarians* (<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/media/zvtlw03q/veterinary-oversight-of-antimicrobial-use-a-pan-canadian-framework-for-professional-standards-for-veterinarians-pdf.pdf>)

Growing Forward 2, Antibiotic Use in Food-Producing Animals in Ontario: A Study of the Current Practices and Perceptions of Ontario Veterinarians (<https://viewer.joomag.com/growing-forward-2-final-report/0699825001446228188>)

Health Canada, Categorization of Antimicrobial Drugs Based on Importance in Human Medicine, 2009 (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/veterinary-drugs/antimicrobial-resistance/categorization-antimicrobial-drugs-based-importance-human-medicine.html>)

College publications contain practice parameters and standards which should be considered by all Ontario veterinarians in the care of their patients and in the practice of the profession. College publications are developed in consultation with the profession and describe current professional expectations. It is important to note that these College publications may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained. The College encourages you to refer to the website (www.cvo.org) to ensure you are referring to the most recent version of any document.