



AGENDA ITEM 7.2

TOPIC: After-Hours Veterinary Care

History of Topic

General Information

Section 20 of Regulation 1093 made under the *Veterinarians Act (VA)* requires veterinarians to provide reasonably prompt services outside of regular practice hours if the services are medically necessary for animals that they have recently treated or treat regularly. In addition to this overarching requirement, Section 20 also states that a veterinarian:

- can provide these services themselves or by referral to another veterinarian;
- is responsible for promptly continuing to provide medically necessary services to an animal after discharge from an emergency clinic; and
- is responsible for informing their clients about their after-hours veterinary care arrangements.

The College's *Policy Statement: After-Hours Care Services* provides additional detail and guidance related to the provision of after-hours veterinary care services, including information related to its interconnectivity with members' obligations such as the veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR), the importance of establishing agreed-upon referral arrangements, and how to manage unforeseen circumstances.

The inclusion of veterinary technicians as members of the College of Veterinary Professionals of Ontario (CVPO) under the *Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024 (VPA)* necessitates the updating of regulation language related to the provision of this care and offers the opportunity to increase clarity and understanding of its associated requirements.

Legislative Framework

Section 20 of Regulation 1093 made under the VA:

20. (1) A member is responsible for providing reasonably prompt services outside of regular practice hours if the services are medically necessary for animals that he or she has recently treated or that he or she treats regularly. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 1093, s. 20 (1).

(2) The services required under subsection (1) may be provided by the member or an associate or by referral to another member who has agreed to cover the referring member's practice. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 1093, s. 20 (2).

(3) If a member provides services under subsection (1) outside of regular practice hours by referring an animal to an emergency clinic, the member is responsible for promptly continuing to provide medically necessary services to the animal after discharge from the emergency clinic until the services are no longer required or until the client has had a reasonable opportunity to arrange for the services of another member. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 1093, s. 20 (3).

(4) A member shall inform each of his or her clients as to how they can access services outside of the member's regular practice hours. O. Reg. 233/15, s. 14.

(5) If a member changes the arrangements for accessing services outside of the member's regular practice hours, he or she shall promptly inform his or her clients of the changes. O. Reg. 233/15, s. 14.

(6) The member shall keep records of every time information is provided under subsections (4) and (5). O. Reg. 233/15, s. 14.

(7) If an animal is to be left in a veterinary facility after regular practice hours, the member treating the animal shall inform the client of supervision arrangements for that animal. O. Reg. 233/15, s. 14.

VPA

Section 93 (1) 23 of the VPA allows for the development of regulation language "prescribing and governing standards of practice of veterinary medicine and standards for veterinary facilities, including respecting standards for the use of technology in the practice of veterinary medicine, when technologies may be used and the manner and circumstances in which they may be used."

Development of Regulatory Concept by Transition Council

Transition Council reviewed and forwarded for public consultation a regulatory concept related to after-hours veterinary care in January 2025. Many of the ideas outlined in the concept were informed by the work and recommendations of the College's After-Hours Veterinary Care Taskforce. This concept included:

1. Ongoing After-Hours Requirements

Section 20 of Regulation 1093 made under the VA currently outlines the requirements for a veterinarian to provide after-hours veterinary care including that a veterinarian is responsible for providing reasonably prompt services outside of regular practice hours if the services are medically necessary for animals that they have treated recently or treat regularly. Transition Council proposed the development of regulation language that continues these requirements.

2. Enhanced Wording Related to After-Hours Veterinary Care Arrangements

Transition Council proposed the development of regulation language that continues to permit a veterinarian member to rely on the referral of after-hours veterinary care services to another veterinarian member and/or accredited veterinary facility (not only emergency facilities). Transition Council proposed that this wording be enhanced to provide clarity that this is only permissible when the referring veterinarian member has made a specific agreed-upon arrangement with the veterinarian member and/or accredited veterinary facility that they are referring to.

3. Clarity Around Discharge Responsibilities

Transition Council proposed the development of regulation language that makes it clearer that a referring veterinarian member's responsibility related to providing care upon discharge applies to all after-hours veterinary care arrangements regardless of the veterinarian member and/or the type of accredited veterinary facility referred to.

4. Delivery of Care

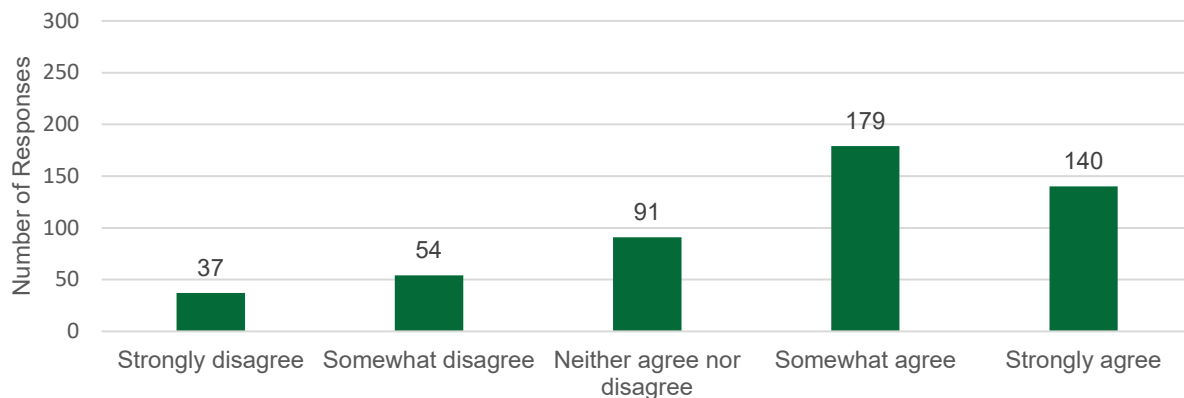
Transition Council proposed that the provision of after-hours veterinary care remain a veterinarian member responsibility. This does not preclude veterinary technician members from also assisting in the delivery of this care through accredited veterinary facilities including through initiation and/or under a veterinarian member's order.

General Consultation Feedback

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

The following quantitative responses were received related to after-hours veterinary care:

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with a statement about After-Hours Veterinary Care on a Likert scale of responses from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". The figure below presents the results of 501 responses to the statement "*The proposed approach to after-hours veterinary care is appropriate.*".



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

- Requests for clarity related to available emergency veterinary care referrals in relation to acceptable distance and what may qualify as timely and prompt;
- Requests for clarity related to the role of telemedicine in the provision of after-hours veterinary care; and
- Requests for clarity on the requirements of the agreement between a veterinarian and another veterinarian and/or accredited veterinary facility related to the provision of after-hours veterinary care.

For more information on this consultation feedback, please refer to pages 53-55 of the full consultation report [found here](#).

Consultation Feedback from Key Partners

Ontario Veterinary Medical Association (OVMA)

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

- Suggestion that the regulations and policies be structured to ensure that care remains tied to the veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR), and that only veterinarians should be permitted to establish the VCPR; and
- Requests for the CVPO to provide education to the public regarding after-hours veterinary care expectations and applications.

Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians (OAVT)

In its April 16, 2025, submission the OAVT noted that it had no further comments to provide on this topic at this time.

Other Submissions

- Support for after-hours veterinary care remaining a veterinarian responsibility
 - o Ontario Association of Bovine Practitioners (OABP); ProVet Alliance
- Requests for clarity related to what qualifies as reasonably prompt

- OABP

For more information related to these submissions, please refer to the beginning of page 132 of the full consultation report [found here](#).

Further Information Gathered Based on Consultation Feedback

1. Inclusion of Veterinary Technicians in Providing After-Hours Veterinary Care

As noted above, the regulatory concept proposes that the provision of after-hours veterinary care remain the professional responsibility of veterinarian members. This does not preclude veterinary technician members from also assisting in the delivery of this care through accredited veterinary facilities including through initiation or under a veterinarian member's order or delegation. The approach for care delivery would be determined by the veterinary team at the veterinary facility.

2. Further Guidance to be Provided Through Policy

It is the intention of the College to facilitate the development of additional policy and guidance related to the provision of after-hours veterinary care services including how both members may play a role in its provision. An example of a possible resource (a decision flow chart) has been attached to this cover sheet as Appendix "A" to help illustrate these intentions.

Additional Context to Assist with Decision-Making

1. Transition Council Discussions Related to Members' Obligations

Transition Council reviewed and approved a regulatory concept related to members' obligations (known in policy as the VCPR and informed client consent) at its May 2025 meeting. As part of this approval, Transition Council proposed that the wording contained in Section 18 of Regulation 1093 remain as currently written and that no specific reference or connection to terms such as the VCPR or informed client consent be included within regulatory language developed under the VPA. This direction has been incorporated into the regulatory concept related to members' obligations as well as into the current proposed regulatory concept related to after-hours veterinary care.

For a full review of how this information would appear within the regulatory concept, please see the chart attached as Appendix "B".

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

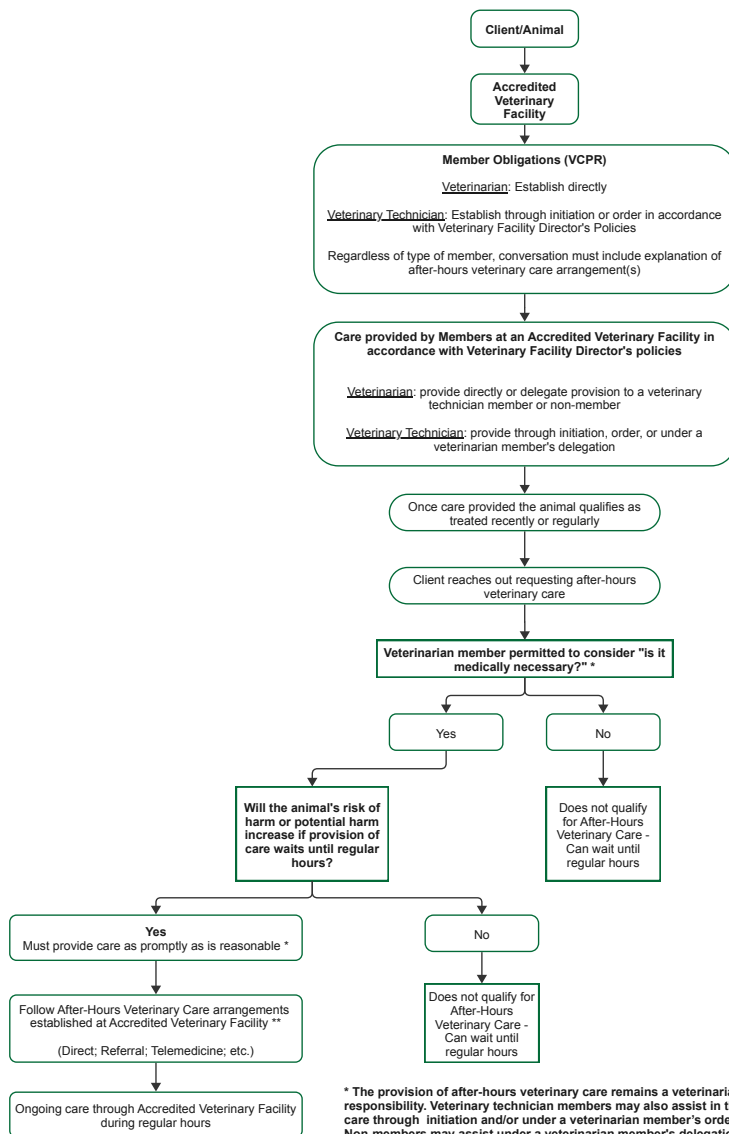
Based on this review and discussion, Transition Council may direct:

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 – After-Hours Veterinary Care – Decision Flow-Chart
2. Appendix B – Regulatory Concept – After-Hours Veterinary Care

After-Hours Veterinary Care



* The provision of after-hours veterinary care remains a veterinarian member responsibility. Veterinary technician members may also assist in the delivery of this care through initiation and/or under a veterinarian member's order or delegation. Non-members may assist under a veterinarian member's delegation.

** Veterinarian members remain professionally responsible if arrangements with another veterinary facility fall through

Concept Chart – After-Hours Veterinary Care

Section	Primary Concepts Confirmed by 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 any additional questions raised.
After-Hours Veterinary Care	<p>General</p> <p>Transition Council proposes the development of regulation language related to after-hours veterinary care in accordance with Section 93 (1) 23 of the <i>Veterinary Professionals Act, 2024</i>.</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>The College of Veterinary Professionals of Ontario (CVPO) will be responsible for providing overarching requirements for the practice of veterinary medicine in Ontario.</p> <p>Overview</p> <p>The public expects that they will be able to access timely and needed after-hours veterinary care services from veterinary professionals with whom they have formed a veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR).</p>	<p>Transition Council proposes that the provision of after-hours veterinary care remain a veterinarian member responsibility. This does not preclude veterinary technician members from also assisting in the delivery of this care through accredited veterinary facilities including through initiation and/or under a veterinarian member's order.</p>	<p>Transition Council confirmed the regulatory concept related to veterinary after-hours care in January 2025.</p>

Section	Primary Concepts Confirmed by Council	Additional Information	Date of Confirmation
	<p>Ongoing After-Hours Care Requirements</p> <p>Section 20 of Regulation 1093 made under the <i>Veterinarians Act</i> currently outlines the requirements for a veterinarian to provide after-hours veterinary care including that a veterinarian is responsible for providing reasonably prompt services outside of regular practice hours if the services are medically necessary for animals that they have treated recently or treat regularly. Transition Council proposes the development of regulation language that continues these requirements.</p> <p>Enhanced Wording Related to After-Hours Veterinary Care Arrangements</p> <p>Transition Council proposes the development of regulation language that continues to permit a veterinarian member to rely on the referral of after-hours veterinary care services to another veterinarian member and/or accredited veterinary facility (not just emergency facilities). Transition Council proposes that this wording be enhanced to provide clarity that this is only permissible when the referring veterinarian member has made a specific agreed-upon arrangement with the veterinarian member and/or accredited veterinary facility that they are referring to.</p>		

Section	Primary Concepts Confirmed by Council	Additional Information	Date of Confirmation
	<p>Clarity Around Discharge Responsibilities</p> <p>Transition Council proposes the development of regulation language that makes it clearer that a referring veterinarian member's responsibility related to providing care upon discharge applies to all after-hours veterinary care arrangements regardless of the type of veterinarian member and/or accredited veterinary facility referred to.</p>		