



## **SPEAKING FRANKLY**

### ***A Report on the Public Community Reference Panel's Meeting with College Council***

September 2023

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#### **BACKGROUND**

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

- to provide early advice to the College on emerging policy matters
- to provide feedback on the clarity of draft policy to the general public
- to provide input on the public communication strategy
- to identify emerging trends related to the animals, animal care and public perspective

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, held in-person with College Council, and outlines opportunities for College consideration.

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#### **KEY AREAS**

##### **(A) Council's Regulatory Role**

Council was interested in hearing what Panel members have been hearing or reading about that would be important for Council to think about in relation to its regulatory role. Comments from the Panel included:

- Producers want a clear vision of what is happening in veterinary care.
- Encouragement for the College to work with other Ministries on consistency in messaging.
- Some sectors of the public fear for limited access to veterinary care, including complementary and alternative therapies.
- Questions remain about where virtual care is moving post-pandemic.
- Consider looking at moral injury and how it differs from burnout.
- Investigate alternate pathways for internationally-trained veterinarians.



## (B) The Public Voice

Council was interested in what the Panel believes would help the public understand that its voice is important and listened to in the College's work. Comments from the Panel included:

- Providing the Panel with updates on how they influenced the work of the College would be appreciated.
- Communicate with commodity groups and external communities to help the public understand how they can contribute.
- Continue to shift the perception of the College away from only managing complaints.
  - Highlight other work such as Community Connection newsletters and other resources.

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### **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.