



College of Veterinarians of Ontario
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Council Meeting Highlights: June 19, 2019

The June meeting of Council was held in Sudbury to provide an opportunity for the public and veterinarians in northern Ontario to attend and learn more about the work of Council. This was the first time in recent history that Council has ever met outside of Guelph.

President Dr. Patty Lechten welcomed Ms. Maureen Ralph to the Council table for her first meeting since being appointed by the provincial government. Council extended appreciation to Ms. Claudia Newman and Ms. Diane Freeman who have completed their terms as public appointees to Council.

The following items were considered by Council at its June meeting.

After Hours Care

A key part of Council's work is managing the risks in veterinary medicine, and the provision of after hours care services has been identified as a critical area. After hours care in veterinary medicine is important to the public and their pets but also has an impact on veterinarians and their staff. Veterinarians are expected to provide after hours care services to animals they have recently treated or treat regularly – this is an aspect of the veterinarian-client-patient relationship. Council reviewed a proposed policy statement on after hours care, which had extensive changes from the previous version. The updated policy strives to achieve a balance among legislative requirements, animal needs, client expectations and the health of veterinarians. Through the updated policy, veterinarians have options in delivering after hours care, including the use of teletriage. The new policy also provides an understanding that veterinarians occasionally have unforeseen circumstances, such as severe weather or illness, that affect their ability to provide services. Council approved the updated policy statement with just a few changes. Watch for it to be posted soon.

Forms of Energy

Council discussed veterinary medicine and forms of energy. A wide variety of forms of energy (radiography, ultrasound, shockwave, etc.) are being used to treat animals by individuals who have various levels of training and certification in treatment. The College is reviewing each form of energy and evaluating their use, benefits and risks. Council looks forward to hearing more about the findings of this review later this year.

Pain Management

Managing pain while delivering treatment to animals is fundamental to quality veterinary care. Council approved revisions to its position statement on pain management. The revised position statement states a veterinarian is expected to maintain current knowledge and skill in the prevention, recognition and management of pain in animals served. The prevention and alleviation of pain and suffering is considered an essential therapeutic goal. Appropriate treatment includes pharmacological therapy, integrative therapy and environmental adaptation.

Code of Ethics

Council approved a revised version of the Code of Ethics for public consultation. The code is intended to provide a framework to guide veterinarians in ethical decision-making. The consultation on the Code of Ethics opens in July.

Licensure – Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence

The Registration Committee informed Council that two general licences have been granted to applicants who are graduates of an unaccredited school who have completed the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE). The PAVE program is a multi-step licensure pathway comprised of two multiple choice exams and requires completion of a clinical year at an accredited veterinary school. The Committee will develop a formal policy to formally communicate to applicants that this licensure pathway will be accepted in lieu of the National Board Examinations.

Animal Welfare & Ministry of the Solicitor General

Council received an update in the College's participation in the development of a new animal welfare strategy in Ontario. The College will be a contributor in the research and development phase of the Ministry's work and will assist in ongoing dialogue.

Medically Unnecessary Veterinary Surgery

As the result of a Notice of Motion, Council discussed a motion regarding medically unnecessary surgical procedures. Council defeated the motion and instead approved a motion to seek a legal opinion regarding a regulatory prohibition on veterinarians from performing surgery solely for altering an animal's appearance.