Modernizing the Veterinarians Act – Defining Incompetence

What is the Concept?
Replacing the current definition of “serious neglect” in the Veterinarians Act with the term “incompetence”.

Why is the College Considering Changes to this Concept?
The College is proposing replacing the current definition of “serious neglect” in the Veterinarians Act with the term “incompetence”, with a slightly revised definition, as the existing definition blends the concept of overarching incompetence with the actual act of neglect of an animal. As a result, the current definition of serious neglect makes it difficult to use. The revised definition omits the phrase “disregard for the welfare of an animal” which relates to member behavior and is more appropriately linked to the professional misconduct.

What is Proposed?
That the definition of “serious neglect” in 30 (4) of the Veterinarians Act be replaced with the term “incompetence,” defined as follows:

“A panel shall find a member or former member to be incompetent if the member or former member had displayed in his or her professional care of an animal a lack of knowledge, skill or judgement of a nature or to an extent that demonstrates that the member or former member is unfit to engage in the practice of veterinary medicine or is fit to engage in the practice of veterinary medicine only subject to the conditions and limitations imposed by the panel.”

This definition is consistent with the regulation of other professions and provides clarity to panels on this topic where it currently does not exist.