Consultation: Single Screening Process

Veterinarians Act: Legislative Reform – What do you think?

What is the concept?

A single screening process and resolutions pathway for all concerns, complaints and reports that are brought to the College’s attention by any source.

Why is the College considering changes to this concept?

The College currently has two distinct screening processes for matters brought to its attention – the Complaints Committee and the Executive Committee. Complaints are clearly defined and are usually made by a member of the public. Executive matters are broad-based and include issues raised anonymously but verified, matters in the media, reports of incapacity, etc.

These two intake processes are supported by different investigation authorities and different abilities to request a Registrar’s inquiry or report. For example, the current Complaints process can only appoint an investigator if it halts its review and requests a separate review by the Registrar; the Committee has no investigative authority. This is an inconsistent use of authority and resources and lengthens the process for all involved.

The College’s efforts to use a voluntary alternate dispute resolution process have also been challenging. Its voluntary nature is counterintuitive to the needs of a complaints department in resolving matters with the most appropriate process.

What is proposed?

- Screening would be conducted by a single screening committee. The current Complaints and Executive Committees’ roles would be folded into a single screening committee.
- Cases that are considered frivolous and vexatious or outside of the College’s jurisdiction (ie. employment law) could be dismissed at intake.
- There would be a mandatory alternative dispute resolution process in certain circumstances. Examples include refusal of service, financial disputes, misunderstandings related to invoices or communication generally, peer to peer disputes (not related to employment), and obtaining a copy of a record or prescription.
- The introduction of a Specified Continuing Education or Remediation Program (SCERPs). There would no longer be voluntary undertakings.
- Appeals to the Review Board (an arm’s length agency) would be retained.
What are the benefits?

The proposed model assists all parties involved in a matter before the College in the following ways:

- There is one triage or intake process which is streamlined and transparent.
- There is the ability to appoint an investigator in any case as necessary.
- Alternate dispute resolution would be mandatory in certain cases facilitating negotiated decisions which contributes to greater satisfaction on outcome for all involved.
- Maintains the arm’s length appeal process to assure the accountability of the College.

Next steps:

All perspectives shared during the legislative reform consultations will be compiled into a report and shared with the College Council. The report will also be available online.

*Please note: This is not a final consultation. Legislative reform discussions are in the early stages. The College and Council welcome your feedback on the initial concepts.*