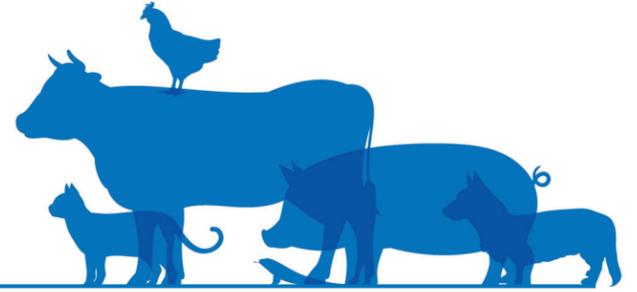
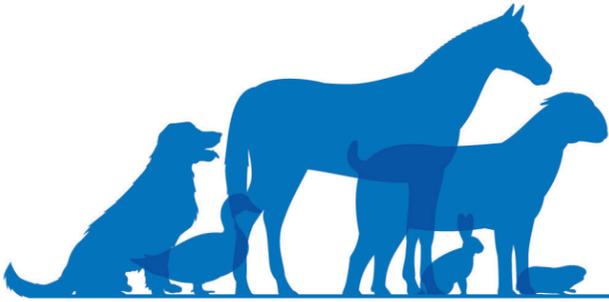




THE COLLEGE OF  
VETERINARIANS  
OF ONTARIO



# CODE OF ETHICS

## PREAMBLE

As members of a regulated profession, who have a societal obligation to serve in the public interest, veterinarians earn and maintain the public trust through engagement in principle-guided ethical practice. Veterinarians hold themselves, their colleagues, and their profession to a high standard of ethical conduct, reflecting the core values and principles of the profession. The College and the public have the reasonable expectation that the care and service provided by a veterinarian reflects these values. As societal ethics evolve regarding animals, veterinarians should take a leadership role to assure that such evolution is rational and sustainable.

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

A veterinarian has a moral obligation to animals, to society, to clients, to colleagues, to the profession, and to themselves. On occasion these obligations may conflict. In such circumstances, the Code provides a framework to guide veterinarians in ethical decision making. It reflects the profession's core values which provide the foundation for ethical principles and guidance on how one is to act as a morally responsible member of the veterinary profession.

## CORE VALUES

***trustworthiness - professionalism - competence  
compassion - transparency - respect***

These values are the foundation for ethical care and service in veterinary medicine.

The core value of professionalism is defined in the College document Guidance on Professionalism for Veterinarians.

## ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

### **Veterinarians act with compassion and demonstrate respect**

- Recognize their duty to identify the interests of the animal in consideration of the circumstances.
- Strive to prevent and relieve animal suffering and improve animal health and welfare.
- Act with empathy towards clients and colleagues.
- Respect clients' autonomy, privacy and right to confidentiality.
- Demonstrate civility and collegiality towards colleagues and all members of the veterinary care team to support and enhance animal care.
- Recognize the importance of self-compassion and personal wellbeing.
- Recognize and mitigate impacts to public health and environmental health.

### **Veterinarians foster transparency and demonstrate trustworthiness**

- Are accountable and truthful in their professional activities.
- Effectively communicate to promote and uphold professional relationships with clients, colleagues, and the public.
- Have open and honest discussions with clients that upholds the interests of the animal and ensures client understanding.
- Are reliable and competent.
- Maintain their competency by actively pursuing continuing professional development so knowledge and skills are current.
- Act in an unbiased manner and demonstrate openness to other perspectives.

### **Veterinarians act professionally and demonstrate continuing competence**

- Demonstrate behaviours, attitudes and skills that reflect the core values of the profession and reinforce the social contract between the profession and the public.
- Collaborate with colleagues to ensure comprehensiveness and continuity of patient care when necessary.
- Maintain appropriate and dignified boundaries in client relationships and all professional interactions.
- Adhere to legislated requirements and Professional Practice Standards.
- Engage in ongoing, reflective practice to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are expressed in professional behaviour.
- Apply current knowledge and skills to the delivery of quality care and service and the advancement of veterinary medicine, animal welfare, and public health and safety.