



## Veterinary Practice Owners Association of Ontario

*The Voice of the Veterinarian Owned Practice...For A Stronger Profession And Excellent Care.*

**Mr. Doug Raven**

**Chief Executive Officer**

Ontario Veterinary Medical Association

420 Bronte Street South, Suite 205

Milton, ON, L9T 0H9

RE: VPOA meeting with OVMA April 1, 2015

Dear Mr. Raven,

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and several key veterinarians within the OVMA. We are looking forward to this meeting as a start to a long and effective partnership that will generate tangible results for veterinarians in Ontario.

As you know, the veterinary industry is undergoing faster and more profound changes than ever before and veterinary practice owners in Ontario are facing challenges they have no good solutions for and many feel they don't have an organization that understands and represents them well. Therefore a group of engaged owners have revitalized the Veterinary Practice Owners Association of Ontario.

We are an advocacy group of practice owners who is engaged with our colleagues in the field. We feel strongly the interests of practice owners have been underrepresented in the marketplace, although we, the practice owners are THE economic motor of the veterinary industry in Ontario.

After many months of one-on-one consultations with our colleagues in the field and after an electronic survey to hundreds of practice owners, we have crystallized **key topics that require immediate and urgent attention by many stakeholders in the industry**. One of our first meetings is with OVMA, whom we all consider the only organization that represents all veterinarians in Ontario.

We will also meet in the next few months with the other stakeholders with the goal of driving real solutions and innovations for veterinary medicine in Ontario.

In our dialogues with our colleagues we could distill almost 20 topics worthy to be acted upon, however realistically we would like to focus on the top 7 actionable items with you during our first meeting.

1. **Discrepancies and confusion about standard of care:** There are not enough clear guidelines what an accepted standard of care means. Some colleagues feel every case should be offered a specialist referral, other colleagues provide entry level care to meet the clients financial situation. It appears that definition of quality is absent by the CVO. .
2. **Competition from low cost providers:** Since fee advertising is permitted, price wars have started. They lead to dismal care standards or unethical bait and switch strategies. They hurt the entire industry.
3. **SPCA, shelter medicine and rabies clinics:** Their offerings are being rapidly enhanced and create an uneven and unethical playing field. The public is unaware of the difference of population medicine and individual care. The private practice has higher requirements but has been widely ignored by veterinary organizations and is being maligned by the public for “gouging”.
4. **Fee guide is being questioned by many:** It will need a thorough rethinking to bring in line with today’s reality.
5. **Industry partners focus on the wrong market:** Pet food and drug manufacturers focus on veterinarians and their immediate competition, while the real competition is in pet stores, internet, US. Etc. All organizations need to work hard to shift their old paradigms.
6. **Oversupply of veterinarians:** The number of new graduates and of new entrants into the marketplace is increasing. However absorption rates are not growing parallel, as well as employability of new entrants is a concern.
7. **Public representation of veterinarians nationwide is dismal.** 85% of veterinarians believe there should be a nationwide PR campaign for veterinarians. All organizations are asked to synchronize their efforts.

We are positive these points are all of great importance for the OVMA as well and we are looking forward to make the first steps towards progress. We owe this to our members and the public.

Sincerely,

VPOA Executive Committee

Jim McCleary

Ernst Marsig

David Legallais

David Bonab

Sami Qureshi

Rae Worden

Christian Cumberbatch.