

RE CVO Policy update:

<http://cvo.informz.ca/admin31/content/template.asp?sid=8843&ptid=242&brandid=5105&uid=907339839&mi=847291&ps=8843>

CVO policies are changing and despite their good efforts of transparency, the newer interpretations of Regulation 1093 are not better but worse.

I would appreciate if this letter was forwarded to CVO and our councillors, yet it should stay anonymous, since our profession is a small community and I would prefer to stay relatively unknown to the CVO for fear of repercussions. People who differ are not liked.

The above policy update redefines "**recent and sufficient**" **knowledge of a patient**. In the past, a once a year examination was defined as a requirement for prescribing. This is no longer required.

The reasons given are:

- there is no evidence-based data to support this
- human health care replaced the annual physical exam with a Periodic Health Visit.

I have a problem with these reasons:

If we are making medical recommendations only on the basis of evidence based data, then we should not use examples of human medical standards as explanation. The two arguments contradict each other. Correlating evidence based medicine with human medical regulations is unacceptable.

There are major differences: Humans generally communicate directly with their physician. We veterinarians communicate with the patient's caregiver, who cannot reveal the patient's needs. If we don't examine the patient directly, we miss important information. The caregiver's communication is naturally biased, since every caregiver has a special motivation to communicate with the veterinarian. In clear terms some feel that their pet is fine and they don't need to spend any extra money for unnecessary exams, others feel that their pet is unwell, even if there is nothing wrong with the patient. Which veterinarian has evidence based data on the caregiver's perceptions? None. We need to examine the patient directly. If we believe the caregiver, we are liable and CVO will be the first to question why we believed them. A one year interval as a minimum isn't a bad standard. CVO rather chooses to have no standard based on the above illogical argumentation.

Further:

Quote: "The focus is now on the **specific needs of the patient versus a specific set time** between physical exams for everyone. This is now the focus for our patients as well."

This requires defining the needs of the patient. What are the needs? Is there any evidence base for definition of needs? Not to my knowledge. Or is CVO taking about the needs of the caregiver? The CVO mandate of protecting the public would certainly make us focus on pleasing the caregiver, not the patient.

Quote: "Determining what "recent and sufficient" knowledge of a patient is will be based on **evidence-based** medicine, **regulations**, and **professional expectations**."

This quote show the circular logic of our regulatory body.

- We established that without physical examination and objective data collection, there is no evidence to base the needs or to determine recent or sufficient knowledge.
- The regulations don't specify such either.
- Only the professional expectations define what is "recent and sufficient" knowledge.

BUT WHAT ARE PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS?

In CVO speak, it would be what is generally accepted practice by other veterinary professionals under similar circumstances.

In reality it is:

You can do whatever you want as long as nobody complains about you. BUT when we have a complaint, we believe the client is right and we summon a committee of experts and practitioners who are removed from the daily realities of veterinary practice and who will define professional expectations for you. They will check carefully where they could fault you for something, because we at the CVO assume that practitioners out there are a potential hazard to the public. And since we, as the regulatory body, give you, the practitioner the discretion to decide your own standards, we can afterwards hold you responsible because we will define the "professional expectations" on a case by case basis.

Please listen to this CVO. I believe my opinion isn't unique.

Why don't you define more precisely what is the "professional expectation"? It would keep us practitioners protected from your committees. Removing a simple rule, like the once per year exam rule, is counterproductive and adds to the confusion. It gives you more power though.

CVO: Practitioner, you are in trouble.

Vet: Why?

CVO: If you don't know...