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The Society of BC Veterinarians Responds to Concerns About the Regulator's Claim of Pending Insolvency

The Society of BC Veterinarians was surprised, in late 2024, with the CVBC's (the regulator) claim that it was approaching insolvency mid-2025. In response to this, the Minister of Agriculture took the extraordinary step of ordering a fee of \$500 from each BC veterinarian (totaling around \$1,000,000) to provide additional funding to bolster the regulator's budget. After that cash infusion, the CVBC claimed it was again projected to become insolvent mid-2026 and now asks for more money in the way of increased fees for veterinarians.

The Society of BC Veterinarians does not wish to see a regulator become insolvent. We recommend that all veterinarians vote YES to the increased fees, but we caution that an affirmative vote is not a vote of confidence nor is it a vote for the status quo. Changes in how the CVBC structures its policies to meet its mandate are required.

"The CVBC must change its practices because two claims of insolvency in one year is unbearable for veterinarians and for those who own animals. It creates distrust and confusion and fear," says Dr. Fraser Davidson, president of the Society of BC Veterinarians (SBCV). "We tell people there is no need to be afraid — veterinarians will remain available to provide medical care to animals. What needs to change is how budgets are being spent."

The CVBC has been subject to scrutiny in recent years. A review of the CVBC's complaints process was performed and delivered in April 2022, and 24 recommendations were made, under the statement that "...much better performance is achievable for the College under the legislation as it currently stands."

The SBCV is concerned that rather than seeing better performance, we see tremendous increases in legal service spending, and what appears to be an unsustainable investigation and complaints strategy. The SBCV supports self-regulation of the profession but prefers the use of regulatory responses appropriate to the risk posed. We

see significant room for re-evaluation of complaints and investigative processes at the CVBC so that costs do not continue to escalate.

“This isn’t a money problem; this is a spending problem,” says Dr. Davidson. “We need to see the CVBC achieve better performance within the constraints of its budget, like most British Columbians do with their own family budgets.”

Dr. Davidson says the CVBC wants the law changed to allow it to charge whatever it likes rather than seeking approval from veterinarians, as the law currently demands, but many veterinarians don’t want to put such uncontrolled power in the hands of the same people who have twice threatened insolvency these past eight months.

“British Columbians trust their veterinarians,” says Dr. Davidson. “Right now, many veterinarians do not trust their regulator. Much of the distrust stems from the CVBC’s unwillingness to communicate with the veterinarians or with the SBCV.”

While the CVBC has ignored the SBCV’s requests for meetings, it has also advised BC veterinarians that it has neither the capacity nor the mandate to engage with stakeholders on an individual basis regarding the legislative, policy, or other legal responsibilities underlying the CVBC's operations.

“Our public bodies, including regulators, should not hide from consultation with those they govern,” says Dr. Davidson. “We support the CVBC’s mandate to protect the public but oppose some of its methods. We haven’t heard of other regulators finding themselves in the position of insolvency. Self-regulation works when there’s diligent communications, strong financial management, and a willingness to reflect on challenges and change course as needed.”

“We share the same goal of protecting the public,” he says, “but often feel we are being positioned as adversaries by some of the CVBC’s actions. It’s simply untrue that we are on opposing sides.”

For immediate release

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