



College of Veterinarians of British Columbia

Professional Practice Standard: Medical Record Keeping¹

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This College publication describes a mandatory standard of practice. The *Veterinarians Act* in section 52 provides that a failure to comply with a standard may be investigated.

Synopsis

The CVBC Professional Practice Standard: Medical Records applies to all veterinarians and all record systems (e.g., electronic, paper or combination of both).

A veterinarian meets the Professional Practice Standard: Medical Records when he/she:

1. Creates a record for each animal or group of animals where a Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) is established, that is compliant with
 - a. CVBC Bylaws, Part 4 – Ethics and Standards, Division 4.5 – Medical Records, s. 243 to s. 247, and
 - b. Schedule D – Accreditation Standards, Section 04 – Medical Records, S. 21 to s. 38.
2. Ensures records:
 - a. are accessible, and
 - b. provide an accurate, complete and up-to-date profile of the animal(s) to enable continuity of care.
3. Ensures any changes made to records include:
 - a. updates identifying both the change and date of change in a clearly identifiable manner, preserving the content of the record before each change or update,
 - b. an audit trail showing the original content, together with the author and date/time is established, and
 - c. a notation of approval by the veterinarian.
4. Establishes procedures and protocols to protect client confidentiality and safeguard records against loss, damage, unauthorized access or disclosure.

¹ Council approved the ‘Professional Practice Standard: Medical Record Keeping’ on June 17, 2017. It is available on the CVBC website (www.cvbc.ca) under Resources > Bylaws, Standards & Policies.

5. Responds to or makes requests for, and/or provides medical information in a timely manner that facilitates the continuity of care of an animal(s) between and among veterinarians.
6. Responds in a timely manner to requests from clients or another veterinarian to transfer a copy of the complete records.
7. Maintains all records for seven (7) years after the last entry is made.
8. Destroys records in a manner that protects client confidentiality.

Background

The complete medical record is a compilation of all information that pertains to the care of an animal or a group of animals, and documents the management of a case. It is a legal document that represents the veterinarian's thought process, decisions, judgment, actions, and interactions with others (clients, colleagues, other caregivers, and service providers such as specialists and laboratories), each of which has an impact on patient outcomes. The medical record is also a communication tool which facilitates the continuity of care for animals both within and between veterinary medical-care teams.

A quality record is fundamental to quality practice, and this Professional Practice Standard itemizes the essential elements of a quality record. As such, justification for any departure from this Professional Practice Standard should be documented in an appropriate place within the medical record.

Legislative Authority

Veterinarians Act, SBC 2010 c. 15.

CVBC Bylaws:

Part 4 – Ethics and Standards, Division 4.5 – Medical Records, s. 243 to s. 247

Schedule D – Accreditation Standards, Section 04 – Medical Records, S. 21 to s. 38

Acknowledgement

Adapted with permission from the CVO's "Professional Practice Standard Medical Records".