



As approved by the membership of the MVMA on February 3, 2012

This Code shall define the practice of veterinary medicine based on a professional morality which will consist of a strict adherence to both the defined rules as set out herein and an overall standard of ethical behavior befitting the dignity and integrity of the profession whose responsibility it is to provide animals with the highest possible standard of medical care.

To achieve this end, all members of the Association shall conduct themselves in an exemplary manner within the spirit of the Code.

A. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE CLIENT

1. Each member shall practise the art of veterinary medicine with integrity.

Commentary:

- a) Integrity is a fundamental quality of any person who seeks to practise as a member of the veterinary profession.
- b) Dishonorable or questionable conduct on the part of the veterinarian reflects adversely to a greater or lesser degree upon the integrity of the profession as a whole.

2. Members have the responsibility of being competent to perform the veterinary services which they undertake on behalf of their clients.

Commentary:

- a) Competence goes beyond formal qualification of the veterinarian to practise veterinary medicine. It has to do with the sufficiency of the veterinarian's qualification to deal with the matter in question and includes knowledge and skill and the ability to use them effectively in the interest of the client.
3. Veterinarians should serve their clients in a conscientious, diligent and efficient manner and should provide a quality of service at least equal to that which veterinarians generally would expect of a competent veterinarian in a like situation.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PROFESSION

1.

- a) The veterinarian should first of all be a good citizen. No act should be committed that will reflect unfavorably upon the profession. Each member should build a professional reputation based on ability and integrity. No member shall belittle or injure the profession or condemn the character of another member's professional acts.
- b) Members shall comply with the common law governing their obligations to their fellow professionals and shall obey without fault the official public regulations and laws governing their acts.

2. Consultations

- a) When a fellow practitioner, laboratory veterinarian, government or industry employed veterinarian is called into consultation by the attending veterinarian, discussions with the client regarding the case shall be handled in such a manner as to avoid criticism of the attending veterinarian.
- b) When rendering necessary services to the client of another veterinarian, it is unethical for the veterinarian to offer free or compensated service or advice other than that which would normally be accorded to any client in the treatment of such cases.
- c) Consultations should be conducted in such a spirit of veterinarian as to ensure the client's confidence in the veterinary profession.
- d) When acting as consultants, regardless of their type of employment, laboratory veterinarians shall deport themselves in the same manner as practitioners.
- e) Members shall not willfully place their professional knowledge, attainments or services at the disposal of any lay body, organization, group or individual, by whatever name called, or however organized, for the purpose of encouraging unqualified groups and individuals to practise veterinary medicine.
- f) When a member is asked to examine and treat an animal that is known to be under the care of another veterinarian, the member shall make reasonable effort to inform the previously attending veterinarian to this effect. A second veterinarian in a case shall not comment on the initial diagnosis if there has not been a discussion of the diagnosis and treatment between both veterinarians. The previously retained veterinarian shall discuss the case with the new attending veterinarian and supply him/her with a full medical history of the case forthwith upon request.
- g) Failure to comply with any portion of this section shall be deemed to be unprofessional conduct.

3. Advertising

No member shall publish, display, distribute or use, or permit, directly or indirectly, the publication, display, distribution or use of any advertisement, announcement or similar form of communication related to the member's professional services or ancillary services or to a member's association with, or employment by, any person, or thing, except as permitted by the following:

Except as provided in this Part, a member may communicate factual, accurate and verifiable information that a reasonable person would consider relevant in the choice of a veterinarian, including the availability of ancillary services that:

- a) Is not false, misleading or deceptive by the inclusion or omission of any information.
- b) Contains no testimonial or comparative statements related to standard of practice or competence.

All advertisements, announcements, displays or similar forms of communication used must be stored in either paper or electronic format by the veterinary clinic/hospital for at least one year.

4. Fraud

When employed by the buyer to inspect an animal for soundness, it is unethical to accept a fee from the seller. The acceptance of such a fee is prima facie evidence of fraud. On the other hand, it is deemed unethical to criticize unfairly an animal about to be sold. The veterinarian's duty in this connection is to be a just and honest referee.

Commentary:

- a) As a member of the veterinary profession, a veterinarian purports to be knowledgeable, skilled and capable in the practice of veterinary medicine. Accordingly, a client is entitled to assume that a veterinarian is capable of fulfilling any veterinary task or procedure undertaken on the client's behalf.
- b) It follows that veterinarians should not undertake a case unless they honestly believe that they are competent to handle it or that they can become competent without undue delay or risk to the patient or expense to their client.
- c) Veterinarians who are incompetent do their clients a disservice, bring discredit on their profession and may injure or harm animals entrusted to them.

5. All members must be alert to recognize when they lack the competence to perform a particular task and the disservice they would do their client if they undertook that task.

Commentary:

- a) Veterinarians should recognize their limitations and when indicated, recommend to their client that other options and services should be obtained.

- 6.** No member shall guarantee a cure.
- 7.** All veterinarians should continue to educate themselves and keep abreast of current developments in the practice of veterinary medicine.
- 8.** Veterinarians have a duty to hold in strict confidence all information acquired in the course of their professional activities and should not divulge any such information unless authorized by their client or required by law to do so.
- 9.** Members shall comply with the common law governing their obligations to their clients and shall obey without fault the official public regulations and laws governing their acts.
- 10.** Members shall provide care to their patients in a humane and compassionate manner.
- 11.** Members should assist in maintaining the integrity of the profession and should participate in its activities.