

Animal Rehabilitation

Introduction

The College of Physiotherapists of Ontario is mandated by the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) to protect the public interest in relation to the delivery of physiotherapy services by physiotherapists to Ontarians. Within its prescribed mandate the College aims to protect and serve the public interest by ensuring that physiotherapists provide high quality, competent and ethical services.

Background

The RHPA governs the majority of the delivery of human health care by health professionals in Ontario. The Physiotherapy Act, a component of the RHPA model, provides a definition of scope of practice of physiotherapy and restricts the use of the title “physiotherapist” or “PT” to those individuals who are registrants of the College.

The Veterinarians Act exclusively governs the delivery of animal health care by health professionals in Ontario. The Veterinarians Act provides exclusive scope of practice respecting animal care to licensed veterinarians by prohibiting anyone who is not a holder of a veterinary licence from engaging in the practice of veterinary medicine or holding himself or herself as engaging in the practice of veterinary medicine. Animal health care is regulated by the College of Veterinarians of Ontario.

Position

It is the position of the College that animal rehabilitation is outside the defined scope of practice of physiotherapists in Ontario. As such, animal rehabilitation is not within the mandate of the RHPA or the College.

College registrants who choose to provide health care to both humans and animals are engaging in dual practice and their activities are governed by the College’s expectations for registrants who engage in dual practice. In these circumstances human physiotherapy care is regulated by the College of Physiotherapists and animal rehabilitation is regulated by the College of Veterinarians.

College registrants should note that because providing health care to animals is outside the scope of practice of physiotherapists in Ontario:

- the use of the protected titles granted to physiotherapists in the Physiotherapy Act is prohibited; and
- the time spent in the provision of animal health care does not apply to the College’s practice hour requirement for continued registration.

As such, College registrants who choose to provide health care to animals should:

- recognize that their health care activities are within the protected scope of practice of veterinarians; and
- ensure that their provision of health care to animals is in accordance with the rules and standards of the College of Veterinarians.

In keeping with this position, the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario will work cooperatively with the College of Veterinarians on complaints received about registrants that may be related to issues including inappropriate title use or behavior unbecoming of a professional while working with animals.

This position statement has been developed in collaboration with the College of Veterinarians of Ontario.

References

- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario. Standards for Professional Practice: Dual Health Care Practice.
- College of Veterinarians of Ontario. Position Statement: Animal Rehabilitation in Veterinary Practice.
- Physiotherapy Act
- Regulated Health Professions Act
- Veterinarians Act

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The information contained in this position statement may be time limited. Persons referring to this information more than two years from the date of publication should contact the College to confirm that the information is current.