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# NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR COLLEGE OF VETERINARIANS

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Submission to the ATIPPA Review Commission August 2014

August 6, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

The Newfoundland and Labrador College of Veterinarians is concerned to hear that veterinarians in the province are being asked to release confidential health records on the basis of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The idea that health records are confidential is a basic tenet of the expected behaviour of all practitioners of both human and animal health. In order for health practitioners – including veterinarians – to practice effectively, they must have the trust of their clients and patients. A large part of this trust is the belief that they can tell their practitioners anything without the fear that this information will be released to the public.

Allowing the release of privileged medical records is a dangerous precedent for any health practitioner. Actions of this kind undercut the basis of the relationship between client and veterinarian. If clients know that their medical records can be released to anyone, particularly if they know their records could be released to business competitors, they would be hesitant to provide the information necessary for veterinarians to protect the health of the animals involved.

Because of this, the College expects all veterinarians to maintain the confidentiality of their medical records.

While the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Veterinarians understands the importance of the free access to information in our society, we are concerned that lumping medical records of any kind under this rubric is a serious mistake.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Andrew Peacock BSc DVM  
Registrar,  
Newfoundland and Labrador College of Veterinarians

