

## ACT Veterinary Practitioner Board Advice regarding telemedicine

The ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board is aware that some veterinary practitioners may want or need to consult with their clients using remote means during the Covid-19 public health emergency. The ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board (the Board) is scheduled to meet on Friday 27 March 2020 and will be developing guidelines on patient consultations conducted remotely by use of technology such as phone, internet, videoconferencing during this period of the Covid-19 public health emergency.

However due to the rapidly changing circumstances the Board have decided to give some immediate guidance to veterinary practitioners. This is an interim advice and more detailed guidelines will be forwarded to all veterinary practitioners following the 27<sup>th</sup> March Board meeting.

**During the declared Covid-19 public health emergency veterinary practitioners if needed may undertake and charge for phone, internet, videoconferencing consultations.**

Veterinary practitioners must still ensure that the following conditions are adhered to:

- The veterinary practitioner must be registered in the ACT or their current registration recognised in the ACT under Part 4 of the *Veterinary Practice Act 2018*.
- There must be a *bona fide* veterinarian–client–patient relationship that is real and not merely nominal (i.e. there should be evidence of personally having previous contact with the client/animal and of assuming the responsibility for the diagnosis, treatment and outcome)
- A complete and accurate medical record in line with Veterinary Practitioner Board’s requirements must be produced and retained. [Management of Clinical Records](#)
- Credentials of all service providers, as well as disclaimers around the limits of telemedicine resources, should be unambiguously disclosed to the client.
- The veterinary practitioner must be satisfied that the data presented by the client is reliable; he or she must have sufficient trust in the client’s ability to assess accurately and describe signs (for example temperature, heat and swelling, halitosis, abdominal pain) and that the technology is satisfactory for the purpose (e.g. lameness examination).
- The supply of restricted drugs must only occur where the the veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) to initiate at the very least a general or preliminary diagnosis of their medical condition. At all times, such supply must meet the requirements under the [Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008](#). In all cases adequate instructions, including any possible side effects and risks to humans administering these drugs, must be provided to the client.

The Board also would urge you to ensure that your staff and colleagues are familiar with the information published by ACT Health regarding COVID-19 <https://health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/novel-coronavirus-covid-19> and the COVID-19 updates on the Australian Veterinary Association’s website <https://www.ava.com.au/coronavirus/>

The Board’s guideline will be sent to you by email and published on the Board’s website as soon as possible.