



Veterinary Ireland Media Release **17th July 2019**

Veterinary Ireland calls on the Veterinary Council of Ireland to uphold the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 as amended and ensure the autonomy of veterinary practitioners

In response to a media release from the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) outlining a number of changes to the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Practitioners in relation to the provision of veterinary services to the public and the ownership of veterinary practices, Veterinary Ireland is calling on the VCI to uphold the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 as amended and thereby ensure the autonomy of veterinary practitioners.

According to the Chief Executive of Veterinary Ireland, Finbarr Murphy, *“it is clear from the current law (the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 as amended) that lay corporate bodies can have no role in the operation of veterinary practices. Employees of lay corporate bodies would not have clinical autonomy in the provision of veterinary services to the public as an employment relationship is inconsistent with autonomy. This has been borne out by relevant judgments of the European Court of Justice”*. The Veterinary Council has clarified that veterinary practitioners should be fully and autonomously responsible for the provision of veterinary services to the public.

Veterinary Ireland is seeking an urgent meeting with the Veterinary Council of Ireland to clarify if it intends to carry out its statutory functions in regulating the practice of veterinary medicine and ensuring that lay persons or lay corporate bodies have no role in the operation and control of veterinary practices.

Veterinary Ireland intends to hold the Veterinary Council of Ireland to fulfilling its statutory functions under the existing law, the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 as amended. In the event that the Council is unable to assure us that it can ensure that veterinary practitioners are fully and autonomously in control of the provision of veterinary services to the public, Veterinary Ireland will take all appropriate action up to and including legal action to guarantee this autonomy.

Veterinary Ireland is disappointed that the VCI appears to have ignored the views of the public and stakeholders in coming to its conclusions and has failed to publish the results of the survey of the public and stakeholders on this critical issue.

Whilst the VCI contends it has no right to make a statement on ownership, it has failed to call on the Oireachtas to clarify the matter of ownership and to amend the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 in a manner that guarantees autonomy in the provision of veterinary services to the public.



Meanwhile Veterinary Ireland is extremely disappointed that the VCI has taken no measures to stop the purchase and operation of veterinary practices in Ireland by lay corporate bodies in clear contravention of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 as amended. Veterinary Ireland calls on the VCI to implement the current law.

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