



## **Veterinary Ireland Media Release**

**10<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

### **Veterinary Ireland welcomes Fianna Fáil's proposed Bill to amend the Veterinary Practice Act 2005-2012**

Veterinary Ireland welcomes the announcement by Deputy Jackie Cahill, T.D. of his intention to bring forward a Bill to amend the Veterinary Practice Act 2005-2012 with the objective of confining ownership of veterinary practices to registered veterinary practitioners and ensuring that the registered veterinary practitioner in charge is an integral part of the ownership structure.

This course of action has been necessitated by the recent encroachment by lay corporate entities into the ownership and operation of veterinary practices in Ireland. Veterinary Ireland is extremely disappointed that the Veterinary Council of Ireland has failed to take measures to stop the purchase and operation of veterinary practices in Ireland by lay corporate bodies in contravention of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005.

The President of the Veterinary Council of Ireland, Peadar Ó Scanaill insists that *"the veterinary practitioner is the service provider and any non-registrant owner, part owner or investor must not influence nor seek to influence the service provision to the public at and from that premises"*.

According to Veterinary Ireland President, Conor Geraghty, *"the recent closure of a veterinary practice in Donegal by its lay corporate owner clearly demonstrates that, contrary to Mr Ó Scanaill's assertions, the registered veterinary practitioner in charge was powerless to prevent this closure. This resulted in serious animal health and welfare issues and in critically important and dangerous drugs being under the control of non-vets. In order that this sequence of events can never be repeated, it is necessary to amend the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, to ensure that the veterinary practitioner in charge must be an integral part of the ownership structure and have total control of the operation of the veterinary practice"*.

Veterinary Ireland agrees with Deputy Cahill's assessment that *"whilst the Veterinary Practice Act remains silent on ownership of veterinary practices, and lay corporates continue to acquire Irish veterinary practices, the resultant damage to the Irish industry will be a poorer and vastly more expensive service to the Irish consumer"*.

Veterinary Ireland wishes to acknowledge the overwhelming support of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine in addressing this issue of critical importance to the future delivery of veterinary services in Ireland and looks forward to their support of this proposed legislation.

#### **ENDS**

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Issued by Veterinary Ireland:

Finbarr Murphy, Chief Executive  
Tel: 01-457-7976 Email: [HQ@vetireland.ie](mailto:HQ@vetireland.ie)

Antonina Ni Dhuinn, Progress Communications  
Tel: 01-276-6117 Email: [nina@progresspr.ie](mailto:nina@progresspr.ie)