

POLICY – PROCESS FOR APPROVAL OF PRACTICE NAMES

BACKGROUND

Historically the bylaws of the ABVMA required that the name of a veterinary practice include the veterinarians' name or geographical location, have the word 'animal' or 'veterinary' in the middle and end with the word 'clinic', 'hospital' or 'service'.

There has been an evolution of veterinary practices in the province from the traditional full service mixed animal practice to special interest and limited practices. This evolution is in part due to the public demand for specialized veterinary medical services.

The naming of veterinary practices is now more permissive to allow for these different types of practices and creativity when naming veterinary practices. The Bylaws of the ABVMA still requires that practice names are approved, however, rather than prescribing what must be contained in a practice name, the bylaw sets out the reasons why the PIPS Committee may refuse to grant permission to use a practice name.

From the ABVMA bylaws:

4.8 Names of Practices

- 4.8.1 *A Registered Veterinarian, permit holder, facility or other entity offering veterinary services to the public shall, prior to the use of any practice name which the person, permit holder, facility or entity wishes to use, have the practice's name approved by the Practice Inspection and Practice Standards Committee.*
- 4.8.2 *The Practice Inspection and Practice Standards Committee may refuse to grant permission to use any practice name that in its opinion:*
 - 4.8.2.1 *is misleading;*
 - 4.8.2.2 *is in bad taste, self-laudatory, or otherwise contrary to the honor and dignity of the veterinary profession;*
 - 4.8.2.3 *potentially abuses the trust of members of the public;*
 - 4.8.2.4 *claims any superiority or guarantee;*
 - 4.8.2.5 *unless the Registered Veterinarian in the facility is registered as a specialist pursuant to s. 5.1 of the General Regulation, suggests a specialty in the practice of veterinary medicine.*
- 4.8.3 *In the event the Practice Inspection and Practice Standards Committee refuses to grant permission, it shall provide a written decision with reasons*
- 4.8.4 *Council may from time to time develop and publish such guidelines with respect to the naming of the veterinary practices as it deems appropriate.*
- 4.8.5 *A Registered Veterinarian, permit holder, or other entity that intends to offer veterinary services who has submitted a name for approval, may request a review of a decision of the Practice Inspection and Practice Standards Committee under this section to Council. Notice of such a request for review shall be in writing and received within 30 days of the receipt of the decision which shall set out the basis of the review. The registered veterinarian, permit holder or other entity and a representative of the Practice Inspection and Practice Standards*

Committee may, at the discretion of Council, make written and/or oral representations to Council with respect to the review, upon Council granting leave to do so.

4.8.6 Council shall provide a written decision with reasons with respect to the review.

This policy sets out the process for practice name approval administratively or by the PIPS Committee.

POLICY

The responsible veterinarian for the veterinary practice wishing to have a practice name approved or a practice name changed shall submit the appropriate application to the ABVMA.

The application for the practice name approval shall be forwarded to the Registrar (or his designate) and the PIPS Committee Chair.

If there is agreement between the Registrar (or his designate) and the PIPS Committee Chair that there is no reason based on the ABVMA Bylaw, to refuse to grant permission to use the practice name, the name will be administratively approved and the member will be notified and informed of their obligations in use of an approved name.

If there is not agreement between the Registrar and the PIPS Committee Chair that the name may be administratively approved, then the name is not approved and:

- the applicant is notified that the name has not been administratively approved,
- the Registrar or the PIPS Committee Chair may provide feedback on the submitted name and/or make suggestions of modifications to the name that may result in administrative approval, and
- if the name is not modified and is not administratively approved, the applicant will be informed that the PIPS Committee will conduct a review of the application to determine if there is a reason to refuse to grant permission to use the name.

PROCESS FOR PIPS REVIEW

The PIPS Committee has the authority under the ABVMA Bylaw to approve or refuse to grant approval for the use of a proposed practice name. The PIPS Committee will hold a meeting to discuss the application for a practice name that is not administratively approved. This may be in person or by teleconference.

The application is provided to the PIPS committee and will include a brief description of the practice, the business model and why the applicant wishes to use the name.

An applicant may submit, in the original application, an alternate name for consideration by the PIPS Committee, which may be considered at the same review.

ABVMA staff will provide the archive of refused names and the current directory of practice names for PIPS consideration during a review.

In the event the PIPS Committee refuses to grant permission, the Committee will provide the reasons why permission was refused.

The reasons may include suggested alternatives similar to the name submitted that would not be refused by the Committee.

Upon approval of a practice name, the member will be notified and will be informed of their obligations in use of an approved name. The PIPS Committee may include comments or suggestions regarding the approved name.

REASONS

The PIPS Committee will provide brief reasons for refusal of all names that are refused permission. These reasons will be provided to the applicant and maintained in an archive to document the decisions of the PIPS Committee, in an effort to have consistent application of the Bylaw.

ARCHIVE OF REFUSED NAMES

All names for which the PIPS Committee has refused to grant permission will be archived. This listing will include the name of the applicant, the date the name was refused, and the reasons of the PIPS Committee for refusal of the name.

The archive of refused practice names will be available to the PIPS Committee at each meeting where a review of a practice name is conducted.

A name or substantially similar name that has been refused by the PIPS Committee will not normally be granted permission for use by another applicant.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUSLY REFUSED NAMES

A practice name submitted by an applicant that was previously refused permission may subsequently be granted permission by the PIPS Committee for use provided the reasons for refusal of the name have been addressed. This may occur due to an evolution of the application of the Names of Practices bylaw or the interpretation of the bylaw, or a change in the type of practice for which the name approval has been requested.

A practice name submitted for approval by an applicant that is the same or substantially similar to a name that was previously refused permission will not be granted permission for use unless the PIPS Committee grants permission for use of that name and the applicant that previously submitted the same (or substantially similar) practice name has been offered the opportunity to use that name.

OLD PRACTICE NAMES

The names of practices that have changed their name or have closed (have stopped using a name) may not be used by another practice for a period of 5 years from the time the practice becomes inactive. The name may be approved for use by another practice provided the consent of the registered veterinarian that originally submitted the name is obtained.

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