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NZVNA Guide to Professional Conduct for Allied Veterinary Professionals

Definition of terms used in this guide

Allied Veterinary Professional (AVP)	Any person with an animal health qualification eligible for registration with the Allied Veterinary Professional Regulatory Council
Client	The person who requests veterinary services for an animal. This is usually in the context of a request for veterinary services to be provided by a veterinarian
Patient	Any animal cared for by an AVP acting in his or her professional capacity
Veterinarian	Any veterinarian appropriately qualified, currently registered by the Veterinary Council of New Zealand in terms of the Veterinarians Act 2005 and holding a current practicing certificate

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Introduction

The Guide of Professional Conduct for Allied Veterinary Professionals sets out the minimum level of conduct required from all NZVNA members.

PART 1 – YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOUR PATIENTS

An AVP must:

- a) make animal welfare the primary consideration
- b) treat all patients, of whatever species, humanely and with respect
- c) provide suitable care
- d) assist with the maintenance of proper standards in relation to in-patient care and supervision

PART 2 – YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS

An AVP must:

- a) ensure that clear information is provided about the arrangements for the care of in-patients
- b) take all reasonable care in using their professional skills to administer care and treatments to patients
- c) keep their skills and knowledge up to date
- d) treat the client with respect and observe professional courtesies
- e) maintain client confidentiality
- f) give due consideration to the client's concerns and wishes where these do not conflict with the patient's welfare
- g) facilitate communication between the veterinarian and the client, to assist the client's understanding of any issues relating to their animal's treatment
- h) recognise situations where the client should speak to the veterinarian in charge of the case
- i) recognise that the client has freedom of choice

PART 3 – YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

An AVP must:

- a) promote responsible animal ownership
- b) at all times be trustworthy and honest and uphold the good reputation of allied veterinary professionals
- c) co-operate with other health professionals when appropriate
- d) use their professional status to provide only factual information to the general public about veterinary products and services
- e) accurately represent their qualifications by using the post-nominal letters as per the NZVNA website.

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- f) continue their professional education by keeping up to date with the general developments in animal health and welfare, particularly in their area of professional activity and should maintain a record of continuing professional development (CPD) undertaken as evidence of so doing

PART 4 – YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO YOUR PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES

An AVP must:

- a) always liaise with colleagues where more than one are involved in caring for an animal
- b) assist with the provision of all relevant clinical information promptly to colleagues taking over responsibility for a case
- c) assist with the provision of proper documentation for all referral or re-directed cases
- d) assist with the responsible referral of cases
- e) be satisfied that the person to whom a task is delegated is competent
- f) treat as confidential, and refrain from divulging, any information acquired during the course of employment. Such information must not be disclosed to anyone except where they are required to do so in a court of law
- g) carry out a veterinarian's orders intelligently, assisting in the provision of veterinary care. They shall, however, act at all times in the interests of the animal and in such a manner as to justify the trust and confidence of the public and to uphold the good standing of the veterinary profession
- h) be prepared to explain and justify to clients or colleagues any action or decision taken in the course of their professional activities
- i) keep within their own areas of competence save for the requirement to provide emergency first aid

An AVP must not:

- a) speak or write disparagingly about another professional colleague
- b) obstruct a client from changing to another veterinary practice
- c) discourage a client from seeking a second opinion

PART 5 – YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE LAW

An AVP must:

- a) be fully aware of, and abide by, all Acts and Regulations affecting them professionally and seek to clarify any areas that are of confusion or are not clearly understood
- b) be mindful of their responsibility to report to their employer any circumstances where the health and safety of staff or animals is put at risk

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- c) when dispensing products or medications, ensure the client is aware of the correct method of use, route of administration, withholding times and special precautions relevant to that animal remedy
- d) not take part in any illegal or unethical conduct. Any AVP who may be in difficulty or trouble may contact the New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association in confidence
- e) The NZVNA Veterinary Nurses' Complaints Committee will comprise of four members, including at least two veterinary nurses (one of which is the NZVNA President) and one layperson. The committee will be decided upon by the NZVNA Executive Committee. Veterinary nurses may contact the Veterinary Nurses' Complaint Committee through the NZVNA National Secretary

The Guide to Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses was adopted by the members of the New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association on 5 August 1994 and updated in 2007 and 2023 (including the name change to encompass all AVP's). The Guide to Professional Conduct is issued to all members of the New Zealand Veterinary Nursing Association and all members of said Association must abide by this Guide to Professional Conduct.