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For Immediate Release

ABVMA members pass resolutions To ban medically unnecessary surgical procedures and to require veterinarians and veterinary technologists to report animal abuse and neglect.

Calgary, AB—Members of the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association (ABVMA) met this morning and voted in favour of two resolutions that will have significant impact on animal welfare in Alberta. The first resolution obligates veterinarians and veterinary technologists to report cases of animal abuse and neglect, and to take action to address animals in distress. A peer-reviewed disciplinary process in place for members whose conduct regarding these resolutions is in question, to protect the interests of animals, the public and the profession. This resolution will complement existing legislation in the *Animal Protection Act (APA)*, while going further, by providing specific definitions of animal abuse and neglect.

The resolution's definition of abuse covers malicious or inappropriate infliction of physical injury, sexual abuse, mental abuse, poisoning, asphyxia, drowning, and evidence of organized dog fighting. Neglect, as defined in the resolution, addresses the failure to provide animals with adequate basic necessities supporting health and well being for extended periods leading to suffering, serious injury or death. This includes food and water, medical attention when wounded or ill, protection from injurious weather, adequate space, sanitary housing, ventilation and lighting, opportunity for exercise, and a stimulating social environment that prevents the induction of a negative emotional or psychological state.

The second resolution recommends a ban on all unnecessary medical/surgical procedures. This includes the following procedures: **ear cropping, tail docking, tail nicking, tail blocking, partial digit amputation** (declawing or onychectomy), **cosmetic dentistry, tattooing** that is not for the purpose of registration and identification, **tendonectomy, front dewclaw removal, body piercing, and devocalization**.

"This is an important step forward for our profession and for animal welfare in this province," says Dr. Darrell Dalton, Registrar of the ABVMA. "I'm grateful for our members who have demonstrated such a profound commitment to their role as guardians of animal welfare in our province by voting in favour of these resolutions." Members approving these resolutions will allow the ABVMA to propose amendments to the Veterinary Profession Act General Regulation.

The ABVMA is the professional regulatory organization governing the practice of veterinary medicine in Alberta under the authority of the VPA. As a self-governing profession, the ABVMA performs its regulatory and professional enhancement functions in accordance with the law and in a manner responsible to the public of Alberta. Providing leadership in animal health and welfare is a core objective of the ABVMA.