



peer review of
MEDICAL RECORDS

Participant Information Package

2026



CVO

College of
Veterinarians
of Ontario

Table of Contents

- 1. ABOUT THE PEER REVIEW OF MEDICAL RECORDS (PRMR) 3**
- 2. PARTICIPATING IN PEER REVIEW OF MEDICAL RECORDS (PRMR)..... 4**
 - Selection 4
 - Benefits of Participating 4
 - Process 5
 - Peer Reviewers 5
- 3. PREPARING FOR A PEER REVIEW OF MEDICAL RECORDS (PRMR)..... 5**
- 4. STEPS IN THE PROCESS 6**
 - Step 1: Complete the Facility Questionnaire..... 6
 - Step 2: Select Eight (8) Medical Records for Submission 6
 - Step 3: Complete a Case Cover Sheet for Each Case 6
 - Step 4: Assemble the Records Package..... 6
 - Step 5: Submit the Records Package to the College..... 9
 - Step 6: Review the PRMR Assessment Report..... 9
 - Total Score 9
 - Annual Risk Issue: Informed Client Consent 9
- 5. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS..... 10**
 - a) If my facility is randomly selected for PRMR, do I need permission from my clients to submit their records to the College? 10
 - b) If the PRMR Assessment Report scores my facility was not successful, what happens next?.. 10
 - c) How do I find resources on medical record requirements? 10
 - d) How do I find out what will be assessed in the medical record review? 10
 - e) Will the results of the PRMR Assessment be available on the Public Register?..... 10
 - f) Will the results of the PRMR Assessment be shared with College Committees? 11
 - g) How are the Peer Reviewers selected and trained?..... 11
 - h) How is conflict of interest addressed in the Peer Review of Medical Records? 11
 - i) How is the Peer Reviewer chosen for the PRMR assessment for my facility?..... 11
 - j) Is there a cost to me to participate in the Peer Review of Medical Records? 11
 - k) Can I volunteer to participate in a Peer Review of Medical Records?..... 11
 - l) Can I share the results of the PRMR Assessment Report with staff at my facility? 12

1. About the Peer Review of Medical Records (PRMR)

The Peer Review of Medical Records (PRMR) supports veterinarians in meeting the standards for medical record keeping. Trained Peer Reviewers, who are practicing veterinarians, assess medical records of facilities that are randomly selected to participate in a Peer Review of Medical Records process. All accredited veterinary facilities operating in Ontario are eligible for random selection unless they meet specific exclusion criteria (see the criteria under “Selection” on the following page).

Each review results in a report that is provided to the facility with recommendations and commendations, as well as feedback on areas of record-keeping that are meeting the standards and areas where gaps in record-keeping are identified. The report will also indicate whether the facility is successful or not in meeting the standards for record keeping. As a result, facilities that are not successful will undergo re-evaluation of their medical records after taking corrective actions. We recommend sharing this feedback with the entire veterinary team so that record-keeping is adjusted consistently as suggested. Each veterinarian is responsible for ensuring that quality medical records exist in relationship to their own individual facility.

In analyzing data over time, the College has identified medical record-keeping as a risk in practice through the information that is gathered from its various programs, including PRMR, facility inspections, and complaints and discipline. The goal of the PRMR program is to improve the quality of medical records among veterinary facilities in Ontario. An aggregate report is provided to the profession annually to highlight opportunities for all veterinarians to enhance their record-keeping practices. The report incorporates the results from a participant survey and the scoring results from those facilities who have completed the PRMR. The report can be found on the College website at www.cvo.org/medicalrecordkeeping.

2. Participating in Peer Review of Medical Records (PRMR)

The College places a strong emphasis on supporting high quality medical records in its Quality Practice Program. Medical records are central to safe quality medicine and provide the basis for the continuity of veterinary care. Peer Review of Medical Records (PRMR) supports veterinarians in meeting the standards for medical record keeping that ensure optimal veterinary care can be continued.

As a component of the College's Quality Assurance Program, a PRMR provides a standardized peer review of a veterinarian's medical records based on requirements set out in professional practice standards and regulations, and constructive feedback on those areas that may benefit from attention or improvement. This information package explains the process and answers some frequently asked questions about peer review.

Selection

Under Section 50 (1) (c) and (d) of Ontario Regulation 1093¹ facilities selected by the College are required to participate in a review of their medical records. Veterinary facilities chosen for a Peer Review of Medical Records are identified through a random selection process.

Approximately 5% of facilities are randomly selected to participate in a Peer Review of Medical Records per year. All accredited veterinary facilities are eligible for random selection, with the following exceptions:

- Facilities within their first two years of operation.
- Facilities within one year after the renewal of their Certificate of Accreditation.
- Facilities with current limitations, terms, or conditions on their Certificate of Accreditation related to medical record keeping.
- A facility that receives a successful score in PRMR is exempt from random selection for a 5-year period.

A facility may also choose to be proactive and volunteer to participate in PRMR. If successful, the facility would be exempted from random selection for a 5-year period.

Benefits of Participating

Participation in the Peer Review of Medical Records offers several benefits:

1. **Improved Efficiency:** Peer reviews can help identify areas where efficiencies in medical record-keeping can be made (e.g. templates).
2. **Professional Development:** Peer reviews provide an opportunity for continuous learning and professional growth.
3. **Standardization:** The PRMR helps maintain record-keeping standards, leading to more consistent and comprehensive documentation, more efficient use of time for all team

¹ 50. (1) The Registrar shall cause, and the members shall permit, the inspection of facilities and of the records kept by members in connection with the practice of veterinary medicine, in order to determine if,
(c) the records in respect of the practice of veterinary medicine are being kept as required; and
(d) the veterinary medicine being practised is generally in accordance with the standards of practice of the profession.

members, better staff and client communication, and increased capacity to ensure the continuity of care provided to patients.

4. **Compliance and Accountability:** Peer reviews ensure that medical records meet regulatory and legal standards, promoting accountability and reducing risk.
5. **Collaboration and Communication:** The process encourages a collaborative approach to record-keeping and communication by team members to improve continuity of care and patient outcomes.

Process

Once the facility's records package is received by the College, a trained Peer Reviewer will be assigned to complete the review. The records are reviewed against a standardized set of records requirements, using a check-list approach. The Peer Reviewer also makes constructive comments and provides a summary with overall recommendations. The completed PRMR Assessment Report will be sent to the Facility Director. The report will include a Total Score which will indicate whether the facility was successful or not in the assessment. If the facility is not successful, directions will be provided to the Facility Director about the next steps, including corrective actions and re-evaluation of records. For more information, please review Step 6: Review the PRMR Assessment Report and the FAQs section.

Further information including the PRMR Assessment Questions and copies of required forms is available on the College website at www.cvo.org/medicalrecordkeeping.

Peer Reviewers

Peer Reviewers are licensed veterinarians that have been approved by the Quality Assurance Committee to serve in this leadership role and have participated in a rigorous training process. Their leadership and commitment to quality practice in the profession is appreciated.

3. Preparing for a Peer Review of Medical Records (PRMR)

A Facility Director has **30 days to submit the PRMR Facility Questionnaire and medical records** to the College for review upon receipt of the notification letter that indicates their facility has been selected for PRMR.

Once the College has received the medical records, a preliminary review will be conducted. College staff will be in contact if components are found to be missing. To avoid delays, please submit these as soon as possible.

A Peer Reviewer will be matched with the facility to conduct the assessment. The Peer Reviewer will assess the medical records using the PRMR Assessment Questions and will complete the PRMR Assessment Report.

The report is submitted to the College and College staff will send the report to the Facility Director. The final PRMR Assessment Report takes approximately 12 to 16 weeks to complete.

The following checklist assists in preparation of the Peer Review of Medical Records. Each of these steps is described in detail on the pages that follow.

Steps in the Peer Review of Medical Records Process	Participant Checklist
1. Complete the Facility Questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Select 8 Complete Medical Records for Submission	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Complete a Case Cover Sheet for Each Case	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Assemble the Records Package for Submission	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Submit the Facility Questionnaire and Records Package to the College	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Review the PRMR Assessment Report	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Steps in the Process

Step 1: Complete the Facility Questionnaire

Prior to assigning a Peer Reviewer to conduct a Peer Review of Medical Records, the College requires an overview of your practice, including patient types, staff roles, etc. The Facility Director is asked to complete a Facility Questionnaire so that an appropriate reviewer can be matched to the facility. This questionnaire also provides an opportunity to identify learning objectives associated with the records review.

- Download the **Facility Questionnaire**: <https://cvo.org/PRMR-Questionnaire>

Step 2: Select Eight (8) Medical Records for Submission

In order to provide a representative sample of the facility's medical records, complete copies of medical records for eight (8) recent cases are to be submitted. Select cases within the past two (2) years that are representative of current medical record keeping practices. **In a multi-veterinarian facility, the eight cases must include records from each veterinarian working at the facility, inclusive of owners, the Facility Director, associates, and locum veterinarians.** In this situation, it is suggested that cases are chosen where more than one veterinarian was involved and significantly contributed to documentation in the medical record. (Depending on the number of veterinarians working at the facility, the Facility Director may be asked to submit more than eight medical records).

- Provide the records for the following case types:

2 Acute Medical Cases **2 Chronic Medical Cases,**
2 Surgical Cases **2 Wellness or Herd Health Cases**

Step 3: Complete a Case Cover Sheet for Each Case

- Download the Case Cover Sheet <http://www.cvo.org/PRMRCoverSheet>. Complete one case cover sheet for each of the cases.

Step 4: Assemble the Records Package

For each case include a Case Cover Sheet, a copy of the medical record, and copies of all relevant components.

The following is a general guideline for what information to include in each case type:

- **Acute Medical:** include records from first diagnosis until resolution, as applicable,
- **Chronic Medical:** choose a record where the diagnosis was made in the last two years and there are at least two follow-up assessments from first diagnosis,
- **Surgical:** include the pre-surgical assessment visit, the surgery, and the post-surgical assessment visit, as applicable,

- **Wellness or Herd Health:** include records that are applicable for that wellness/routine visit; if puppy or kitten wellness visits, then can include the whole vaccine series.

For a mixed facility, include cases from each species type (e.g. one of each case type for Companion Animal and one of each case type for Food Producing Animal).

If the facility does not have a particular case type (e.g. no surgical cases for a mobile facility), please substitute a different case type. Please include at least one case that contains a written prescription if possible.

For computerized records, please ensure that all screen views are sent and are compiled in the proper order. The records may be submitted to the College electronically through the CVO Cloud Drive. Please do not send records via USB or CD. See Step 5 below for more information on submitting records electronically.

Radiographs must be submitted in a digital format through electronic submission. Original radiographs will not be accepted. If digital radiographs are not available, submit digital photos taken of the original radiographs.

For any information related to a particular case that is contained in a log (radiographic, surgery, anesthetic, controlled drug), provide copies of the log pages that contain the information related to that case.

This list will assist you with compiling a complete submission. **If a component is not submitted, this may cause delays in the PRMR.**

All cases should include the following components:

- ✓ Client/Patient Identification
- ✓ History, Physical Exam findings
- ✓ Record of Vaccinations
- ✓ Assessment: problem list, differential diagnoses/final diagnosis
- ✓ Medical treatments (drugs administered, prescribed, dispensed)
- ✓ Invoices, cost estimates
- ✓ Documentation of Informed client consent (e.g. written or verbal consent)
- ✓ Professional Advice and Client Communications (e.g., discharge instructions, home care templates, discussion notes)
- ✓ Laboratory Reports/test results, if applicable
- ✓ Audit Trail for electronic medical records²

In addition to the above components, each case type should also include the following components:

² The audit trail records the date and time of each entry of information for each animal, indicates any changes in the recorded information, preserves the original content of the recorded information when changed or updated, and is capable of being printed separately from the recorded information of each animal. For further information, please see the Guide to the Professional Practice Standard: Medical Records.

Acute Medical	<p><u>If applicable:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Emergency Contact Information ✓ Monitoring notes for hospitalization (e.g., in-hospital treatment flow sheet) ✓ Laboratory Reports/test results ✓ Consent forms ✓ Referral letters and reports ✓ Radiographs ✓ Logs (controlled drug, surgical, anesthetic, radiology) ✓ Insurance forms
Chronic Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At least 2-3 visits, with one being the diagnosis <p><u>If applicable:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Emergency Contact Information ✓ Monitoring notes for hospitalization (e.g., in-hospital treatment flow sheet) ✓ Laboratory Reports/test results ✓ Consent forms ✓ Referral letters and reports ✓ Radiographs ✓ Logs (controlled drug, surgical, anesthetic, radiology) ✓ Insurance forms
Surgical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consent forms ✓ Emergency Contact Information ✓ Notes on general anesthesia (e.g. anesthetic monitoring sheet) ✓ Surgical/anesthetic log ✓ Controlled drug logs ✓ Surgical notes (e.g., protocols) ✓ Hospitalization progress notes (e.g., in-hospital treatment flow sheet) <p><u>If applicable:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Laboratory reports/test results ✓ Radiographs + log ✓ Referral letters and reports ✓ Insurance forms
Wellness or Herd Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Vaccine certificates (e.g., if rabies vaccine administered) <p><u>If applicable:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Laboratory results ✓ Insurance forms

Do not include:

- The entire medical history and records or components that are more than two years old.
- Components that are not relevant to the case type.

Step 5: Submit the Records Package to the College

Submit the records package to the College. The records package should include:

- Facility Questionnaire
- Complete Copies of 8 Medical Records and components
- 8 Case Cover Sheets (one for each case)

Submissions are required within thirty (30) days of notification of selection.

Electronic Submission Instructions:

The Facility Director will receive an email from the Associate, Quality Practice, with instructions on how to securely upload the completed records package to the CVO Cloud Drive.

Once received, the records package will be assigned to a Peer Reviewer.

Step 6: Review the PRMR Assessment Report

Once the Peer Reviewer has completed the PRMR assessment, the Facility Director will be provided with the following: a copy of the PRMR Assessment Report, a guide to interpreting the report, and a cover letter outlining any corrective actions for the facility. The report will provide the facility with information on the record requirements that are being met and those that are not. Constructive feedback will be provided, and a Total Score given for the assessment. The Total Score will determine whether a facility is deemed successful or not in meeting record requirements. If not successful, information on taking corrective actions to prepare for re-evaluation of the facility's records will be provided in the cover letter.

Total Score

The Total Score of the assessment report determines whether a facility will need to take corrective actions and undergo re-evaluation of records. Using predetermined cut-off scores, the Total Score is colour coded. **Green** indicates that, compared to other facilities, the facility is deemed successful in meeting medical record requirements. **Yellow** indicates that the facility is deemed partially successful. **Red** indicates that the facility is deemed not successful in meeting the requirements.

A facility that scored partially successful or not successful is advised to take self-directed corrective actions to improve record keeping to prepare for re-evaluation. A successful facility will receive feedback on strengths and gaps in record-keeping and suggestions for improvement.

Annual Risk Issue: Informed Client Consent

As part of the Annual Cycle for PRMR, each year a strategic risk issue will be identified to be included in PRMR Assessments for one year. At the end of the year, an aggregate report with general findings from PRMR Assessment data on the risk issue will be shared with the

profession. Informed client consent was identified as the third annual risk issue and is currently being assessed through PRMR. Previously, requirements for preparing a written prescription and drug documentation were identified as annual risk issues and were assessed through PRMR in 2019 through 2023. These sections will remain on the assessment report; however they are no longer annual risk issues. The scores associated with preparing a written prescription do not contribute to the Total Score.

5. Frequently Asked Questions

a) If my facility is randomly selected for PRMR, do I need permission from my clients to submit their records to the College?

No, the College is permitted by law to review medical records kept by members to determine if they meet requirements. The College has strict privacy and security guidelines in place to protect confidential information.

b) If the PRMR Assessment Report scores my facility as not successful, what happens next?

In the package with your PRMR Assessment Report, you will be provided with information on next steps which will assist you in taking actions to improve record-keeping in your facility. Your facility will be required to undergo a re-evaluation of medical records in 6 months and in 12 months through the PRMR process. If the re-evaluation at 6 months does not show improvement that is satisfactory to the Registrar, the matter will be referred to the Executive Committee for review.

c) How do I find resources on medical record requirements?

The College website has a number of helpful resources to help you understand medical record requirements including a Professional Practice Standard and Guide on Medical Records, Learning Modules on Medical Record Keeping, and Sample Templates for record-keeping. These resources can be found at www.cvo.org.

d) How do I find out what will be assessed in the medical record review?

The PRMR Assessment Questions are available on the [College's website](#). For each medical record submitted the Peer Reviewer will use the assessment questions to determine if each record component is present or not. In some cases, certain record components may not be applicable. For example, if the case being reviewed did not involve surgery, all assessment questions related to surgery would be noted by the reviewer as not applicable, or N/A.

e) Will the results of the PRMR Assessment be available on the Public Register?

No, the PRMR Assessment Report is confidential, and results will not be made public on the Public Register.

f) Will the results of the PRMR Assessment be shared with College Committees?

In rare circumstances, where a facility that was not successful remains unsuccessful in the subsequent re-evaluation of their records, the results of the assessment will be shared with the Executive Committee. Otherwise, information gathered from Reports will only be shared in aggregate form.

g) How are the Peer Reviewers selected and trained?

Peer Reviewers apply and are selected based on the information they submit as well as an interview. Once selected, a Peer Reviewer undergoes a rigorous training process. Following that they must complete a Peer Review of Medical Records Assessment of their own records before starting to be active as a Peer Reviewer. They participate in ongoing training.

h) How is conflict of interest addressed in the Peer Review of Medical Records?

The facility questionnaire contains a list of Peer Reviewers and you are asked to indicate if there is a conflict of interest with anyone on the list. Questions to ask yourself to guide your decision are:

- Have you had a working or personal relationship with this individual in the past (e.g. an acquaintance, a close friend, a competitor)?
- How close were your interactions?
- How long ago was this relationship?
- Could you or the facility in which you work reasonably be viewed as a competitor to the licensed member/Reviewer (e.g., for patients, clients, referral sources, etc.)?

i) How is the Peer Reviewer chosen for the PRMR assessment for my facility?

There is an effort to match a facility with a Peer Reviewer who has similar experience. When this is not possible, the Peer Reviewer is made aware of the circumstances relevant to your scope of practice.

j) Is there a cost to me to participate in the Peer Review of Medical Records?

No. There is no cost to participate.

k) Can I volunteer to participate in a Peer Review of Medical Records?

Yes, you can volunteer to participate either as a facility or as an individual veterinarian. If you are volunteering as a facility and your facility is deemed successful in your Peer Review of Medical Records Assessment, your facility will be exempt from the pool for random selection for a 5-year period. If you are volunteering as an individual veterinarian and working in a multi-veterinarian facility, and your assessment is deemed successful, it will not affect the eligibility of the facility for random selection.

l) Can I share the results of the PRMR Assessment Report with staff at my facility?

Yes. Sharing with the other veterinarians in a multi-veterinarian facility whose records were reviewed provides a professional development opportunity to improve record-keeping practices and provides an opportunity to acknowledge what is being done well. Sharing with non-veterinarian staff members involved in entering medical record information provides similar benefits. Medical record-keeping is often a team effort.

If your question wasn't answered here, please contact the Quality Practice Team at qualityassurance@cvo.org or (519) 824-5600/1-800-424-2856 ext. 2222