

## **Access to the Locked Narcotic and Controlled Substances Cabinet**

The Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association has as its primary responsibility the protection of the public interest. The Government of Nova Scotia, through the Veterinary Medical Act, has mandated Facility Accreditation as a statutory requirement of the NSVMA. Facility Accreditation standards, as set out in the Annex to the By Laws, spell out in detail those requirements that are in the best interest of public protection.

Universal Standard 8 of the Annex to the By Laws addresses the management of Pharmaceuticals by the Facility. Specifically, Section 4 focuses on Narcotics and Controlled Substances.

Section 4 states that narcotics and controlled substances are to be “stored in a **limited access**, securely locked, substantially constructed cabinet or safe.” Some confusion has recently been raised by some Members as to the correct interpretation of “limited access”.

As a Profession, we must demonstrate that we are responsible stewards of these potentially lethal drugs and have policies and procedures in place to mitigate the possibility of diversion of these drugs. There is always room to improve our processes with regard to the control of narcotics so as to limit the opportunity for these drugs to be diverted to the street and result in a negative outcome. One such mitigation measure is to limit access to the locked Narcotic Control Cabinet.

The NSVMA Council discussed this matter during the Council Meeting on April 7, 2021 to clarify any confusion by the Membership around the interpretation of limited access to the locked narcotic cabinet.

In the interest of public safety and protection, Council has determined that access to the Narcotic Control Cabinet be limited to only those Licensed Veterinarians that must have access to it. This means that only Licensed Veterinarians should have access to the Cabinet and that the Cabinet should remain locked other than when it is opened by a Licensed Veterinarian.