For a veterinarian, a medical record is a critical tool for the ongoing management of cases and sharing information with collaborating colleagues. From the perspective of the IC, a medical record is a valuable source of information that provides the necessary documentation and details to demonstrate the quality of a veterinarian's practice. Complete and comprehensive medical records are invaluable in helping the IC to understand the progression of a case and documenting decisions and client conversations that may otherwise not be clearly rememberedby the client and the veterinarians involved.

The common questions that come up that the IC can easily glean from a comprehensive medical record include

- What was the history of the case?
- What were the clinical exam findings? – remember that subjective and objective assessments are both important!
- What were the results of any diagnostics and your interpretation of those results?
- What was your differential diagnosis and ultimate diagnosis?
- What was your treatment plan and why?
- What did you tell the client - this is very important and sometimes forgotten. So many IC cases come down to communication, communication, communication. What and how you communicated to ensure clarity of the information that was provided to the client during the appointment, explanation of discharge instructions, follow up telephone conversations, and established informed consent is critical to informing the IC with respect to case management.
- Did you include anesthetic logs, dental reports, hospitalization records to help inform how a patient was managed in your care?

Your medical record is an important document when assessing the evidence, and the IC will defer to the medical record in situations where the veterinarian and the client are in disagreement with what was said or done. The Medical Record Standards and Guide noted below explain what should be documented. Keep in mind, your client may not submit the complaint immediately, and we note that the time between when a complaint is filed and when it is concluded can be up to or over a year depending on the complexity of the issue, the case load of incoming complaints, and the number of cases in front of the IC. We are actively working on improving those turnaround times, but at the end of the day, no one can accurately reflect the details of a case better than a well-documented medical record completed at the time of treating a patient.

Looking for a refresher on the CVBC medical records requirements?

- Guide to the Medical Records Standards
- Standard – General
- Standard – Companion Animal
- Standard – Equine
- Standard – Herd/Flock

Feel free to contact the CVBC team if you have any questions at feedback@cvbc.ca