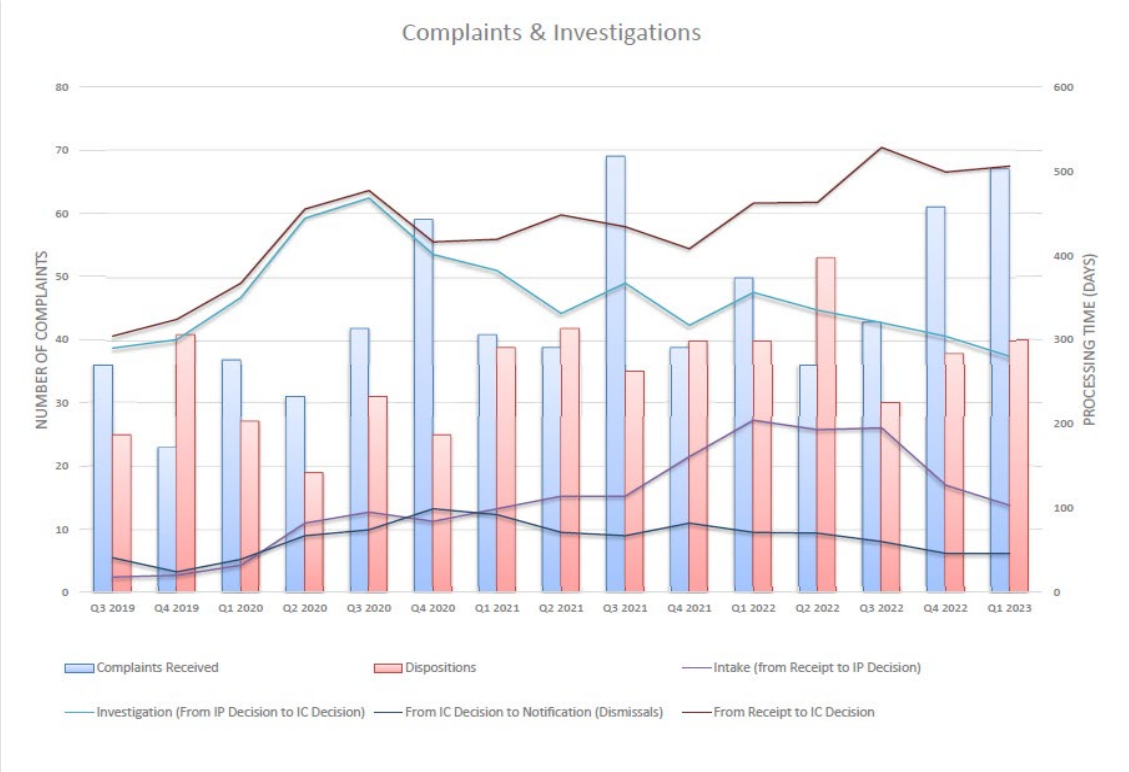
College of Veterinarians of British Columbia

With the engagement of the Cayton Report Working Group (Gian Sihota, Christine Arnold, Joel Walsoff, Dr. Megan Bergman, Dr. Josh Waddington and Greg Cavouras) and the Investigation Committee, the CVBC has been progressively working towards addressing areas for improvement in the CVBC Complaints and Investigation Process.

The Quarter 1 report assessing the number of complaints and processing time demonstrates a steady decline in processing time, with the exception of the time from receipt of a complaint to decision. This is reflective of delays experienced from quarter 1 to quarter 3 of 2022 at the Intake Panel stage, as well as addressing aging complaints that are now coming to resolution. These issues have been resolved and we expect to see the overall time for complaint processing trend downwards over the next few quarters. However, when compared year over year, our incoming complaints continue to trend upwards at an average rate of 5% which presents an ongoing challenge when working towards reducing complaint processing time.



Communications:

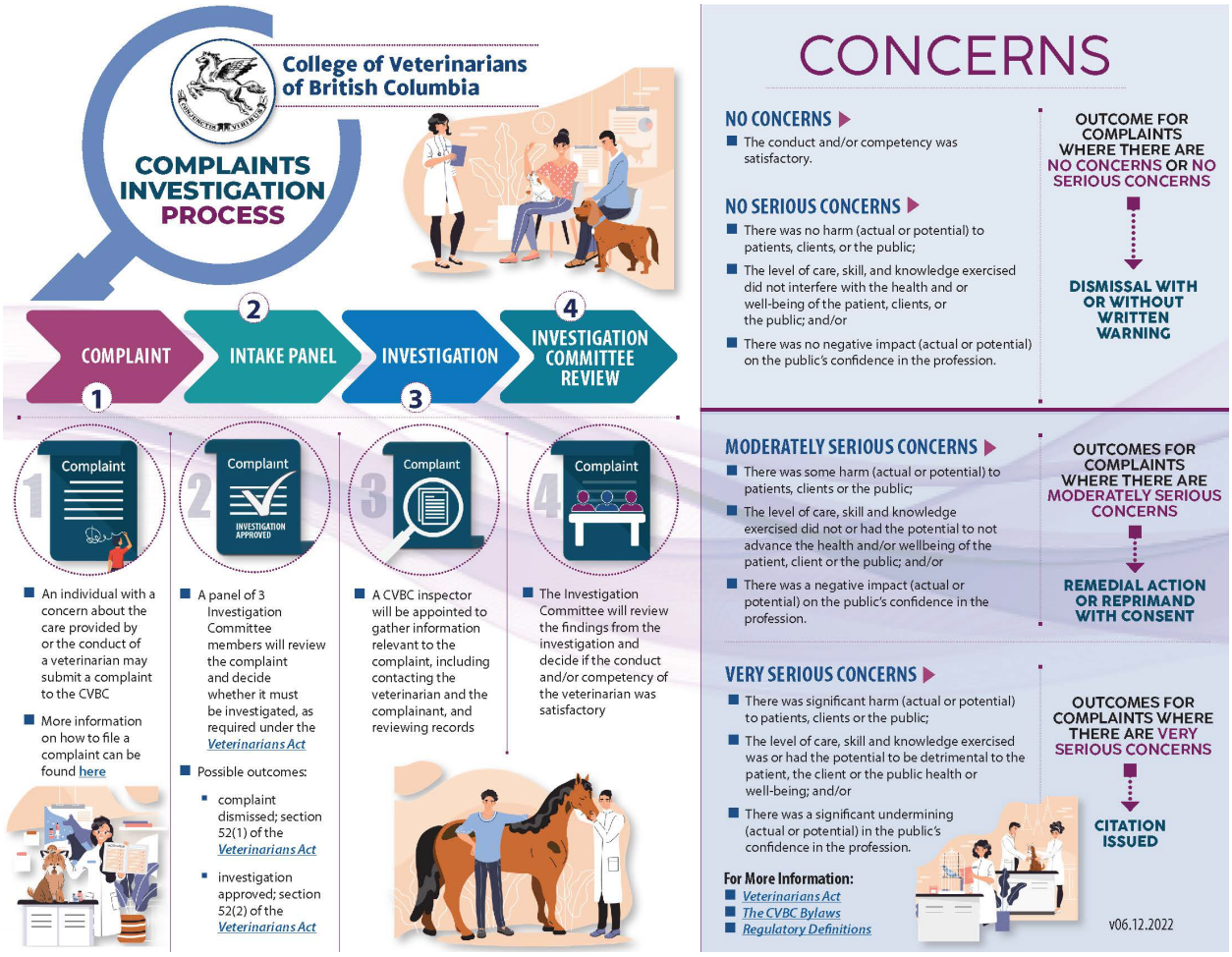
Communication tools have been updated for members of the public and registrants as you will see on the CVBC website

Additionally, updates have been made to the following communication tools and documents:

- Letters to the registrants in relation to complaints about them.
- Questions and Answers document for the registrant.
- Letters to the complainant in relation to the complaint.
- Contact information for the public regarding animal related concerns that are not related to the CVBC.
- A process has been established to enable complainants who may not be able to submit a complaint in writing to do so by utilizing alternate methods including recording, or utilization of a translator.
- The website is in the process of being updated by the CVBC IT team to incorporate complaint and discipline outcomes directly into the online registry for ease of access to the public, as required by the *Veterinarians Act*.
- A publication policy has been developed to articulate what content will remain on the public facing webpage, and what content will remain on the registrant access only webpage.

Reforming the Complaints Process:

- Consultation with registrants has been undertaken regarding a registrant's duty to report, and the feedback received is now under review.
- Staff are now prioritizing complaints to be forwarded to the intake panel based on provisional assessment of the level of risk or harm (actual or potential) that the complaint presents to the public, their animals or reputation of the profession.
- The Complaints and Investigation Process document which can be found on the CVBC Complaints Process webpage describes the complaints process, as well as the decision-making framework applied by the Investigation Committee when considering a complaint about a veterinarian. The possible outcomes of a complaint are grounded in the level of harm or potential for harm to the public, their animals, or the public's confidence in the profession as you will see below.



- The Intake Panel of the Investigation Committee is now considering specific references to the *Veterinarians Act* and the CVBC's Bylaws and standards, when directing an investigation.
- Where a conduct or competency concern has been identified by the Investigation Committee following an investigation, a record of similar past decisions is available for reference by the Investigation Committee in order to enhance the consistency of decision making.
- The Investigation Committee is working to expedite decision making in complaints that appear to be low risk.
- A recruitment drive is underway to increase the number of public members on the Investigation Committee and to ensure that all CVBC Committees include public members.

Enabling Change:

- Staff and investigation capacity has been enhanced. The Complaints team now has one additional legal counsel, four paralegals (up from two), one legal assistant (up from zero), and three new inspectors. The CVBC continues to review current staffing levels to ensure efficiency and capacity needs are met.

- Training has been carried out for the Investigation Committee, the Complaints Inspectors, as well as CVBC staff, and the Council.
- Work is ongoing to update and improve processes to guide the staff, inspectors and committee.

Information Governance:

- The CVBC has appointed Ms. Irina Sear, the CVBC Chief Financial Officer, as the Chief Information Officer and we are in the process of developing formal information policies.
- Training has been ongoing with respect to cyber security and information management for CVBC staff.
- Policy documents have been drafted to articulate the data management process, as well as the actions that will be implemented in the event of a data breach and will be presented to Council for review and approval.