



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

##Imprisonment and fines up to \$75,000 possible for people hiring a vet to treat an animal in British Columbia. ##

***“Someone who provides veterinary care for their sick or injured pet is subject to the same criminal prosecution as someone who does not.” said a BC SPGA spokesperson.***

**\*\*Vancouver – British Columbia\*\*** – In 2025, the Society for British Columbia Guardians And Animals (BC SPGA) officially launched the "Justice for People and Their Pets in Veterinary Care" online campaign. This initiative stemmed from "people with pets and animals from all over the Province contacting us. We had many upset and angry emails about the BC SPCA actions where they seize a guardian's animal under veterinary care," said a spokesperson for the BC SPGA.

At the heart of the issue is the BC SPCA's enforcement action to seize animal(s) that are actively undergoing treatment from a veterinarian then attempt prosecution of the pet's guardian by referring the file to the Crown counsel where the fines can be up to \$75,000 and two years imprisonment under the Prevention Of Cruelty To Animals Act and similar under the Canada Criminal Code.

According to the BC SPGA, the BC SPCA acts on a third-party complaint by hiring its own veterinarian to assess an animal, even while that animal is under the care of a treating veterinarian who has raised no concerns about either the animal or the client.

A spokesperson from the BC SPGA describes it this way, "The BC SPCA animal enforcers hire a veterinarian to examine the animal so they can seize it from right under the nose of the unsuspecting treating veterinarian and the distraught family. If the treating veterinarian has not complained about the client or the animal, it should be nobody else's business. Veterinary care is becoming very expensive for many families, and to have an animal seized for complying with animal welfare laws just doesn't seem right. It doesn't end there however, because the BC SPCA can refer the file for criminal prosecution of the pet's guardian by Crown counsel which can result in fines up to \$75,000 and up to two years imprisonment as well as a ban on owning animals. In effect, someone who provides veterinary care for their sick or injured pet is subject to the same criminal prosecution as someone who does not."

"This practice targets families and individuals who are simply fulfilling their responsibilities as guardians of their beloved pets by seeking necessary veterinary care for the pets," stated a spokesperson for the BC SPGA. "A treating veterinarian should not be overridden by an external organization acting on someone else's complaint in the same profession or anonymously. These

seizures of people's pets are not only traumatic for families or a loved one, and the innocent victim, the pet, but also overall financially devastating and can result in fines and prison."

The BC SPGA campaign directed the public's concerns to Attorney General and Deputy Premier Niki Sharma via its Justice for People and Their Pets in Veterinary Care online campaign.

"Attorney General Niki Sharma's role is to uphold laws that protect the rights of all British Columbians," the spokesperson continued. "If these unfair laws enable an organization to penalize people for abiding by animal welfare laws, they must be reviewed and revised. Pets are family, not assets."

The BC SPGA encourages the public to join the online Justice for People and Their Pets in Veterinary Care campaign and thereby advocate for fair treatment of families and their pets. "The BC SPCA animal enforcement unit are the only police under the Police Act that have no independent oversight so change has to come from public pressure." a spokesperson from BC SPGA said.

For more information about the online "Justice for People and Their Pets in Veterinary Care" campaign <https://spga.ca/campaigns.html>

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**\*\*About the BC SPGA: \*\***

The Society for British Columbia Guardians With Animals (BC SPGA) is an incorporated, non-profit society dedicated as the Voice for animal and pet guardians and caregivers in B.C. We strive to make the lives for animals and pets better by advocating for guardians and providing programs and services through education, community engagement, and reform initiatives. The society strives to create a compassionate and pet-friendly B.C. with its campaigns for people with pets and animals.

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