



michigan veterinary medical association

*Professional excellence.
Compassionate care.*

May 12, 2020
Honorable Gretchen Whitmer
111 S. Capitol Ave.
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Governor Whitmer,

The safety of Michiganders and the containment of COVID-19 are of the utmost importance to all of us. We thank you for your commitment to public safety and to initiating a plan to slowly and safely reopen Michigan's economy.

As you continue to follow your MI Safe Start initiative, we ask that veterinarians and their staff be permitted to perform both essential and non-essential services effective immediately. We know Michigan is safer and better protected from the spread of COVID-19 due to your leadership and forward thinking. We also know veterinarians have taken significant steps throughout this pandemic to protect both animal and public health.

As trained medical professionals, veterinarians are more prepared to safely return to work than just about any other industry. They know how to protect themselves, their staff and their patients. They are currently conducting curbside service to drastically reduce, and in many cases eliminate, human to human contact. They are maintaining social distancing guidelines while in clinics, on farms and at residences. They are using telehealth whenever possible and have only been performing essential services for nearly two months.

They have held off on all sterilizations services including spays and neuters, wellness visits, seasonal preventive checkups and much more. Veterinarians cannot continue to push off these procedures and treatments much longer without putting animals at risk.

Veterinarians have been responsible users of PPE and most have moved to cloth gowns and masks that are washed and sanitized daily in order to conserve medical equipment to help combat this virus. These practices will continue.

Accompanying this letter, you will find a plan for practices and clinics to safely reopen as well as guidelines they will follow when they do so. As you will see, these guidelines are based on science and data, and have been vetted by the American Veterinary Medical Association's Chief Veterinary Officer. We are taking this pandemic very seriously and would not ask to perform all services unless we felt it was absolutely necessary and could be done safely and responsibly. Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please stay safe and healthy. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Tramontana".

John Tramontana, MS, CAE
Chief Executive Officer
Michigan Veterinary Medical Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Melissa Owings".

Melissa Owings, DVM
President
Michigan Veterinary Medical Association