



May 11, 2020

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909

RE: Resumption of Non-urgent/Elective Veterinary Services

Dear Governor Whitmer:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), its 95,000 plus members, and key veterinary stakeholders urged that veterinary practices be considered “essential businesses” in cases where non-essential retail facilities were being asked to close. In some states, like Michigan, while veterinary services were recognized as essential, a requirement to postpone non-urgent/elective procedures was put into place to conserve PPE and reduce person-to-person contacts between staff members and the public to those absolutely necessary.

Veterinarians responded appropriately, using their professional judgment to reschedule non-urgent/elective appointments and procedures and implementing new service strategies that support social distancing and safer client interactions. The latter include, but are not limited to, increased use of telemedicine where medically appropriate and instituting direct car-to-exam room admissions, curbside service, or patient drop-offs. For PPE in short supply, veterinarians applied CDC- and FDA-recommended conservation strategies (extended use and re-use) and alternatives (washable PPE) to provide appropriate protection for veterinary staff and patients, while supporting the preferential direction of disposable and sophisticated PPE to human healthcare. These approaches to veterinary practice have been refined and become routine in the new normal. PPE shortages have also lessened. What remains, however, is a backlog of demand for non-urgent/elective veterinary appointments and procedures that, while not immediately urgent, remain important for protecting the health and welfare of all types of animals and, in some cases, supporting good public health.

In states where orders restricting provision of non-urgent/elective services and procedures are being lifted for human healthcare providers, we urge state officials to also allow veterinarians to resume providing these services and procedures. In doing so, veterinary practices should and can continue to invoke strategies that conserve PPE and support social distancing.

Veterinary teams provide essential care for all animal species and play a critical role in protecting the food supply. In coordination with veterinary stakeholders, such as the Michigan Veterinary Medical Association, the AVMA continues to develop resources that support veterinarians in providing quality care for their animal patients while protecting their clients, staff, and themselves from COVID-19. So that veterinarians may continue to provide complete

care that protects their patients, animal owners and the public, we urge policymakers to allow veterinarians to resume offering non-urgent/elective services as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and please don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet D. Donlin DVM". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'D'.

Janet D. Donlin, DVM, CAE
Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer

AM/GCG