

# WSVMA Alert!

## COVID-19 Crisis Digest for March 20, 2020

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### Updates from WSVMA

**Gov. issues proclamation ceasing non-essential medical services** - Governor Inslee issued a [proclamation](#) to prohibit all hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, and dental, orthodontic and endodontic offices in Washington State from providing health care services, procedures, and surgeries that require personal protective equipment. **The proclamation does not name veterinary services.** It's unclear whether veterinary practices must cease non-essential services, but at this time, we don't believe we're included in the order. We are checking with all available resources to get clarification and will post updates as we learn more.

Despite the lack of a clear directive in the proclamation, it is *critical* that veterinary practices should be following AVMA and WSVMA recommended guidelines to only provide care for emergent situations.

The WSVMA has been advocating aggressively with Governor's Inslee's office, key legislators, the WA Department of Health, and the WA Department of Agriculture to ensure veterinary practices are considered essential services in the event of a shutdown. As of today, no such restrictions have been put in place, although as we have seen in other states, veterinary hospitals have been determined to be essential facilities.

**COVID-related veterinary regulations** - The WSVMA is advocating with the Veterinary Board of Governors about what's allowed during the crisis. We've submitted inquiries about filling scripts without exams, the use of telemedicine as it relates to the VCPR, remote supervision of technicians, and allowances for CE requirements. We'll update you as we learn more.

**Survey of veterinary practices** - We've sent a survey to veterinary owners to solicit information on how the community is dealing with this situation. If you're a practice owner or hospital manager, access the survey [here](#).

**Veterinary donations of personal protective equipment** - As the COVID-19 crisis worsens across the country, veterinarians have been asked to donate excess personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators to hospitals in need. While it's not an official order, the WSVMA is currently working with the Washington State Hospital Association, the Foundation for Healthcare Quality (FHC) and WISHA to let you know which hospitals are in need of supplies and how to deliver them.

Before you donate, however, use your professional judgment and think strategically about what you will need going forward. Current predictions are that the COVID-19 crisis could last several months and once additional supplies are made available, it's presumed human healthcare will be prioritized over veterinary medicine. Also, consider that donating to a hospital that's acutely affected now and outside of your region may preclude you from donating in your own community when the need arises days or weeks later. AVMA is currently working on a guidance document regarding donations of masks which will be shared once its completed.

Another step you can take is to share the information with your clients and encourage them to donate as appropriate. This is our opportunity to assist with life-saving efforts to benefit our community.

To participate to the degree that you're able, a partial list is available [here](#). WISHA will become the main coordinating body and a new link will be posted on our website as soon as we receive it.

**Increased Continuing Education** - We're in the process of converting our canceled CE events to weekly webinars. We'll feature *A Merry Mishmash of Medicine* in four weekly one-hour webinars beginning the first week of April. We'll also feature four weekly webinars on *Animal Nutrition* during April. These are in addition to our monthly DVM:Masterclass webinars. Stay tuned for more information on how to register for these events.

Next week we present a webinar entitled ***COVID-19 in the Workplace: Key Employment Law Questions Answered***. It will take place at **12pm on Thursday, March 26, 2020** with local attorney Amy Mensik. Many of you have heard her speak at the Pacific Northwest Veterinary Conference. This webinar is free to anyone who wishes to attend. [Register today](#)

**New Member Telemedicine Benefit** - Watch your email for the announcement of our new member benefit that you can use to enhance your telemedicine services. We expect to roll out the announcement today or Monday.

**Forums** - Community discussion forums are set up on the WSVMA website and there's a thread specifically to share information on the COVID-19 crisis. Log in to the [WSVMA website](#), click on Community/Forums and click on the thread.

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## Taking the COVID-19 Crisis seriously

The WSVMA has received anecdotal reports that some practices are not following CDC, WA Department of Health, AVMA, and WSVMA recommended guidelines.

The COVID-19 outbreak is not a hoax, nor is it a conspiracy theory. As employers of veterinary practices, it's critical to take this seriously. To keep seeing patients for non-essential appointments, to not practice rigid infection controls, and to not employ personal protective equipment means that we are not respecting our employees and their families, our patients and clients, not to mention our own families nor ourselves. Simply put, we are putting *everyone* at greater risk.

We are medical health professionals and respected scientists in the community and the public trusts us to practice with skill and safety. For veterinarians to ignore public health experts during this crisis is to ignore science, and that will get us into trouble and last long into the future in the minds of pet owners.

## COVID-19 News

**Second dog tests positive for COVID-19** - The Hong Kong government [announced](#) a second dog has tested positive for the corona virus. This follows an earlier case in which a 17-year-old Pomeranian dog tested weak positive during repeated tests for the virus. The Department will continue to closely monitor both dogs and conduct repeated tests on the animals. There is still no evidence that dogs or cats become ill, nor that they can spread SARS-CoV-2. The government spokesperson advised people who are sick should restrict contact with animals and if there are any changes in the health condition of the pets, advice from a veterinarian should be sought as soon as possible.

**WSU College of Veterinary Medicine graduates seniors** - With input from AVMA COE, WSU/CVM has elected to effectively conclude senior year for veterinary students, ending with their current rotation. Roadblocks to graduation are not expected despite a shortened calendar. Students currently on external rotations can stay in their clinic if comfortable and if the clinic can retain them. At this time, it's doubtful that the commencement ceremony will take place. May we say **Congratulations** to the Class of 2020.

**Treasury and IRS Issue Guidance on Deferring Tax Payments Due to COVID-19 Outbreak** - The IRS has issued guidance allowing all individual and other non-corporate tax filers to defer up to \$1 million of federal income tax (including self-employment tax) payments due on April 15, 2020, until July 15, 2020, without penalties or interest. The guidance also allows corporate taxpayers a similar deferment of up to \$10 million of federal income tax payments that would be due on April 15, 2020, until July 15, 2020, without penalties or interest. This guidance does not change the April 15 filing deadline.

Link to the [Press Release](#)

Link to the [IRS Notice](#)

**H.R. 6201 - Families First Coronavirus Response Act** - The U.S. Senate advanced the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201). After much debate, the package now heads to the president to be signed into law. Read [here](#) for complete information on what the FFCRA includes.

**Inslee announces relief for businesses, workers, renters and more in response to COVID-19 outbreak** - Read the synopsis on [Medium.com](#)

## **New Posted Links to WSVMA's COVID-19 Resources**

- New WA State COVID-19 Website – [Washington State COVID-19 Response](#)
- Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) – [COVID-19 Resource Page](#)
- Small Business Administration – [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Small Business Guidance & Loan Resources](#) & [Washington counties now eligible for disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration](#)
- Coronavirus guide: Communicating with staff and clients – [AAHA](#)

Looking for specific information that you can't find on our [resource page](#)? Contact the WSVMA office at (800) 399-7862 or [info@wsvma.org](mailto:info@wsvma.org).