

WSVMA COVID-19 Crisis Digest for March 23, 2020

Just a few moments ago, Gov. Jay Inslee issued a “Stay at Home” order to begin in 48 hours and last for a minimum of two weeks. **Veterinary services are included as essential businesses in the order.** Also included is that social distancing precautions must be followed. The order is enforceable by law.

In addition, on Friday, March 20, 2020, Gov. Inslee prohibited “medical and dental practices from providing health care services, procedures, and surgeries that, if delayed, are not anticipated to cause harm to the patient within the next three months.”

The 3-20-2020 order does not name veterinary services, but we believe that veterinary practices must follow the Governor’s orders as they pertain to other healthcare providers and limit the services they provide.

What veterinary care are we allowed to provide?

As AVMA and other states are recommending, veterinarians should use their professional judgement on what allowed services are based on the needs of the patient. Limit care to injured or ill animals, emergencies, necessary medication dispensing, and other urgent services as deemed appropriate on a case-by-case basis. Essential veterinary services also include veterinary care to ensure that only healthy animals enter our food supply, and issuing health certificates that are required for the movement of animals between states and countries.

We also consulted with public health experts and they recommend the following guidelines based on the current Rabies Compendium.

- A rabies vaccination is essential for any animal that hasn't received the initial vaccination
- An animal that needs a booster vaccination could wait weeks/month
- It is essential that for any animal that has a suspected/confirmed rabies exposure to get a booster within 96 hours of the exposure
- Please confirm with your local health jurisdiction for additional information.

Proper precautions when providing limited services

The WSVMA has received a report that a veterinary staff member in the Seattle metro area has tested positive for COVID-19, likely as the result of exposure to a client who ultimately tested positive but exhibited no signs when they visited the practice.

Make sure to maintain proper distancing for the health and safety of your staff, yourself, and clients. Use curbside appointments, and employ telemedicine services whenever possible while following [state VCPR guidelines](#). Be strategic in your use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). For more information on conserving PPE, review AVMA's [guidance](#).

We understand that this requires you to make major changes to your day to day operations, your staffing levels, and your revenue expectations.

And we know that there are still many unanswered questions. The WSVMA will continue to update you as we learn new information. And don't forget to sign up for Petriage and start your teletriage visits today.

Hang in there. We're all in this together.

Important new links from AVMA:

- [Flowchart - Minimizing COVID-19 Exposure and social distancing in veterinary practice](#)

[**COVID-19 and wellbeing**](#)