

March 27, 2020 COVID-19

President Trump Signs \$2 Trillion Coronavirus Rescue Package into Law

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) offers relief to state and local governments, individuals, small and large businesses, and hospitals affected by the coronavirus crisis. The following are three documents the AVMA has prepared.

- [Highlights of the FFCR Act and the CARES Act.](#)
- [Section by Section Analysis of portion of the CARES Act most relevant to veterinary practice](#)
- [FAQ on Small Business Loans](#)

AVMA is working quickly to get information out to the community on how the new law can bring relief. Visit the AVMA [website](#) to see materials developed to date. Submit questions on the CARES Act or the Families First Coronavirus Act to coronavirus@avma.org; these will inform a FAQ document to follow.

The CARES Act includes opportunities for small business loans for payroll protection in companies under 500 employees. Call your CPA, attorney and/or lender to inquire how you might receive this assistance.

U.S. Dept. of Labor releases workplace poster

The Department of Labor has just released a poster for employers to post in the workplace and an FAQ document about it.

- The poster can be accessed [here](#)
- The FAQ about the poster can be accessed [here](#)

Each covered employer must post a notice of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) requirements in a conspicuous place on its premises.

Managing Anxiety & Stress During the COVID-19 Outbreak

While it is certainly important to wash your hands and follow the guidance of medical professionals to prevent the spread of COVID-19, it is also important that you take care of your emotional and mental health as well. Your entire WSVMA family is here to support you as we work through this challenging time together.

For many individuals, this can be a stressful time that produces anxiety. It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during and after a pandemic like the COVID-19 outbreak. Rest assured that these are very natural responses to the ongoing media coverage and uncertainty around the event. Many scholars argue that the feeling of panic is an uncomfortable feeling that our minds are naturally programmed to feel during the “flight, fight, freeze” instinct process. Many individuals become aware of a perceived threat, the COVID-19 outbreak in this case, and our minds create their own stories with the worst possible outcome.

As each of you works compassionately to continue serving your community and pets, please remember to take care of your wellbeing. Your entire WSVMA family is thinking about you and wishing you nothing but good health for yourselves and your loved ones.

Managing anxiety and stress is important during this response. To help calm anxious thoughts, there are several things you can do. A quick and simple technique to break up anxious thoughts is to intentionally distract your mind and train of thought when you feel anxious. An easy way to do this is to silently name four shapes, sounds, colors and textures that you can see in your immediate environment. This can disrupt the thoughts that are producing anxiety by redirecting your focus and attention to a neutral, yet engaging task. Many individuals find peace and comfort in music, so try putting together a “happy playlist” with all of your favorite songs. Listen to this playlist when you find yourself alone such as driving in the car or working silently. The therapeutic benefits of journaling have been scientifically proven time and time again. Consider keeping a journal where you can privately write your thoughts and feelings about what you are experiencing during the crisis. Allow yourself to openly and candidly journal about what you are feeling without reservation. This journal does not need to be shared with anyone, so it can include anger, frustration, sadness, and other emotions that you might not feel comfortable verbally expressing.

While it is important to stay aware of new developments around COVID-19, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourage people to take breaks from watching, reading, and listening to media coverage about the outbreak. By exposing yourself to pandemic coverage on a reoccurring and frequent basis, you can provoke unnecessary stress and anxiety. Instead, make a plan to check media at certain points throughout the day such as once in the morning and once at night. Take a break from social media if you find yourself becoming upset by reading such content on a frequent basis. Another simple technique you can use throughout the day to manage stress is guided imagery. For this technique, you visualize and create calming scenes, places, or experiences in your mind to help you relax and focus. For example, you may choose to find a quiet space, close your eyes, and take a trip to the beach. You might want to visualize playing with your grandchildren or baking your favorite treats. You can find free apps and online recordings of calming scenes, but make sure to choose images and experiences that you find soothing and that have personal significance.

While it might sound cliché, it is more important now than ever to take care of your body. This includes exercising, eating healthy, getting plenty of sleep, and avoiding excess alcohol. Set aside time each day to engage in positive, calming activities with those who you enjoy spending time with. This might include painting, putting together a puzzle, playing games, or simply spending quality time with your children and loved ones after the workday. It is important that you make an intentional effort to do this because it can be beneficial for family members to cope in group settings. Focus on gratitude. Before you begin your day in the morning or while you drink your coffee, think of something that you're grateful for. Share this with your friends and family around you each morning. Not only can this process of sharing be therapeutic, starting your day on a positive note can change the course of the entire day.

Don't be afraid to have open, honest conversations with those who you trust. Make yourself available to answer questions from those around you, especially children, about the crisis. Education and awareness are key to reducing anxiety. Children react based on what they see and hear from the adults around them. When adults are confident and calm about the COVID-19 crisis, they are better able to provide meaningful care and support for their children. Take time to explain what is happening with the

outbreak to your children, but avoid making it the topic of conversation for the entire day. Be intentional about checking in with your friends and family who might not live with you, especially if they are alone.

Remember, not all children react to stress the same way. Be on the lookout for any abnormal behavior, acting out, irritability, or out of the ordinary behaviors that may indicate that they need to process their emotions. Reassure your child that they are safe and can come to you with their concerns. Let them know it is okay if they feel upset. Be open about sharing how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn different coping strategies. Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning and relaxing at home. Stick to normal morning and bed time routines to avoid disruption to their natural sleep cycle even if school is not in session.

Common signs of distress:

- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety or fear.
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and upsetting thoughts and images.
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Anger or short-temper.
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

If distress impacts activities of your daily life for several days or weeks, talk to a counselor, doctor, clergy member, or contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration helpline at 1-800-985-5990. You can also text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained counselor by text.

If you would like additional information on emotional and mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak, you can confidentially contact me at the information below.

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Wellbeing Links

- CORONAVIRUS vs. COLD vs. FLU vs. ALLERGIES – [Kansas State Department of Health](#)
- AVMA Wellbeing Resources
 - [Covid-19 and Wellbeing](#)
 - [Wellbeing in a time of COVID - AVMA My Veterinary Life Podcast](#)
 - [General Wellbeing Resources](#)
- Pandemic self-care for veterinary teams – [AAHA NewStat](#)
- Coronavirus anxiety overwhelmed this doctor. A deep breath helped – [Washington Post](#)
- Mental Health and Coping during COVID - [CDC](#)
- Emotional Wellbeing During the COVID-19 Outbreak – [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
- The Happiness Lab – [Covid-related podcasts with Dr. Laurie Santos](#)
- Science of Wellbeing course - [Coursera](#)

Important links

- [WSVMA Covid-19 Resources](#)
- [WA Essential Critical Infrastructure Executive Order](#)
- [Washington State COVID-19 Response](#)
- [Flowchart – Minimizing COVID-19 Exposure and social distancing in veterinary practice](#)

Questions, comments or concerns? Email info@wsvma.org or call (800) 399-7862.