



Our profession.
Our cause.
Our NYSVMS.

New York State Veterinary Medical Society

NY State is trusting you to do the right thing

Dear Dr. Atkinson,

I have seen a mixed response from members about the new interim guidance for Animal Care operations released by the Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Rather than responding to everyone individually, I would like to put these guidelines in a broader context.

NYSVMS has consistently held the view that the decisions of how to treat specific cases should be left to veterinarians in consultation with the owner.

Some of you are concerned that the new guidelines may have swung too far from the earlier language of "emergency only" and give veterinarians too much freedom to operate. I think that a better way to view the breadth of these new guidelines is that the NY State government is putting more trust in veterinarians to make the right decisions about balancing the health of animals, public health and the health of their staff and clients.

I have said before that the situation is changing daily, and it will continue like that for some time even though these guidelines might be around for a while.

I share the NY State's confidence in the veterinary community that you can demonstrate that when trusted to make sound medical decisions, veterinarians can perform at their best, and that you will be continually assessing the need of each patient against the current level of risk to your staff.

The guidelines should also be read in the context of the messages we are hearing from the Governor who requires that everyone in the State put the safety of people ahead of making money. You have been trusted to make the right decisions, and should see patients only when you have balanced the risk to your staff against the need of the animal.

This is especially true in the next couple of weeks when there is little research on the risk of the new Covid19 safety protocols, and there is great concern and little information on the supply of PPE for both veterinary and human use. You might choose to delay seeing some animals in order to conserve PPE that is needed for more urgent animal and human case.

For example, just because the guidelines say you can still spay/neuter, that does not mean that these operations should continue at full capacity. The NYSVMS board has discussed this specific issue and feels that right now some spay/neuter operations are extremely high risk to your staff and we urge extreme caution.

Today we are at the epicenter of the Covid19 crisis in the United States. Let's provide a road-map that will help save lives for those who are watching how NY responds.

Interim Guidance for Animal Care Operations

Incase you missed it:

The top concern we have heard from members over the last few days is how to interpret Executive Order 202.6 which requires non-essential businesses to close-down onsite operations.

Clarification is now available.

I want to thank Dr. David Smith, State Veterinarian at the NY State Department of Agriculture and Sciences for responding to your needs so promptly. His department has now issued an interim guidance document for veterinarians that clarifies that the following are exempt:

Companion animal veterinary care : "Essential veterinary care, including spay/neuter, treatment for infectious disease" is exempt.

Livestock/Equine/Captive Cervids all veterinary care is exempt.

[Read NYS Guidance for Animal Care](#)

Please send questions to me at tatkinson@nysvms.org or call 518 869 7888

For more updates on Covid19 and veterinary care visit:
vets.nysvms.org/Covid19



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