



Our profession.  
Our cause.  
Our NYSVMS.

New York State Veterinary Medical Society

## State changes "Essential" definition

The Covid-19 situation is changing very quickly. The growth in confirmed cases of Covid19 in NY is truly terrifying, and higher than other States.

Today the Governor announced a whole set of sweeping new changes under the PAUSE program which goes much further than earlier initiatives announced this week, including a 100% closure of non-essential businesses.

This [new Executive Order](#) goes into effect at 8:00 pm Sunday 22nd March and is very similar to a shelter-in-place order.

The State provides lists of businesses that are exempt from closure on two government sites, and these may continue to change. For example, the Department of Economic Development definition of essential businesses changed today from the one we published yesterday.

As of right now the guidance on what constitutes an exempt business are:

**Department of Agriculture and Markets:** "Food producing farms, fisheries, operations that care for animals..."

**Department of Economic Development:** "Emergency veterinary and livestock services" (This is a change from the language provided on Thursday)

I have spoken to the State Veterinarian in the Department of Agriculture and Markets, and he assures me that there will be further conversations about the wording of this guidance because of the clear need for inoculations to prevent zoonotic disease, among other things.

While we wait for clarity let's step back and look at the intention behind this. The Governor is saying that he would like everyone to shelter-in-place, but he has allowed some unavoidable exceptions. He has been very clear that his intention is to save human lives first and foremost. He wants us all to still be alive to then rebuild our economy together. Operating your practice is extremely hazardous right now, and we don't want anyone to die unnecessarily.

A common-sense approach while waiting for us to clarify things with the government, (and which is not reviewed by our legal counsel), would be for you to remain open for emergency visits/necessary medication dispensing, urgent services of any kind, as permitted in the current government guidelines but decrease your on-site staff as much as possible while also preserving distance between staff as possible.

Meanwhile we will work on clarifying a safe legal path for you to continue to prevent further zoonotic diseases like rabies from taking a hold.

Please also see our [website](#) for advice on safety while handling animals during the Covid19 crisis.

Above all, stay safe, and stay alive,

Tim Atkinson  
Executive Director  
New York State Veterinary Medical Society



---

[Opt-out options](#)  
[Unsubscribe](#)



---

To unsubscribe from the MEMBERS list, click the following link:  
<http://list.vmaexecs.org/scripts/wa-VMAEXECS.exe?SUBED1=MEMBERS&A=1>