



CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Governor's statement regarding elective surgery in veterinary medicine

This is obviously a unique and challenging time requiring collective approaches and a broad view of how we can help one another and society as a whole. Veterinarians have always been valued members of their communities and a critical part of overall public health. We respect your ability to make the decisions that make sense for you in this environment and will do our best to help you navigate the weeks ahead.

Gov. Mike DeWine and all state officials are faced with a number of difficult decisions as they establish COVID-19 treatment and containment approaches. We appreciate the governor and his team for their leadership in trying times and respect the efforts they are making.

REQUEST TO RESCHEDULE SURGERIES

That said, we would like to expand on Gov. DeWine's request to postpone elective veterinary surgeries (*see below for the exact wording*) and make you aware of our understanding of the totality of the governor's request to your profession.

"Governor DeWine announced that the state had received its personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, gowns, and goggles, from the National Strategic Reserve last night. He asked all health care providers and others that use PPE to conserve their supplies. Governor DeWine requested that dentists and veterinarians postpone elective surgeries. Governor DeWine explained that his health advisory group is in the process of developing guidelines for doctors for postponing elective surgeries that will not put patients at risk. These measures will open up critical treatment beds while preserving the state's limited supply of PPE"

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On Saturday morning, OVMA President Dr. Greg Hass and Executive Director Jack Advent spoke with Gov. DeWine, who asked that **veterinary offices turn over any PPE that could be spared** to their local Emergency Management Agency for distribution and use in human healthcare. The governor has also encouraged any efforts within veterinary medicine that could conserve PPE use.

During a press conference later that day, veterinarians and dentists were **requested to postpone elective surgeries** as one of several strategies aimed at preserving and sharing PPE for use in the COVID-19 response.

We did share with the governor that, to our knowledge, **PPE supplies in veterinary medicine facilities are already very limited** due to current demand and backorders, but as a profession we would do our best to assist.

DONATING & CONSERVING SUPPLIES

If you are in a position to do so, **please deliver any PPE supplies you can spare to [your county's Emergency Management Agency](#)**. Please also let the OVMA office know of your donation (contact ohiovma@ohiovma.org or reply directly to this email) so we can track a statewide response. It is not clear at this time whether you will be reimbursed by the state for any donation, but at a minimum **any donation may be eligible for a business tax deduction**.

Relative to elective surgeries, be advised that the governor's statement was a request. It should be viewed in a broader context of conservation of resources. OVMA has not taken a formal position on postponing elective surgeries; as with most medical decisions, **it is a**

determination best made between the veterinarian and the client, reflecting individual medical circumstances.

Another option to consider in the effort to preserve PPE is **temporarily modifying general surgical standards of care where appropriate**, including:

- Performing minimally invasive surgeries with sterile surgical gloves and without a surgical mask and/or gown
- Reusing gowns and masks

This morning, OVMA made a formal appeal to the Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board, requesting that it **permit actions like these that may violate the minimum standards of care ([OAC 4741-1-03](#)) during this current healthcare crisis**. We are also part of national discussions relative to this approach.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

At this time, we are working on additional COVID-19-related resources, including information on telemedicine and small business relief packages in discussion, and will disseminate these materials tomorrow.