

IVMA Recommendations Concerning Veterinary Care Essential Services

During the COVID-19 crisis, veterinary groups including the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association (IVMA), American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) and other key stakeholders are advocating for state governments to designate veterinary practices as “essential business”. Our lobby team has been in contact with IDALS, IBVM, and the Governor’s office regarding this issue.

While Iowa is currently not under a shelter-in-place directive and, during this crisis veterinarians should use good medical judgement and not perform non-essential services to limit staff exposure to the virus. Clinics may want to consider meeting clients at their cars instead of bringing animals into clinic waiting rooms to maintain appropriate social distancing. See the [AVMA Flowchart](#) Minimizing COVID-19 Exposure.

According to the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, essential services that should continue to be provided by veterinarians include (but not limited to):

1. Veterinary critical and emergency care
 - a. Threat to the patient’s life if surgery or procedure is not performed.
 - b. Threat of permanent dysfunction of an extremity or organ system, including teeth and jaws.
 - c. Risk of metastasis or progression of staging.
2. Administration of initial rabies vaccination to unvaccinated domestic animals in areas with terrestrial rabies variants
3. Administration of booster rabies vaccination to domestic animals with confirmed or suspected rabies exposure
4. Administration of other vaccinations to domestic animals in response to local or regional outbreaks (e.g., parvovirus, distemper virus, influenza virus)
5. Diagnosis and reporting of notifiable veterinary conditions (e.g., foreign animal diseases and others requiring movement restrictions)
6. Physical examination and completion of Certificates of Veterinary Inspection for interstate movement of animals
7. Community animal control and sheltering services
8. Euthanasia to avoid continued animal suffering, pain or diminished quality of life

While Iowa is currently not under a shelter-in-place directive and, during this crisis veterinarians should use good medical judgement and not perform non-essential services to limit staff exposure to the virus. Clinics may want to consider meeting clients at their cars instead of bringing animals into clinic waiting rooms to maintain appropriate social distancing. See the [AVMA Flowchart](#) Minimizing COVID-19 Exposure.