OVMA nationwide COVID-19 survey results

OVMA's fifth survey in response to COVID-19 was launched on June 22, in conjunction with a national COVID-19 survey run in partnership with:

- Associated Veterinary Purchasing Co. Ltd.
- Merck Animal Health
- Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Diets
- Royal Bank of Canada
- Veterinary Purchasing
- Western Drug Distribution Center Limited
- The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association

The survey collected 544 responses from Ontario between June 22 and July 3. The COVID-19 survey will be run at regular intervals to monitor how veterinarians are responding to the situation as it develops.

In this survey, some new questions were added, while others were significantly altered and therefore don't have trend data from previous surveys.

**Measures Taken at Any Point During Pandemic**

Survey respondents were asked, “Over the course of the pandemic, which measures did you and/or your hospital implement at any point?”

Some of the common “other” responses included individual risk assessments for allowing appointments, permitting only small numbers of clients to enter the hospital, and eliminating any paper documents (e.g. receipts, signed consent forms, etc.).

It should be noted that when limited to mixed, large and mobile veterinarians, the percentage of those minimizing contact and using the lowest risk client for restraint during farm/mobile calls was significantly higher. These figures are artificially decreased in the table below due to the high number of small animal veterinarians who responded to the survey.
Measures Currently Being Implemented

Survey respondents were asked, “Which measures are you and/or your hospital continuing to implement?”

Some of the common “other” responses included providing masks for clients who didn’t bring one, having longer appointment times to facilitate distancing and cleaning, and utilizing plastic shields to separate clients and the veterinary team.

Once again, when limited to mixed, large and mobile veterinarians, the percentage minimizing contact and using the lowest risk client for restraint during farm/mobile calls was significantly higher.
Client Entry to Hospital

Survey respondents were asked, “When are you and/or your hospital planning to allow clients to enter the building on a wider scale?”

Some of the common “other” responses included once regional case rates declined or the region entered the next phase of re-opening, and once there’s a vaccine for COVID-19.

Re-Opening Stage

Survey respondents were asked, “Are you and/or your hospital located in an area that is in Stage 1 or Stage 2 of re-opening?”

Most respondents, at 87 per cent, were in a Stage 2 region, with only 12 per cent in a Stage 1 region. It should be noted that between the time of surveying and publication of this report, all Ontario regions have moved to Stage 2.
Client Entry to Hospital by Re-Opening Stage

Responses to “When are you and/or your hospital planning to allow clients to enter the building on a wider scale?” were stratified by those hospitals in Stage 1 and Stage 2.

While the results aren't dramatically different overall between the regions, one distinction stands out: of those respondents in a Stage 1 area, none were currently allowing entry to their building on a wider scale, while seven percent of those in a Stage 2 area were.

Measures Currently Being Implemented by Re-Opening Stage

Responses to “Which measures are you and/or your hospital continuing to implement?” were stratified by those hospitals in Stage 1 and Stage 2.

Respondents in a Stage 1 area were overall likely to be continuing with measures, such as curbside animal drop off, contactless payments, screening clients for signs of illness or travel history, and postponing some examinations/vaccines.
Euthanasia Appointment Measures

Survey respondents were asked, “How are you and/or your hospital conducting euthanasia appointments?”

Some of the common “other” responses included conducting euthanasia appointments outdoors, or sedating the animal away from the client and then having them present only for the final moments of the appointment.

Alterations in Staffing

Survey respondents were asked, “Have you and/or your hospital altered staffing?”
The most common “other” response was that additional staff had been hired to allow for greater distancing from clients on farm calls, or to assist with the increased time requirements of the measures they had implemented to deal with the pandemic.

### Have you and/or your hospital altered staffing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>April 14-15</th>
<th>May 14-15</th>
<th>June 22 - July 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No - All Staff Healthy/Working as Normal</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Staff to Self-isolation/Weed/Child-care Responsibilities, etc.</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laid Off Staff Due to Business Shutdown</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Staff Hours Due to Business Shutdown</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split Staff into Separate Teams</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Working From Home/Remote</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy Qualification

Survey respondents who indicated that they were either practice owners or practice managers were asked, “Have you qualified for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (75 per cent wage subsidy) at any point during the pandemic?”

The Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy covers up to 75 per cent of an employee’s wage, to a maximum of $847 per week (approximately $44,000 per year, or 75 per cent of the annual salary of an employee making approximately $59,000 per year).

To qualify for this program, veterinarians had to show that their revenues had declined by at least 15 per cent in March 2020 from either March 2019 or the average of January and February 2020, and by at least 30 per cent in April, May and June 2020 from the same month in 2019 or the average of January and February 2020.

### Have you qualified for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (75% wage subsidy) at any point during the pandemic?

| Yes       | 41%       |
| No        | 59%       |

### Payroll Situation

Survey respondents who indicated that they were either practice owners or practice managers were asked, “Which best describes your payroll situation?”

Some of the common “other” responses included reducing staff hours while increasing pay, and having lost staff (as explained in Table 8) but paying remaining staff the same or an increased wage.
Hours of Operation Alterations

Survey respondents were asked, “Have you and/or your hospital altered your hours of operation?”

Some of the common “other” responses included alterations to opening and closing times without an overall change in total hours, reducing appointment hours to allow for telemedicine appointments, and that hours had initially been reduced but are now back to a normal schedule.

Telemmedicine

Survey respondents were asked, “If you and/or your hospital have implemented telemedicine, what do you charge for a telemedicine examination? If you do not charge for this service, please enter $0.”

Of those respondents offering telemedicine, 80 per cent indicated that they charged for this service. Those charging for telemedicine consults had a median fee of $60 (excludes those providing service for $0).

May Revenues

Survey respondents were asked “How busy were you and/or your hospital in May?”

The most common “other” response provided was that the respondent didn’t know what the revenue of their hospital was in May 2020 compared to May 2019.
June Revenue

Survey respondents were asked, “How do you anticipate your and/or your hospital’s revenues will be for June?”

Once again, the most common “other” response provided was that the respondent didn’t know what the revenue of their hospital was in June 2020 compared to June 2019.

Amount of Work for Locum Veterinarians

Survey respondents who indicated that they were a locum veterinarian were asked, “How much work have you had as a locum during the course of the pandemic?”

The most common “other” response provided was that the respondent initially had much less work at the onset of the pandemic, but their workload had now returned to normal levels.

Animal Behaviour

Survey respondents were asked, “Have you and/or your hospital found animal behaviour to have been noticeably altered due to separation from the client during appointments/procedures?”
The next most commonly indicated answer was an “other” response, with the majority of these specifying that they found animals were better behaved, less aggressive, and easier to restrain and work with away from clients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Aggressive</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Difficult to Restrain</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Fearful</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Noticeable Difference</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients Have Remained With Animal</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OVMA Pet Health Insurance launches new platform to submit trials and claims

The OVMA Pet Health Insurance (PHI) program and Petline Insurance are excited to announce the launch of a new web-based platform that makes it easier to submit trials and claims. Petline’s Interactive Partner Electronic Response (PIPER) has been launched as an exclusive custom solution to simplify the process of sending documents to help clients with their pet insurance needs.

Benefits of the new platform include:

- **Simple web-based solution**: No need to download a program. Simply log in to your account to upload and submit documents.
- **Convenient one-stop shop for trial, claim and medical record uploads**: No more faxing or emailing documents; you can upload everything through this platform!

PHI territory managers will reach out to clinics directly to get you up and running on the platform. They’ll provide you with the URL/website and credentials to begin submitting documents. If you’d like to learn more before your territory manager reaches out, contact them directly or email Chantelle Percy at chantelle.percy@petlineinsurance.com.

Back by popular demand: new virtual JumpStart! Boot Camp workshop dates!

While we can’t bring staff together in person, we can bring JumpStart! Boot Camp to them!

This two-day workshop is designed to equip frontline staff with the skills and tools required to keep clients happy and engaged. It’s open to every member of your practice team, from reception staff to veterinarians. You’ll be led through step-by-step processes to:

- Handle phone shoppers
- Overcome client objections
• Handle client complaints
• Communicate benefits to gain client compliance
• Remind clients and achieve results
• Keep the appointment book filled
• Provide the ultimate client experience at your hospital (even with curbside care)

**When:** Aug. 18 and Aug. 19 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
**What's needed:** A quiet room with a computer, a good Internet connection, camera, headphones and a microphone*.

Members can register at a **discounted rate** of $175 per person (practice owner needs to be a member to qualify the rest of their staff). Non-members can register for $250. The session counts for 5.5 continuing education credits. For more information and to register, contact Sheila Krane at skrane@ovma.org or 1.800.670.1702, ext. 216.

This session is generously sponsored by LifeLearn and Hill's Pet Nutrition.

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*Camera and microphone are needed to provide an interactive experience.

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**Ride for Farley: participate from home and help pets in need!**

On Sept. 12, for the first time ever, the Farley Foundation's annual Summit Veterinary Pharmacy Ride for Farley will be held from the comfort of your own home!

To help pets in need while maintaining social distancing, the Farley Foundation is encouraging participants to get active in and around their local communities. Although it's traditionally a cycling fundraiser, this year's event welcomes participants of all ages to exercise however they choose. Whether you're interested in biking, walking, swimming or spinning, you can get active in support of people and pets in Ontario!

Other changes to this year's event include:

• Rather than being exclusive to veterinarians and clinic staff, this year's event is open to all pet lovers! You can **sign up as a team or register as an individual** to raise money for the foundation.

• There's no minimum donation amount, registration fee, or age or distance requirements, so it's easier than ever to participate!

• If you raise more than $2,500 you'll be entered into a draw to win a $150 gift card of your choice, and if you raise more than $5,000, you'll have a chance to win a $250 gift card of your choice!

Remember to get social with other event participants by posting your experience on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter! Don't forget to tag the Farley Foundation and use the hashtags #RideForFarley and #HelpingPetsFromHome on your posts, and we'll share it on our page!

Don't wait to sign up: **register today**! If you have questions, email info@farleyfoundation.org. Additional event guidelines will be provided upon registration.
Thanks to our generous sponsor, Summit Veterinary Pharmacy, 100 per cent of the funds raised through this year’s event will go directly to helping people and pets. To date, the Farley Foundation has disbursed more than $4.7 million to assist over 11,000 people and their sick or injured pets.

NewsHound e-newsletters provide timely veterinary news and updates. You’re receiving this message because you’re a member of the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association.

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