



## COVID-19 update

### Potential mandatory closure of veterinary practices

This morning, the Province of Ontario announced the mandatory closure of restaurants, bars and a variety of other venues where people gather. Veterinary practices were not among the list of businesses required to close.

Veterinary medicine is not considered an essential service under Ontario's Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. This means that veterinary practices could be required to close, should the Province of Ontario decide to close all businesses that are not providing essential services. In anticipation of that possibility, OVMA has been lobbying the provincial government to provide an exemption for veterinarians/veterinary practices providing medically necessary services, such as treating sick or injured animals, as well as services related to herd health of food animals. OVMA will keep members apprised of those discussions as they progress.

### New OVMA member service: Smart.Vet telehealth platform

Many practices are looking for ways to still see patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. To assist in that regard, OVMA is pleased to announce a new member service. Smart.Vet allows you to offer clients remote consultations by text, phone or video via a **telehealth platform branded for your practice**. It has many features including:

- Options for clients to request a text consultation, phone call or video chat.
- Automatic payment after the consultation.
- Ability for clients to book their remote consultation online based on the availability you provide.
- Service is accessed from the clinic website.
- Option to record the consultation so the client and clinic receive a copy.
- Seamless communication. If the client's Internet connection is weak on a video consult, it can switch to a phone call. The system will call the client and the veterinarian.

**The ability to offer this type of service is especially important now when patients need parasiticide medication. Smart.Vet can help clinic teams to continue seeing their patients remotely prior to dispensing parasiticide medication for pick up at the clinic.** (Note: A veterinarian is required to obtain recent and sufficient knowledge of an animal before prescribing medication. According to the College of Veterinarians of Ontario, if a valid veterinarian-client-patient-relationship exists, and if a veterinarian believes they have sufficient information to provide a prescription, the veterinarian is permitted to provide a prescription via telemedicine.)

Smart.Vet's platform normally costs \$249.99/month for unlimited consultations by up to five users in the practice, plus six per cent of each transaction fee and a \$0.30 per

transaction processing fee.

**The OVMA Member rate** is \$199.99/month for up to 10 users, plus four per cent of each transaction fee and a \$0.30 processing fee. For example, for a \$50 consultation, the processing/admin fee would be  $\$2 + \$0.30 = \$2.30$ . That cost includes any related merchant card fees. The clinic would receive \$47.70 from the consultation directly deposited to the clinic bank account.

[Learn more about Smart.Vet](#) or [sign up](#) for the service at the special OVMA member rate.

### **MyVetStore Web Store service: give clients access to online purchases and home delivery**

OVMA's MyVetStore service offers practices the ability to provide home delivery of pet food through Veterinary Purchasing. Clients can order their pet food and then arrange to have that food delivered to their home. MyVetStore also offers practices the ability to have clients pre-purchase medications and then pick them up at the clinic. The practice can even arrange to have a staff member go out to the client's car and give them the prescription, as the payment has already been completed.

There's no set-up fee, no minimum commitment period that you are required to keep the web store and the **first three months are free**. Included in the monthly fee is unlimited training and support for you and your clients, access to monthly email campaigns and social marketing materials, and all upgrades to the site. Here's an example of what ongoing transaction fees might look like:

Monthly web store sales	Monthly web store fee
Up to \$3,000	\$49
\$3,000-\$5,000	\$99
\$5,000-\$10,000	\$149
\$10,000-\$15,000	\$249
\$15,000-\$20,000	\$349
Over \$20,000	\$449

To find out more, go to [info.myvetstore.ca](mailto:info.myvetstore.ca). To request a demo or to sign up for the webstore service, email [info@myvetstore.ca](mailto:info@myvetstore.ca) or call 1.877.788.5028.

### **Concerned about your practice's finances?**

Given the uncertainties surrounding COVID-19, many veterinarians are justifiably concerned about their business, and how they will pay their expenses if they are required to close their doors or suffer a decline in client numbers and revenue.

The OVMA Economics Department, using data collected over recent years, has determined that veterinary hospitals are generally well positioned to weather a decline in business. OVMA's economic modelling has found that the average veterinarian in Ontario would be able to break even with a 40 per cent reduction in revenue through March, and 50 per

cent reduction in revenue in April. This model assumes that full-time non-DVM and DVM staff continue to be employed and receive 100 per cent of their compensation.

If you would like to model scenarios for your hospital, contact Dr. Chris Doherty at [cdoherty@ovma.org](mailto:cdoherty@ovma.org) or Darren Osborne at [dosborne@ovma.org](mailto:dosborne@ovma.org).

### **OVMA office is going virtual**

To safeguard staff health and protect against community spread, OVMA staff will begin working virtually starting Friday, March 20. Although OVMA's physical office will be closed, all OVMA staff will continue to be available by email and phone to assist members throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff contact information can be found at [ovma.org/contact](http://ovma.org/contact).



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