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Important health and safety advice

Important health and safety advice from Dr. Scott Weese

Dr. Scott Weese has added some very informative articles to his Worms and Germs blog on how to stay safe while working in a veterinary practice, including:

- SARS-CoV-2 environmental survival
- Social distancing and veterinary medicine: Are they compatible?

To read these articles and more, visit wormsandgermsblog.com.

Update on status of veterinary practices as essential services

OVMA has been working closely with the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs regarding emergency management planning. Both ministries understand the vital role that veterinarians play in protecting the health and well-being of both animals and people. The province has assured OVMA that maintaining appropriate access to those services will be factored into any decisions the province may make concerning the potential mandatory closure of non-essential businesses. The ministries are committed to maintaining the highest level of animal welfare during this uncertain time. OVMA has a direct line and will continue to support the ministries in their planning over the coming days. As information becomes available it will be shared through NewsHound.

[Read OVMA's letter to the Ministry of the Solicitor General.](#)

New CVO guidelines on after-hours service and records transfer

The College of Veterinarians of Ontario (CVO) has provided new guidance to practices regarding after-hours service and the transfer of medical record information during the COVID-19 outbreak. For details, visit the college's [Coronavirus web page](#).

Keeping patients and clients safe during parasite season

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 outbreak arrived just as veterinary practices were gearing up for flea/tick/heartworm season. Fortunately, practices can continue to meet patient needs while protecting client health with a little creativity. Here are a few helpful ideas that many practices have implemented to ensure client safety and patient health during the upcoming parasite season:

- Notify clients via email and/or phone that flea/tick/heartworm products are available for pre-purchase and curbside pickup.
- Where possible, process credit card transactions by phone. If the client doesn't have a credit card, payment can be taken by debit card using a portable hand-held terminal (if you have one) or (as a last resort) cash during medication pickup.
- Advise the client to call the clinic once they're in the parking lot and their medication will be brought out to their vehicle.

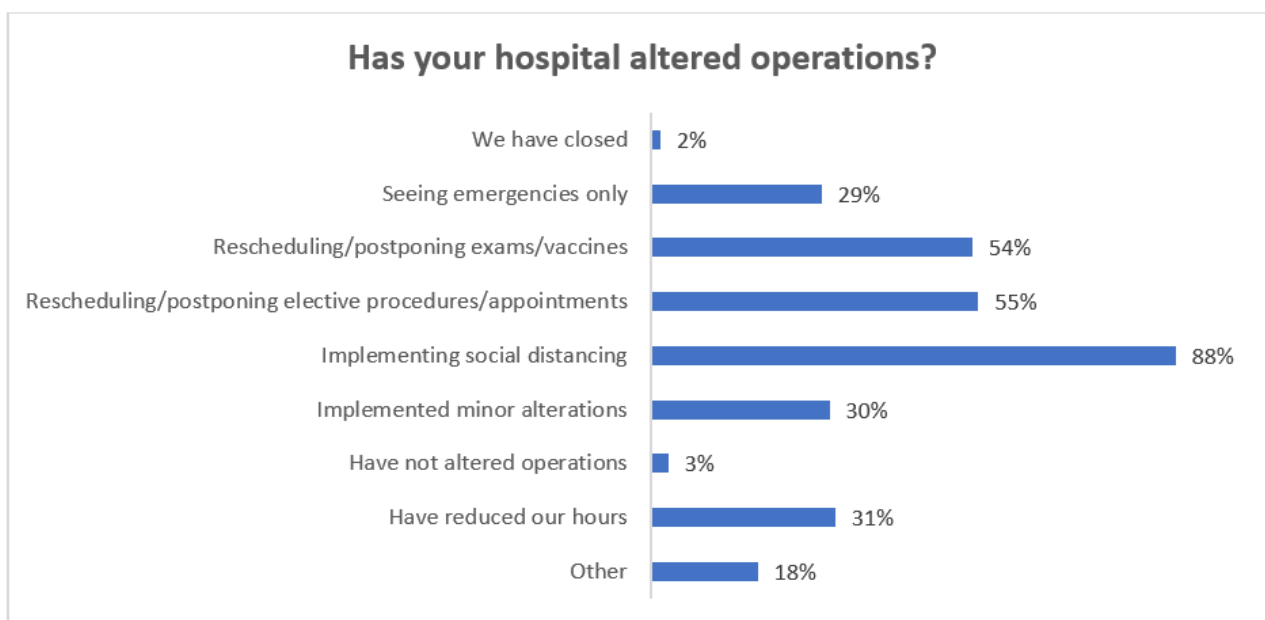
Question: What if I need to see the pet before dispensing the medication?

CVO has recently given veterinarians more flexibility in obtaining recent and sufficient information to prescribe and dispense medications, to enable practices to use telemedicine to obtain information that might have previously been obtained only via an in-clinic examination. [View CVO's announcement on telemedicine.](#)

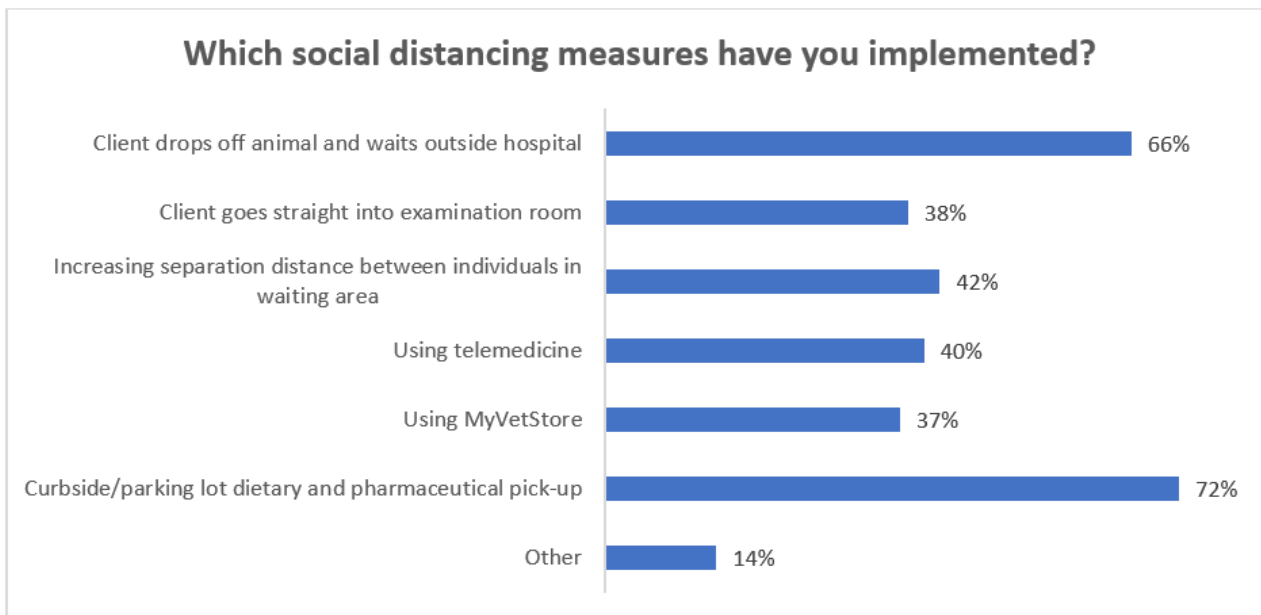
Practices seeking to enhance their telemedicine services are reminded to check out [Smart.Vet](#). OVMA is offering preferred member rates on Smart.Vet's veterinary practice platform. For a demonstration or to enquire about OVMA member rates, [contact Smart.Vet.](#)

Practice survey results

OVMA's first survey in response to COVID-19 was launched on March 19, 2020, and over one day, collected 870 responses. This survey will be run at regular intervals, to monitor how veterinarians are responding to the situation as it develops.



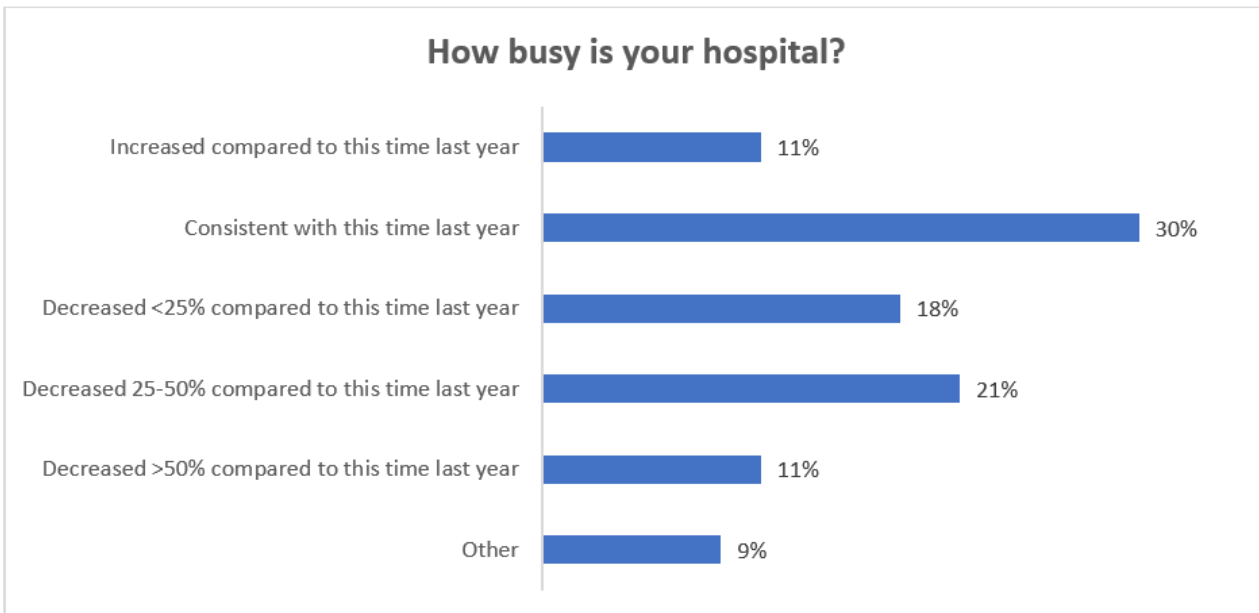
Some of the common “other” responses to how hospitals have altered operations included longer appointment time to allow for increased cleaning/disinfecting, not allowing any clients into the hospital, limiting the number of people in the hospital at one time, and requiring clients to affirm they have not travelled or are showing flu-like symptoms.



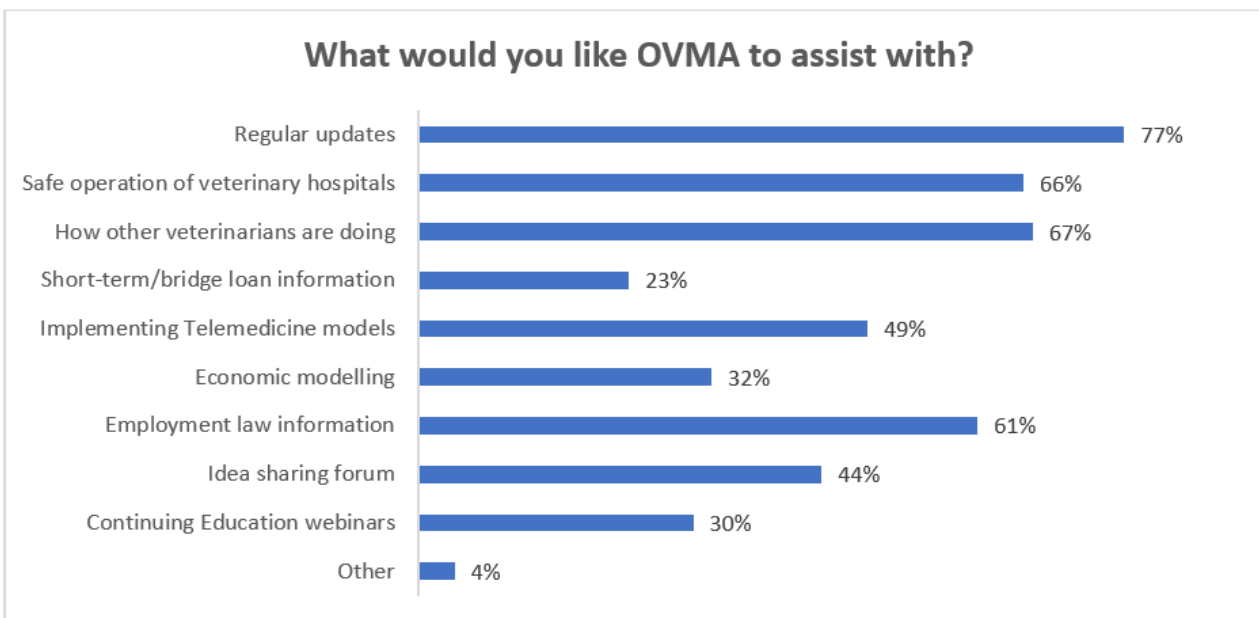
Some of the common “other” responses to which social distancing measures that have been implemented included keeping a further distance from clients during house-calls and farm visits, not allowing clients within the hospital, home deliveries for dietary and pharmaceutical sales, and payment over the phone.



Some of the common “other” responses to how hospitals have altered staffing included splitting staff into two teams without overlap between the teams and altering work schedules.



Some of the common “other” responses to how busy the hospital is included that they are unsure how it compares to previous years, and that appointment volumes have decreased yet sales of dietary and pharmaceuticals have increased.



Some of the common “other” responses to how OVMA can assist included helping to ensure veterinary supply from distributors, guidance on how to navigate staff/client safety and how to access government programs to support small businesses.



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Our mailing address:

Ontario Veterinary Medical Association
420 Bronte Street South, Suite 205
Milton, ON, L9T 0H9

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