



## NewsHound

Your Veterinary News Source.



## Federal wage subsidy details announced

The federal government released additional details about the 75 per cent payroll subsidy announced on March 27:

- The subsidy is available to all Canadian companies and charities that have seen at least a 30 per cent decrease in business. The revenue decrease will be assessed by the federal government after the fact. Businesses that didn't experience at least a 30 per cent revenue decrease will be asked to repay any subsidy provided.
- The subsidy will cover up to 75 per cent of an employee's salary on the first \$58,700 that each employee earns (\$58,770 is the current maximum annual amount of income for the purpose of calculating CPP on earnings). The maximum subsidy per employee will be \$847 per week. The subsidy will be available whether or not the business remains open.
- There will be no cap on the number of a business' employees that can be subsidized.
- Employers can choose to top up the subsidy.
- The subsidy will be backdated to March 15.
- Additional details will be made available by the government over the next few days.

**Important note: Over the past two weeks, some practices have been rushing to lay off employees. While layoffs are an option, they can have a serious impact on a practices' employees, its culture, future staff retention and the Canadian economy as a whole. The availability of the 75 per cent federal payroll subsidy will enable the vast majority of Ontario veterinary practices to stay in the black financially without having to resort to staff layoffs. [View OVMA's step-by step guide on keeping your practice afloat](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

## Employment law and COVID-19 Q&As

Many OVMA members have questions about employment law as it pertains to the COVID-19 pandemic. Answers to many of the most common questions can be found on OVMA's [COVID-19 Employment Issues](#) web page.

Members with general questions that haven't been included in the Q&As are asked to send them to [info@ovma.org](mailto:info@ovma.org). More specific questions (i.e. questions pertaining to the wording of

your employment agreement or your practice's personnel policy) should be directed to OVMA's Free Legal Counsel Service at 1.877.636.8557.

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## COVID-19-related classified ads

In the coming weeks, associate veterinarians may be seeking temporary employment if they have been laid off or have had their hours reduced as a result of the pandemic. OVMA members seeking temporary positions can post an OVMA Associate Available ad free of charge. For more information, email [info@ovma.org](mailto:info@ovma.org). Similarly, veterinary practices may need veterinarians and other hospital personnel on a short-term basis to cope with COVID-19-related absences. To help practices seeking temporary assistance to connect with those seeking temporary positions, OVMA will identify Veterinarian Wanted and RVT/Hospital Personnel Wanted ads for positions that are temporary in nature when those ads are posted in OVMA's classifieds.

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## OVMA guide to keeping personal finances afloat during the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is justifiably causing concern about personal finances, particularly if you've seen a decline in income. OVMA has put together a guide listing strategies and government initiatives to help members protect and maintain your financial health during these turbulent times. [Access the guide.](#)

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## Urgent request for ventilators

As veterinarians are aware, the current pandemic is resulting in a significant increase in demand for ventilators in human health-care facilities. Over the weekend, the College of Veterinarians of Ontario received a formal request from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, asking veterinary practices with ventilators to loan that equipment to hospitals, wherever feasible. At this time, the focus is increasing availability of standard ventilators, emergency transport ventilators, anesthesia gas machines capable of providing controlled ventilation or assisted ventilation, or other appropriate equipment that can operate independently for a single patient, rather than "unconventional" equipment. Veterinarians are asked to go to the [Ontario Together website](#) as soon as possible to let the ministry know what ventilators or other equipment they have available to help with this urgent request.

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## Protecting biosecurity on farms during COVID-19

The COVID-19 outbreak is necessitating significant changes in how veterinarians carry out their day-to-day activities. It also requires veterinarians and their practices to plan for possible contingencies, as there's no concrete timeline for when this pandemic could be resolved. To assist large animal veterinarians during this time, several resources are

available and shared below. As this situation is fluid and changing by the minute updates will be provided through NewsHound.

[National Farm Animal Care Council – Code of Practice](#)

[Equestrian Canada – COVID-19 and Equestrian Facility Operations](#)

[Ontario Animal Health Network](#)

[Worms and Germs Blog – Dr. Scott Weese](#)

Government of Canada:

- [National Biosecurity Standards and Biosecurity Principles](#)
- [National Farm-Level Biosecurity Planning Guide](#)
- [Latest CFIA Information for Consumers on Food and Animal Health – COVID-19](#)

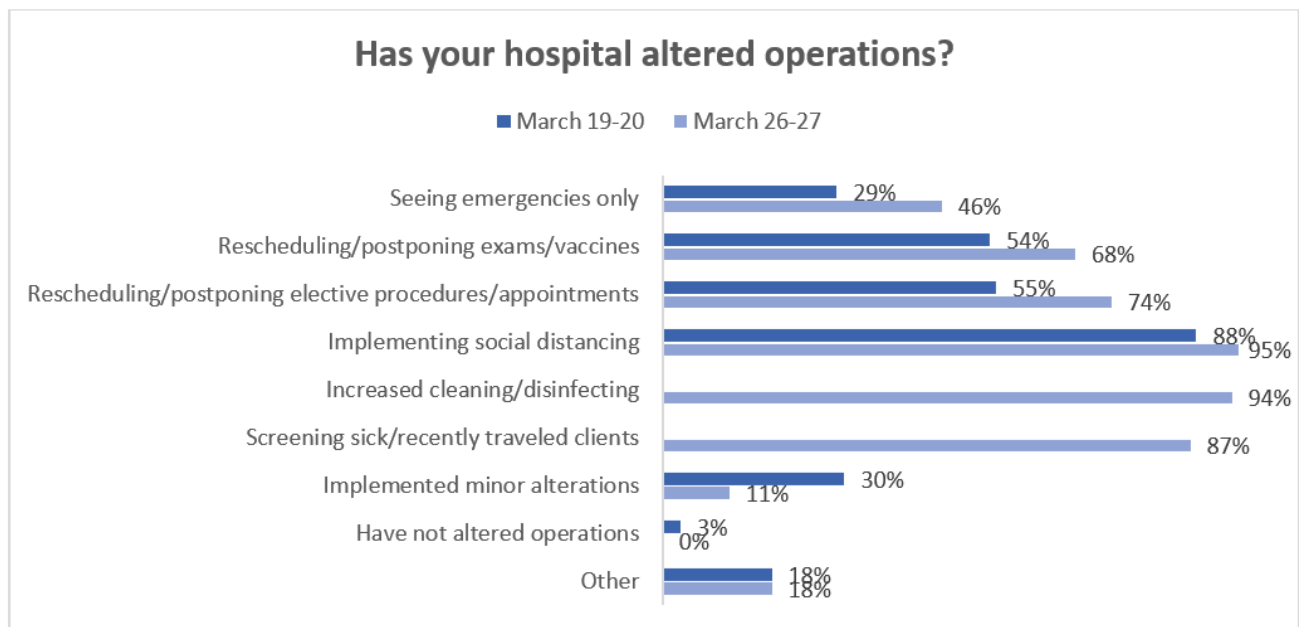
OVMA has developed a [Coronavirus FAQ](#) page with resources and information to support our members. A [checklist](#) has also been provided that sets out actions practices should take to safeguard employees and clients, and plan for the future.

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. For more information, visit the [Smart.Vet website](#).

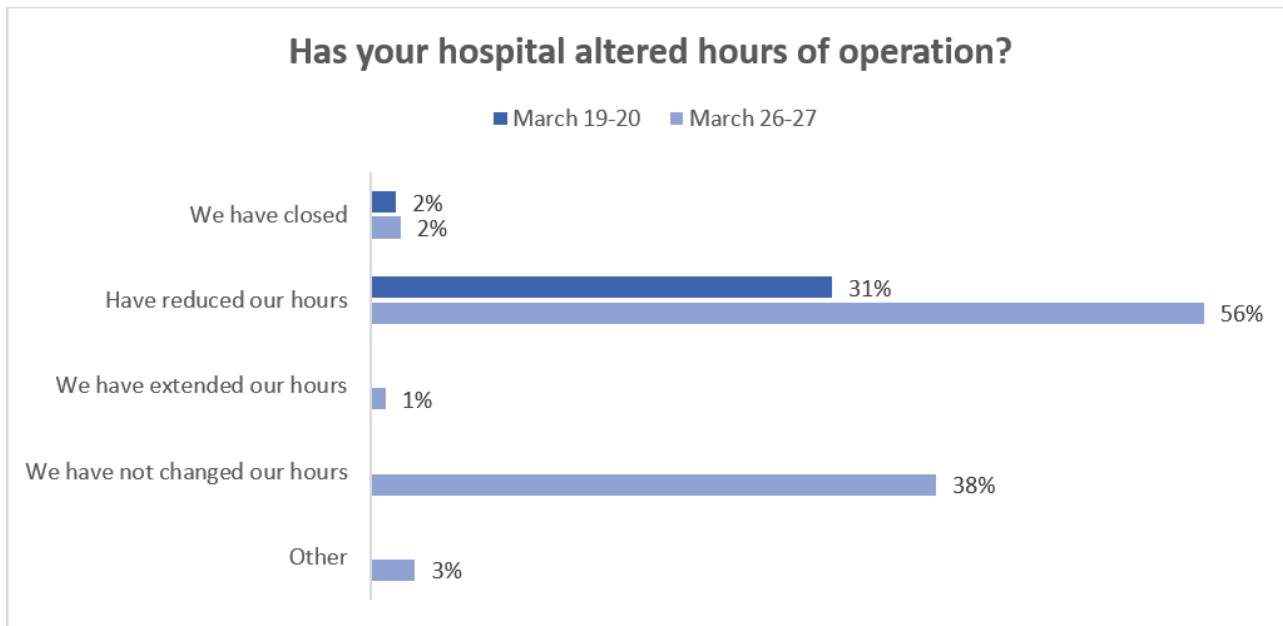
## Practice survey results

OVMA's second survey in response to COVID-19 was launched on March 26, and over two days collected 819 responses. This survey will be run at regular intervals, to monitor how veterinarians are responding to the situation as it develops.

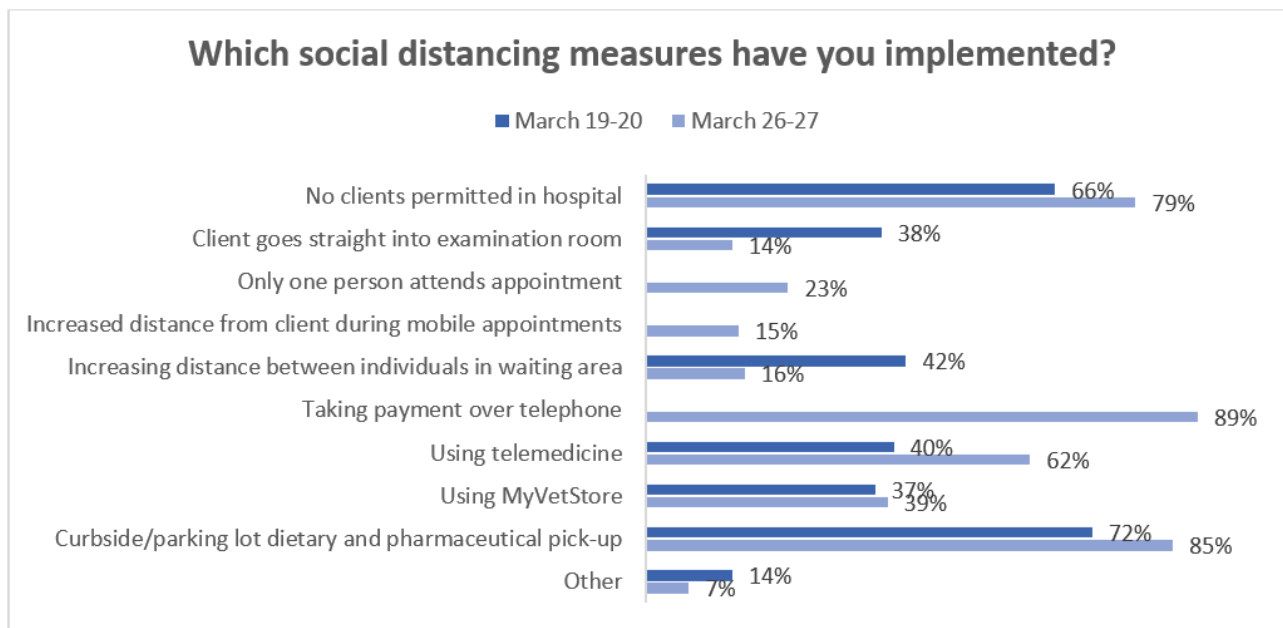
Please note that some responses were added in the second iteration of this survey, and therefore don't have percentage values available for the first survey.



Some of the common “other” responses to how hospitals have altered operations included conducting some vaccine appointments (e.g. puppy and kitten series), plexiglass screens installed at reception area and longer appointment times.

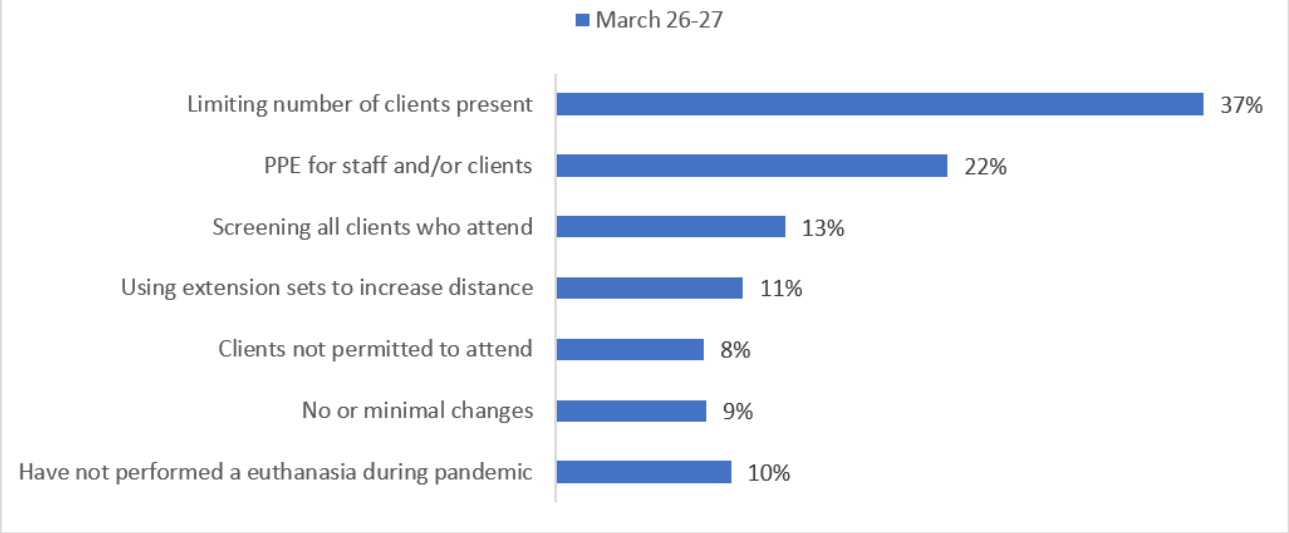


Some of the common “other” responses to how hospitals have altered hours included booking fewer appointments but open for same number of hours, and shortening some days while lengthening others.



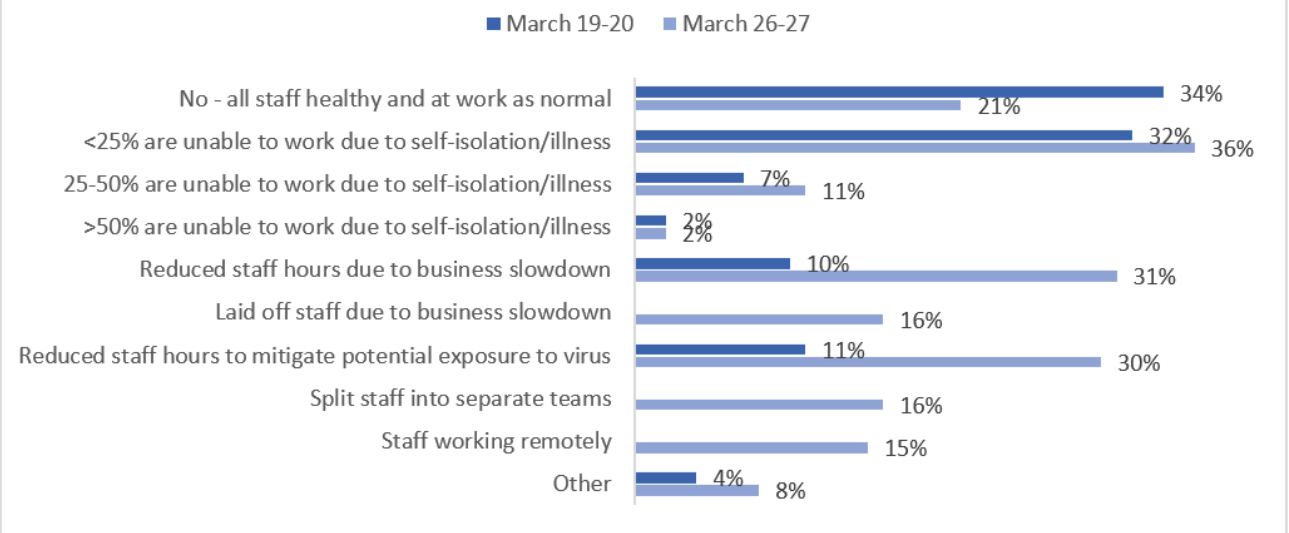
Some of the common “other” responses to which social distancing measures have been implemented included conducting appointments outdoors when possible, examinations conducted in treatment area away from clients, and not permitting clients to be present in the barn/room during farm/mobile appointments.

### How is your hospital conducting euthanasia appointments?

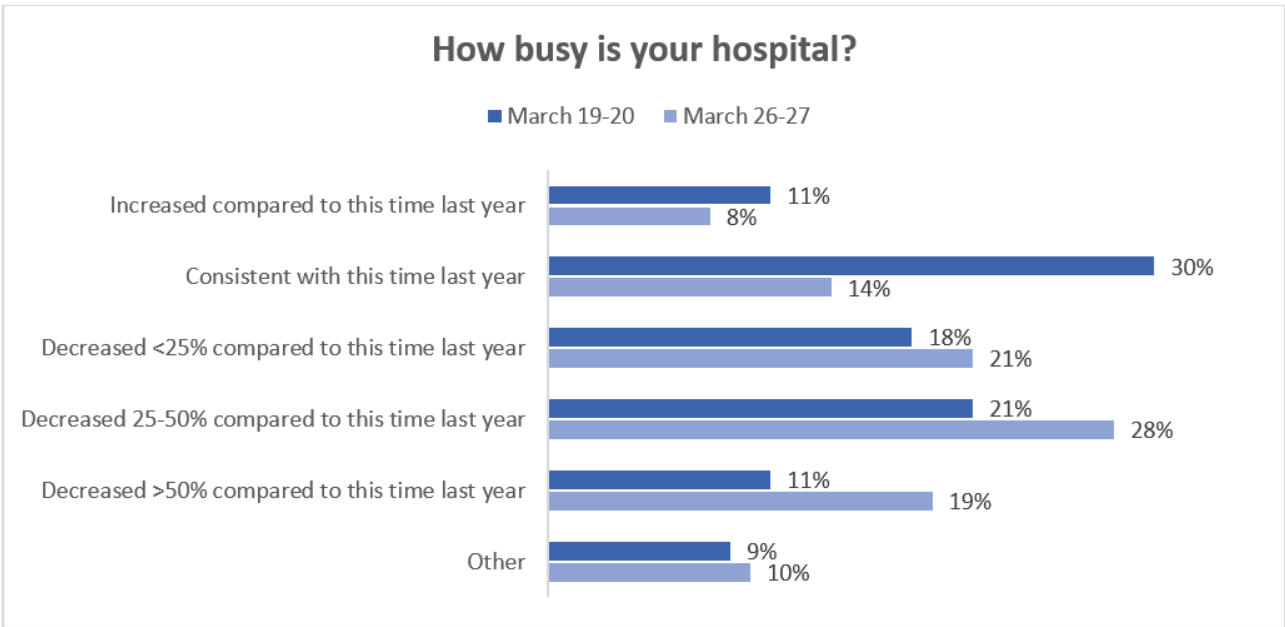


Survey respondents were able to enter a brief comment on how they were conducting euthanasia appointments, and these were then categorized based on what was indicated in the comment. Many responses also discussed increased distance from clients during euthanasia appointments, increased disinfecting and frequent handwashing. For future iterations of the survey, these commonly cited adjustments to euthanasia appointments will be included as response options.

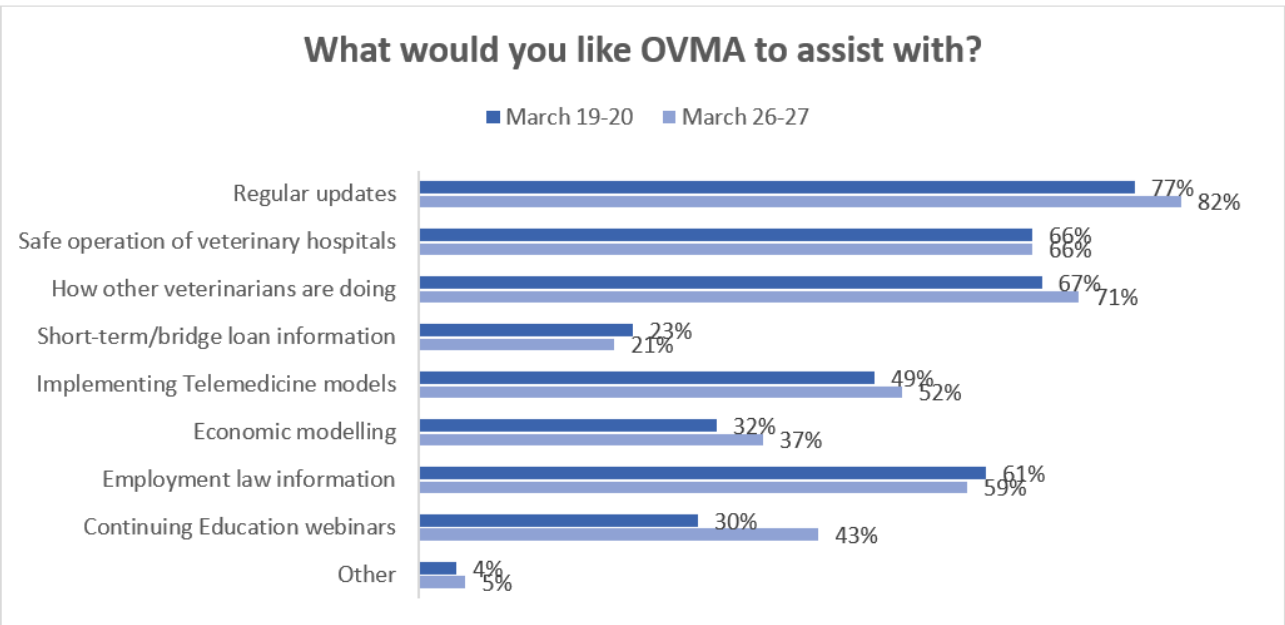
### Has your hospital altered staffing?



Some of the common "other" responses to how hospitals have altered staffing included part-time staff no longer working, and some staff taking leaves of absence to care for children.



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, and how to access government programs to support small businesses.



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