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March 28th, 2020

To my veterinary colleagues throughout North Carolina:

In the midst of the constant flow of guidance/information/misinformation associated with all things COVID-19, there remains some confusion about appropriate activities for veterinarians in the face of shelter in place/stay in place/stay in home directives in North Carolina. No matter the “shelter” status in which a veterinarian might find themselves, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) advises that veterinarians, under the umbrella of the Veterinary Patient Client Relationship (VCPR), engaged in food animal production and rendering of care to livestock, including horses, continue in those activities as needed for the health and welfare of the production animals and livestock for which they are responsible.

Additionally, particularly given the NCDA&CS’ engagement with shelters and kennels under the Animal Welfare Act in the state of North Carolina, the NCDA&CS supports the characterization of the provision of companion animal veterinary care and all health and welfare services provided to companion animals as essential healthcare operations. Said care, again under the umbrella of the VCPR, should be limited to those patients requiring frequent follow-up care/visits, animals which are sick or animals which require emergency services. **The veterinarian in charge of the case will determine which treatments and services are essential for their respective patients.** Non-essential visits, those that can be reasonably postponed given the health of the patient, and elective procedures should be delayed.

The provision of the aforementioned veterinary services must always be balanced with the responsibility each veterinarian has to themselves, their family, and their staff to fully implement all requirements necessary to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in any and every environment where such services might be rendered.

Please be careful out there,

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