



**SVA Executive  
Committee  
2018/2019**

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Member

Dear SVA Members,

1 The Executive Committee of the Singapore Veterinary Association (SVA) is writing to you to wish you well and to assure the veterinary profession that we are actively working with the relevant authorities to ensure business continuity such that we may continue to safeguard public health, animal health and welfare as the COVID-19 situation develops.

2 The Executive Committee has received queries on whether veterinary services will be classified as essential services. SVA strongly advocates for veterinary services to be considered as essential as to maintain animal health, welfare and biosecurity, but also human health and mental wellbeing, food safety, and food supply chain integrity. In addition, having continued access to veterinary care and services to keep pets healthy is important to upkeep the morale of many Singaporeans and residents.

3 In addition, like the human medical profession, the veterinary profession has an in-depth understanding of biosecurity, biosafety and diseases. Hence, the veterinary profession can be relied upon to put in place adequate measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

4 We have communicated the above-mentioned position in writing directly to the following individuals:

- Dr Yap Him Hoo, Director-General of the Animal Veterinary Service of the National Parks Board and;
- Mrs Josephine Teo, Minister for Manpower and;
- Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health

5 As we continue working together in these trying times, we recommend veterinarians and clinics to allocate resources to critical services which have a significant impact on public health, animal health and welfare. Should the situation worsen, non-critical services should be deferred, including but not limited to:

- Nail trimmings and ear cleaning
- Elective dental scaling for mild periodontal disease
- Elective procedures such as sterilisation

6 SVA recommends veterinary service providers to implement the appended measures at your workplace, in accordance to the advisories issued by the government (see Appendix for suggested measures). As a reputed profession, pet owners and members of the public will look to us for advice regarding the disease and related issues, and also as role models. Let us continue to be exemplary in our conduct and adhere to government directives and advisories.



7 While the SVA Executive Committee continues to work with our policymakers, we seek your patience and understanding. It is important for the veterinary profession to remain united and continue to hold ourselves to high standards. Please feel free to share suggestions, lessons learnt and experiences on our Facebook page so that others can learn.

8 We will get through this together.

#SGUnited

*Timothy Chua*

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Timothy Chua  
President  
Singapore Veterinary Association  
On behalf of the SVA Executive Committee



## Appendix

### Social Distancing

- No waiting inside indoor reception area
- Encourage social distancing among waiting pet owners while they wait outside (at least 1 metre apart from each other)
- Avoid handshakes with others
- Maximum 2 individuals per pet to visit
- Reduction of consultation time if possible
- Shortening your working hours if possible and admit only urgent cases
- Allocate sufficient manpower to manage incoming phone calls and emails from pet owners.
  - This would allow your staff to adequately triage consults and book appointments according to urgency.
  - Space out and pace your appointments to reduce crowding in the reception area.
- Provide house call services if manpower allows
- Provide delivery services for food and ongoing medications
  - Only for existing pet owners with established and active established vet-pet-client (VPC) relationships
  - Make sure approved by primary veterinarian
- Consider contactless payment system
- Restricted visiting hours for hospitalised patients or unnecessary visits

### Contact Tracing

- Temperature taking for all individuals (staff and clients)
- Clients to fill up Travel History Declaration form
- Contact details recorded for contact tracing purposes

### Improved Sanitation

- Increased frequency of disinfection of high touch areas e.g. reception desk, door handles
- Remove all items in waiting rooms where people can touch e.g. magazine, toys for children

### Split Team Arrangement

- In the interest of business continuity planning, we recommend that veterinary clinics where possible consider team segregation (2 teams: Team A & Team B) and a complete segregation between each team
- Hand over cases between the teams to be done electronically (email/words document/technology mobile apps etc.)
- Inclusive of all staff e.g. cleaners

### Personal Hygiene

- To practice and encourage all staff to practice personal hygiene e.g. frequent & thorough hand washing
- Provision of hand sanitizers to clients
- Face mask if needed
- To inform the supervisor of illness and seek immediate medical attention