

1/15/2021

Secretary-Designee Andrea Palm  
Department of Health Services

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee  
Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Members

**RE: Veterinarians – Phase 1b COVID Vaccination Plan**

Dear Secretary-Designee Palm and Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

My name is Ruth Houseright and I am from Madison, Wisconsin. I am a veterinarian providing services in rural Dodge County. I am writing to ask you to include veterinarian health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

I work in a 4-doctor mixed animal practice that provides critical veterinary medical and surgical care for food and companion animals throughout rural southeast Wisconsin. Our services are important in our community not only to address illness and injury in pets, but also to ensure the continued productivity and safety of Wisconsin's farms.

Yesterday, I evaluated a dog's torn ACL, removed bladder stones from a dog that could not urinate, traveled to one farm to treat a sick dairy cow and another to deliver baby lambs, and ended the suffering of a senior dog with terminal cancer. This was just another typical Thursday for me, and none of these tasks are elective procedures that can wait until the current plague subsides. While we do our best to limit face-to-face interaction with clients and take social distancing measures seriously, it is impossible for us to do our jobs without working together with technicians and other paraprofessional staff in close quarters and without travel. We cannot safely restrain pets for examinations, take radiographs, perform surgery, or evaluate a dairy herd alone or remotely.

Due to the increased time required to manage clients' concerns from a distance, most veterinary practices in southeast Wisconsin are not currently taking new clients. We receive more calls for urgent care than we can accommodate every day. A COVID-19 outbreak in our practice requiring even a 2-week closure would leave the dairy, beef, and sheep producers of Dodge and Columbia counties with little recourse for either emergencies or the routine herd health tasks required to keep them operational, including certifying livestock health for shipping to market. A shutdown would also leave our clients without help for their sick or injured canine, feline, and equine family members and cost our 20 paraprofessional staff income they cannot afford to lose.

Achieving good public health requires recognizing the interconnection between human health and animal health. We are healthcare professionals too. Please help us protect Wisconsin's beloved animal family members and food supply. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Ruth A Houseright, DVM, PhD, DACVP

Dr. Lynn V Schultz DVM  
Stoney Brook Veterinary Service  
6540 York Heights Rd  
Waterloo, WI 53594-9529  
920-478-2451  
Irschultz@mwwb.net

January 16, 2021

**VIA EMAIL ONLY TO [DHSSDMAC@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSSDMAC@dhs.wisconsin.gov)**

Secretary-Designee Andrea Palm  
Department of Health Services

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee  
Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Members

**RE: Veterinarians – Phase 1b COVID Vaccination Plan**

Dear Secretary-Designee Palm and Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

My name is Dr. Lynn Schultz and I am from Waterloo, Wisconsin. I am a semi-retired Food Animal Veterinarian who has practiced in my home state of Wisconsin since 1978. I am presently the board of directors' secretary for the Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium, I have volunteered for several years with World Dairy Expo and am a Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association member. I am writing to ask you to include veterinarian health care professionals in next, Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

My reasons for recommending Veterinarians and Veterinary Staff for Covid-19 vaccination as soon as possible are as follows:

- Food animal Veterinarians and their staff travel to our livestock farms and interact with farm managers and their employees daily, often being on call for emergencies 24/7. DVM's multiple interactions with those working on dairies, beef farms, hog operations and poultry flocks often involve close face to face communications where masks aren't always or convenient to be worn – especially by farm employees.
- Livestock Veterinarians are also frontline health care workers who are responsible to recognize diseases that are communicable from animals to people (zoonotic). We maintain a constant awareness that diseases like Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, and Salmonellosis (to name just a few) can infect livestock managers, employees and ourselves as well as the public consumers. At the frontlines we work in protecting and preventing diseases affecting animals, people and Wisconsin's multi-Billion-dollar agriculture economy.

- Veterinarians who serve to teach and serve the public at the Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine and Clinics should be prioritized to get vaccinated. Their face to face interactions with students, clients and their animals under a wide variety of circumstances should demand that they receive vaccine protection.
- The Veterinarians, technicians and staffing at the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory should also be protected due to the wide variety of animals, animal tissues, blood and body fluids that they receive daily to analyze for disease.
- Our small animal pet hospitals, those serving zoological parks and wildlife animal Veterinary needs shouldn't be denied a priority when considering who is listed "next in line" for Covid vaccinations. Our pets are family members and it has been shown that felines can be affected by the virus.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

*LYNN V Schultz DVM*

Dr. Lynn V Schultz

January 16, 2021

Secretary-Designee Andrea Palm  
Department of Health Services

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee  
Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Members

RE: **Veterinarians – Phase 1b COVID Vaccination Plan**

Dear Secretary-Designee Palm and Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

My name is Samantha Morello and I am from Madison, Wisconsin. I am a large animal veterinarian and a board certified large animal surgeon. I am writing to ask you to include veterinarian health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

I am a professor and surgeon at the University of Wisconsin. I serve clients across the state of Wisconsin who own horses, cows, goats, pigs, alpacas, llamas and sheep. Horses and cows make up the majority of our caseload and we are the only referral facility in the state of Wisconsin for the bovine and other food/farm animal population of this state. Veterinarians have been essential workers throughout the pandemic, as injury and disease, both life-threatening and non, has continued to affect animal populations throughout Wisconsin. There are not other individuals who can step in and do our jobs when we are out sick or in isolation from exposure. Both the animal agriculture industry, and the general population, whose mental health has been tremendously buoyed by the comforting presence of their animals, depends on us for the health of their animals, and their peace of mind. The loss of a veterinarian from a day of practice affects those who are employed by that individual – technicians/nurses, kennel/barn staff, reception staff – all of whose income is dependent on the income generated by the veterinarian. Many people depend on us to do our jobs, and their lives are affected when we cannot.

Thank you for considering this request.

Samantha Morello, DVM

1/14/21

Secretary-Designee Andrea Palm  
Department of Health Services

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee  
Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Members

**RE: Veterinarians – Phase 1b COVID Vaccination Plan**

Dear Secretary-Designee Palm and Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

My name is Sarah Pikalek and I am from the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area. I am a veterinary technician. I am writing to ask you to include veterinary health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

We are a small animal hospital that is currently doing a modified curbside approach. We come into contact with many clients daily. We are doing our best to socially distance, require masks, and only allow one client into an exam room at a time. A majority of our staff is over the age of 50, several with health conditions putting them at higher risk. In August we were closed for almost 2 weeks, due to a COVID positive case and a mandate from the health department. Our clients, patients, and staff members cannot sustain another COVID related closure. The entire profession has all been working hard during this pandemic to remain open; not only to continue to employ all staff members but to maintain quality health care for our client's pets, and uphold our oath to be disease sentinels for the general public. In the last few years the veterinary profession has suffered a high rate of suicide and compassion fatigue. And although this in no way compares to what our human medical counterparts are facing, it is no less significant. A vaccination would go a long way to help dissipate a small amount of the stress this profession is facing.

We implore you to add the veterinary professionals to the Phase 1b COVID Vaccination Plan.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Sarah Pikalek  
Veterinary Technician  
Lakeside Animal Hospital

January 14, 2021

VIA EMAIL ONLY TO [DHSSDMAC@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSSDMAC@dhs.wisconsin.gov)

Secretary-Designee Andrea Palm  
Department of Health Services

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee  
Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Members

RE: WVMA Urges Veterinary Professionals be Included in COVID-19  
Vaccine Priority Group 1b

Dear Secretary-Designee Palm and Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

On behalf of the veterinary health care community, I write to respectfully urge you to include veterinary workers in the Phase 1b prioritization list for COVID-19 vaccine distribution.

I personally work in a veterinary hospital and have stayed open and essential throughout the pandemic to date. We provide care for family pets by seeing them for appointments, needed surgical procedures and refilling their needed medications/prescription foods. We also keep pets up to date on necessary vaccines to keep serious diseases prevented. In order to continue doing this, the COVID-19 vaccine would be helpful if our staff staying healthy and able to work.

We cannot work remotely from home and is currently not allowed under Wisconsin law to proceed as such. Uninterrupted in person patient care and available services are required.

Veterinarians actively protect public and human health through zoonotic disease surveillance such as rabies and leptospirosis.

Sincerely,

Sarah Lochen,  
Care Animal Hospital of Pleasant Prairie  
262-694-6515

1/15/2021

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Department of Health Services

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee  
Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Members

**RE: Veterinarians – Phase 1b COVID Vaccination Plan**

Dear Secretary-Designee Palm and Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

My name is Sheila Veksler and I am from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I am a Veterinary Hospital Manager and I am writing to ask you to include veterinarian health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

We are a busy, 5 to 6 doctor practice serving the greater Milwaukee area. We are located near downtown Milwaukee where the caseload of COVID positive cases is higher than many of the surrounding areas. We are responsible for not only making sure our client's pet stay healthy, but also providing treatment for and educating the community about the control and prevention of zoonotic diseases. We are lucky to have remained open this long during the COVID outbreak. If we were need to shutdown, it could potentially put the community at a higher risk for transmission of zoonotic diseases such as Leptospirosis, multiple intestinal parasites, and even Rabies. It would also limit thousands of our normal clients' ability to readily find care for their pets illnesses or injuries.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sheila Veksler, CVT, Hospital Manager  
Small Animal Hospital  
2340 N. Newhall St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53211  
(414)276-0701

Friday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Secretary-Designee Andrea Palm  
Department of Health Services

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee  
Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Members

**RE: Veterinarians – Phase 1b COVID Vaccination Plan**

Dear Secretary-Designee Palm and Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

My name is Sonja Tjostheim and I am from Madison, Wisconsin. I am a veterinarian. I am writing to ask you to include veterinarian health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

I am currently employed as a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine. Within the UW Veterinary Care hospital, our department sees a minimum of 5-6 scheduled clients and their pets per day, in addition to frequent emergent appointments in need of a cardiologist. Our service also consults with/guides referring veterinarians all across the state of Wisconsin, as well as bordering states, regarding cardiac care and cardiac emergencies in veterinary patients. Within the hospital, our service is consulted multiple times per day by other services regarding cardiac disease in their patients, including those undergoing urgent or emergent surgical procedures. The demand for our services, from clients and referring veterinarians, is so great that we consistently book out 3-5 months in advance, despite overly filled days each week. If our service were to be shut down due to COVID outbreak, not only would we be at risk for exposing a large number of faculty/staff, clinicians, and students at the hospital, but our patients would suffer a higher morbidity and mortality as they are often in need of urgent or emergent care that cannot be provided remotely and often requires skills possessed only by specialty-trained cardiologists.

Thank you for considering this request.

**Sonja Tjostheim, DVM, DACVIM (Cardiology)**  
Clinical Assistant Professor – Cardiology  
UW Veterinary Care (University of Wisconsin-Madison)  
2015 Linden Dr, Madison WI 53706  
Phone: 608-263-7600 (Hospital)  
Web: [www.uwveterinarycare.wisc.edu](http://www.uwveterinarycare.wisc.edu)



## VCA ANIMAL HOSPITAL – ESSENTIAL SERVICES TEAM MEMBER

**March 20, 2020**

To Whom it May Concern:

VCA Veterinary Emergency Service & Veterinary Specialty Center has three locations located as follows:

VCA Veterinary Emergency Service & Veterinary Specialty Center  
1612 N Highpoint Rd  
Middleton, WI 53562  
**Hours: 24 hours/day, 7 days/week**

VCA Veterinary Emergency Service & Veterinary Specialty Center  
4902 E. Broadway  
Madison, WI 53716  
**Hours: 24 hours/day, 7 days/week**

VCA Veterinary Emergency Service  
3710 E. Racine Street  
Janesville, WI  
**Hours: Monday – Friday: 5pm-1am**  
**Saturday and Sunday and Holidays: 8am-1am**

There are essential businesses in our community providing specialty and emergency veterinary services.

Please excuse **Dr. Tom Day** an employee of our practice, from the current curfew in our state, so that he/she may commute to and from our veterinary practice. If you have any questions, please contact me at [REDACTED].

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Hospital Manager  
[REDACTED]



801 Canal Road  
Waterloo, WI 53594  
(920) 478-3234  
Fax: (920) 478-4044  
orchard@waterloovetcare.com  
[www.waterloovetcare.com](http://www.waterloovetcare.com)

January 16, 2021

**VIA EMAIL ONLY TO [DHSSDMAC@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSSDMAC@dhs.wisconsin.gov)**

Secretary-Designee Andrea Palm  
Department of Health Services  
State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee  
Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Members

**RE: Veterinarians-Phase 1b COVID Vaccination Plan**

Dear Secretary-Designee Palm and Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

My name is Kristi Orchard, DVM, MPH and I am from Waterloo, Wisconsin. I am a Practice Owing Sole Veterinarian. I am writing to ask you to include veterinarian health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

I purchased Waterloo Veterinary Care, a companion animal practice in January 2020. I am currently the sole owner of the business and have 9 other employees relying on my presence and ability to practice medicine. I have been vigilant in following CDC and health department guidelines as a business and personally. Having one individual in my practice getting COVID would be detrimental. Since we are a small business and the current shortage of veterinarians, I would be unable to find someone to work while I or my staff is under quarantine. With the current quarantine guidelines, I would be required to shut my doors for possibly weeks or longer.

There is an increase in demand for veterinary care due to the number of people adding pets to their homes as they are restricted from socializing. Veterinary Medicine was short staffed prior to the pandemic but now it is beyond problematic. Currently, clients are struggling to find care and are having to wait weeks to months for pets to get essential medical and surgical care. Veterinarians can't work remotely and telehealth (granted not as effective for animals) is not allowed under Wisconsin law.

Emergency clinics are overloaded with extensive long wait times and people are not able to have their pets evaluated. Some clinics have had to cut down on seeing appointments due to the lack of staff to keep their businesses going. If a clinic gets shut down, there is no making up for the lost time of trying to care for these pets besides the economic effect on our businesses. My staff and I have been working a large amount of overtime daily for the last 10 months to assist owners in getting care and avoiding patient suffering and risk of disease transmission. Veterinarians in other states have already received the vaccine.

Please help keep our staff healthy and allow us to be vaccinated for COVID-19 in Phase 1b. We need to keep the pets of the community healthy along with the mental and physical health of our clients.

Thank you for considering this request.

Kristi Orchard, DVM, MPH



4610 S. Biltmore Lane  
Suite 107  
Madison, WI 53718  
(608) 257-3665  
Fax: (608) 257-8989  
wvma@wvma.org  
[www.wvma.org](http://www.wvma.org)

January 14, 2021

VIA EMAIL ONLY TO [DHSSDMAC@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSSDMAC@dhs.wisconsin.gov)

Secretary-Designee Andrea Palm  
Department of Health Services

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee  
Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Members

RE: **WVMA Urges Veterinary Professionals be Included in COVID-19  
Vaccine Priority Group 1b**

Dear Secretary-Designee Palm and Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

On behalf of the more than 2,400 veterinary health care workers who are our members, the Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association (WVMA) writes to respectfully urge you to include veterinarians, veterinary technicians, veterinary assistants, and other veterinary clinic staff in the Phase 1b prioritization list for COVID-19 vaccine distribution.

Veterinary health care workers are essential frontline workers who provide critical care to both food/fiber animals and companion animals throughout the State of Wisconsin.

The closure of veterinary clinics and facilities due to COVID-19 outbreaks among veterinary staff poses a unique risk to the continuity of animal care. In many areas of the state, there is limited availability of veterinary care. As a result, if a clinic or practice is forced to close due to COVID-19 exposure, there may not be any geographically accessible alternative for patients.

In addition, veterinary health care workers cannot work remotely or work from home. Currently, the provision of veterinary care via telehealth is not allowed under Wisconsin law. As a result, the provision of patient care requires uninterrupted in-person provision and availability of health care services.

Veterinarians also actively participate in protecting public and animal health through surveillance for the SARS-CoV-2 virus in nonhuman animals. Our surveillance function extends well beyond SARS-CoV-2, encompassing other potentially zoonotic and zoonotic diseases.

As such, we are disappointed to see our veterinary professionals overlooked in this recommendation for the next phase of vaccine distribution. We respectfully urge you to include Wisconsin veterinary workers in Phase 1b.

Sincerely,

Jo-ell Carson, Executive Director  
Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association

Integrity  
Compassion  
Community  
Well-being



# Fellow Mortals<sup>TM</sup>, Inc.

Wildlife Hospital

*"...I'm truly sorry man's dominion has broken nature's social union, an' justifies that ill opinion which makes thee startle at me, thy poor, earth-born companion, an' fellow mortal..."*

*-Robert Burns, 1785*

January 15, 2021

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Secretary-Designee Andrea Palm  
Department of Health Services

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RE: **Wildlife rehabilitators – Phase 1b COVID Vaccination Plan**

Secretary-Designee Palm and Members of the SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

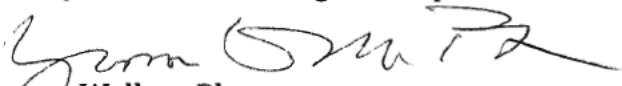
My name is Yvonne Wallace Blane. I am an advanced wildlife rehabilitator licensed by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Wisconsin DNR, employed by Fellow Mortals Wildlife Hospital, Lake Geneva, WI. I have been a licensed wildlife rehabilitator since 1988 and was an appointee under Governor Doyle and Governor Walker to the Wildlife Rehabilitation Advisory Council to the Wisconsin DNR from 2013-2019, where I served as elected chair.

Fellow Mortals has treated 60,000 animals brought to us by the public since its organization as a non-profit in 1985. In 2020, Fellow Mortals admitted 2000 animals from 123 communities across the state.

I am writing to ask you to include wildlife rehabilitation professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

Wildlife rehabilitators are a small but important group of individuals who provide care for injured and orphaned wildlife brought into care by the public. Given the nature of this pandemic, research on transmissibility of this virus to animals has been limited to date. In the interest of preventing a potential reservoir of this virus in the wild I think it is imperative that this group of individuals be included for the benefit of the public, and the wild resources of the state.

Thank you for considering this request.



Yvonne Wallace Blane

Fellow Mortals Wildlife Hospital, Lake Geneva, WI