

**From:** [Penn Engebose](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Please include Animal Hospital Staff in Phase 1b  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 8:47:26 AM  
**Attachments:** image003.png

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Penny Engebose  
Lakeside Animal Hospital  
211 W. Bender Road  
Milwaukee, WI 53217

January 15, 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 Penny Engebose and I am from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I have been the Veterinary Hospital Manager for the last 23 years at Lakeside Animal Hospital. I am writing to ask you to include veterinarian health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

Lakeside Animal Hospital has been serving clients and their pets throughout the pandemic in even greater numbers as many more people have adopted pets during the pandemic. If we have an outbreak at our hospital, hundreds of patients would not get the care they need and employees would not be paid. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We need to continue working without fear of exposure. Please consider including us in Phase 1b.

Thank you,

*Penn Engebose*  
Hospital Manager



# Lakeside

## ANIMAL HOSPITAL

**Penn Engebose, MBA**  
**Hospital Manager**

**Lakeside Animal Hospital**  
**211 W. Bender Road**  
**Milwaukee, WI 53217**  
**414-962-8040**

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**From:** [Emma Svenson](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 8:26:02 AM

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

My name is Dr. Emma Svenson, and I am from Madison, Wisconsin. I am a PhD student in epidemiology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Department of Population Health Sciences, and a practicing veterinarian, pursuing a laboratory animal medicine residency at the Wisconsin National Primate Research Center. I am writing to respectfully request that veterinary health care professionals, including veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and veterinary assistants, be recognized for their critical, public-facing work in maintaining both animal and human health throughout this pandemic. Veterinary professionals should be included as a priority recipient group for vaccination during Phase 1B of COVID-19 vaccination.

Veterinarians and veterinary staff provide crucial preventive care and emergency care to diverse animal populations, including domestic companion animals, livestock species, laboratory animals, and both captive and free-ranging wildlife species. These activities can contribute directly to supporting food and agriculture industries, considered essential critical infrastructure. Maintaining access to high-quality food that safe for consumption is an important aspect of human health. Furthermore, many can recognize the important role pets can play in supporting mental and physical wellbeing, especially during the pandemic. Pets are a source of emotional and social support an era of increasing self-isolation and social distancing, and may inspire owners to maintain levels of physical activity that they would not otherwise achieve. Veterinarians are crucial to promoting companion animal health and welfare, indirectly impacting the health of companion animal owners. Additionally, veterinarians safeguard human public health through surveillance for zoonotic diseases, such as rabies, influenza, and COVID-19, among others. Those involved in laboratory animal care directly support research efforts to understand and combat COVID-19, and may work with animals experimentally infected with COVID-19. Veterinarians are thus actively involved in 1) maintaining food security, 2) maintaining companion animal welfare, thereby fostering the human-animal bond and promoting mental and physical health 3) zoonotic disease recognition and prevention, and 4) research efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on these activities, veterinary health care workers are essential frontline healthcare workers, and the cessation of veterinary activities due to COVID-19 outbreaks among veterinary staff poses a unique risk for both animal and human health.

As health care professionals, we recognize that vaccination is only one aspect of safeguarding health and preventing COVID-19 transmission among our staff. Social distancing in the workplace, adequate personal protective equipment, the use of telemedicine whenever

possible, and other risk management strategies are all necessary to control COVID-19. However, veterinarians and veterinary staff encounter situations in which adequate physical distancing from each other or from the public is impossible on a daily basis, both when handling animals and performing medical procedures. As just one example, most small animal clinics still allow pet owners to be physically present in exam rooms during euthanasia appointments. Families frequently hold animals as euthanasia is being performed, and prefer to talk to veterinarians face-to-face regarding this difficult decision. Regular close contact to other people presents an obvious risk for COVID-19 transmission. We also know that COVID-19 appears to affect animals, with natural infection occurring in dogs, cats, minks, tigers, lions and great apes, and experimentally induced infection occurring in ferrets, bats, hamsters and macaques in laboratory settings. This may pose a risk for zoonotic disease transmission to veterinary professionals in close contact with infected animals, especially in a laboratory setting. There is also potential that as the COVID-19 virus naturally mutates and changes over time, a new strain may spillover from animals to people a second time. Having an inoculated workforce working closely with animals may therefore be an important upstream preventive measure, and early vaccination will help mitigate some of the risks related to direct contact with both people and animals.

Finally, veterinarians are highly trusted healthcare professionals within our communities. We are currently experiencing a high degree of vaccine skepticism and hesitancy in this country, and unfortunately in this state. Veterinary professionals can be a part of promoting confidence in vaccination, and share messaging regarding the importance of vaccination as part of a common public health mission. Similar to human healthcare professionals, this messaging is most trusted and effectively conveyed by people who have themselves received a vaccine.

Thank you for allowing community members the opportunity to provide feedback on draft recommendations for Wisconsin's Phase 1B COVID-19 vaccine distribution priority, and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,  
Emma Svenson

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**Emma Svenson, DVM, MPH**

PhD student in epidemiology, Department of Population Health Sciences

Veterinary Resident, Wisconsin National Primate Research Center

University of Wisconsin-Madison

[svenson@wisc.edu](mailto:svenson@wisc.edu), [REDACTED]

**From:** [Angela Sutton](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee Phase 1B  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 8:22:53 AM

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To Whom It May Concern;

I am writing to encourage you to include essential zoo staff in phase 1B of the COVID vaccine roll out. I work as a full time veterinary technician for Henry Vilas Zoo in Madison and have continued to report to work regularly as an essential animal care employee since March 2020. All of our zookeepers have done the same. Much like mink farms, we have many COVID susceptible animals at the zoo, including critically endangered species like tigers and orangutans. In addition, our staff interact with the public regularly since the zoo reopened in June 2020. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Angie Sutton, CVT  
Henry Vilas Zoo  
Madison, Wisconsin

**From:** [vetgirlb@aol.com](mailto:vetgirlb@aol.com)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** veterinary professionals should be considered essential for Covid-19 vaccine  
**Date:** Friday, January 15, 2021 8:15:11 AM

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

On behalf of the veterinarians in the State of Wisconsin, I write 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 non-human animals. Our surveillance function extends well beyond SARS-CoV-2, encompassing many other potentially zoonotic diseases.

As such, we are very 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,  
Rebecca Blotz DVM  
Chetek Veterinary Clinic  
Chetek, WI 54728  
715-924-3301

**From:** [Noah](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Meryl Schimek](#); [Nicole Waliszewski](#); [Rebecca Banks](#); [Philip Nawrocki](#); [benbreunig@gmail.com](#); [Janet Arnold](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine subcommittee- phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 9:52:35 PM

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Hi, my name is noah arnold. I own a veterinary clinic called Dr Noah's Ark, in showerwood, wi. My team of 38 people, care for over 7000 animals in our community. We are essential workers, unable to work remotely. Our job requires close contact with the general public and one another. We have children and parents and siblings who we return home to each night.

[REDACTED]

The entire clinic shut down, sick animals weren't seen, the suffering and the dying and their distraught owners got an answering machine message and a locked door.

Veterinarians and our support staff are answering the call to provide care for our communities. Please recognize our value and the unique struggle of covid era animal medical care and the far reaching benefits of keeping us in business, and keeping us alive.

I ask that you please include veterinarians and veterinary staff in the Phase 1B vaccination. We are here for you. Please be here for us.

Kindly,  
Noah

Sent from my iPhone



**From:** [Seth Oberschlake](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 9:37:48 PM

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

My name is Dr. Seth Oberschlake and I am from Appleton, Wisconsin. I am a Veterinarian and Veterinary Hospital Owner. I am writing to ask you to include veterinary health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

From the beginning of this pandemic we as a profession have continued to work tirelessly to care for our animal companions and help the owners that they belong to. Unlike a lot of professions, even essential professions, veterinarians and our employees are unable to work remotely and have sacrificed daily to do our jobs. With so many people staying at home and working from home, there has been such an increased work load and need for veterinary care. We are typically unable to stay socially distanced from each other in our profession, have often been put on the bottom of PPE priority, and therefore are at high risk of getting an spreading covid.

Even though we do everything in our power to be safe, we and other veterinary practices, have had numerous covid outbreaks through our clinics putting our lives at risk, our families/friends lives at risk, and the animals we cannot see because of this, at risk.

Numerous clinics throughout our area and the state are in a similar place. For months we are often extremely short staffed all the time, have had to even close our practices due to quarantines, exposures, and infections. Many of my staff are high risk and have family members that are high risk.

One Health is the collaboration between human and animal health as they are often intertwined. Veterinarians and veterinary teams contribute directly to the food and agriculture industries, helping them continue to run smoothly and safely. In addition to providing critical support for the sufficiency and safety of our nation's food supply, veterinarians also help ensure the health and wellbeing of the pets that share our homes. Those pets have played an important role in supporting their owners' physical and mental wellbeing during the pandemic. There is still so much we don't know about covid and the roll animals play in it's incubation, transmission, and mutations.

It's disappointing to hear veterinarians and our staff continue to be disregarded in our value to society. Being placed behind prisoner's is particularly upsetting. We would be happy to help with administering vaccinations if that would help speed processes of getting these into people's arms that need it and want it. We would be much for qualified to vaccinate then some of the other professions that have been suggested to give them.

Thank you for considering this request.

Dr. Seth Oberschlake, DVM



**From:** [Angie Vitale](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee-Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 9:27:06 PM

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Please consider including veterinarians and veterinary staff in vaccination phase 1B.

Veterinary healthcare is an essential business in which remote work and physical distancing is impossible.

We are a small animal veterinary clinic located in Sun Prairie. Veterinarians need to continue providing mandatory services such as rabies vaccinations as dictated by Wisconsin law and life-saving surgeries. It is impossible to perform these services while physically distancing from other staff and veterinary establishments are unable to obtain the same level of PPE as human healthcare facilities. In no way do I feel veterinary staff should receive priority vaccination or PPE above human healthcare workers but I respectfully request that you consider designating veterinary staff in vaccination Phase 1B.

In addition, please consider allowing veterinary staff to become vaccinators.

Respectfully,

Angie Vitale  
Practice Administrator  
Sun Prairie Pet Clinic, Inc.  
1512 N. Bristol St.  
Sun Prairie, WI 53590  
608.834.8118

**From:** [lisa\\_burleighroadanimalhospital.com](mailto:lisa_burleighroadanimalhospital.com)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Request to include veterinarians in Phase 1b for COVID vaccine  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 8:47:56 PM

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

My name is Lisa Schultz and I am from New Berlin, Wisconsin. I am a veterinarian practicing in the city of Brookfield, WI. I am writing to ask you to include veterinarian health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

I understand that our patients are not humans. But they come attached to humans. We're doing curbside service, but not everyone has a cell phone, so we're often out in the parking lot talking to owners, many of whom are not wearing masks. We're also letting clients in the building if they make the difficult decision to euthanize their pet. This is a time when people are wailing and sobbing and aerosolizing respiratory viruses, and almost always do not follow our request for them to keep a mask on.

I would also like to point out that at the beginning of the pandemic, we respected requests to cancel all elective appointments and procedures/surgery to save supplies for human use. We're healthcare workers when it comes to re-using our surgical masks and face shields for 10 months to conserve PPE.

There have been a number of local clinics in my area, including one of the large referral/ER centers that have had to temporarily close due to so many staff being infected with COVID that they were unable to keep their doors open. We need to stay healthy to be able to provide the healthcare that our patients desperately need.

In addition, veterinary patients ARE susceptible to COVID-19. While uncommon, there are scattered reports of dogs and cats being infected COVID.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Lisa Schultz  
Burleigh Road Animal Hospital

**From:** [Leigh Kasten](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 8:44:51 PM

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January 14th, 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 Leigh Kasten, 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 provide relief veterinary services to multiple small animal practices in the Madison area. Veterinary care is an essential service, and providing life-saving health care to animals needs to continue even in the face of a COVID-19 outbreak. Additionally, veterinary services cannot be provided virtually and by necessity require hands-on, close contact between veterinarians and their staff members in the clinic setting. This is why veterinarians need to be considered in the Phase 1b vaccination plan. Additionally, if a veterinarian contracts COVID and needs to quarantine, or needs to self-isolate due to COVID exposure, there needs to be an option for professional relief so that these vital health services can continue for animals in need. Relief veterinarians need to be able to step in during these scenarios and be able to continue a vital health service without risking their health or the health of the veterinary clinic staff further.

Thank you for considering this request.

Leigh C. Kasten, DVM  
Kasten Veterinary Relief, LLC

**From:** [Kaye Krueger](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Veterinarians- Phase 1b Covid Vaccination Plan  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 8:41:31 PM

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

My name is Dr. Kaye Krueger and I am from Hartland, 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.

My practice provides care for companion animals in my community. We have been considered essential and remained open throughout the pandemic with the exception of 1 week [REDACTED]. My business also provides income for 23 women, most of whom are primary breadwinners for their families. I feel we would be classified as 1b for vaccination to help prevent us from having to close our business due to infection.

Thank you for considering this request.

Kaye Krueger, DVM

**From:** [Alex Saver](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 8:14:39 PM

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01/14/21

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 Dr Alexander Saver and I am from Madison, Wisconsin. I am a veterinarian and university educator at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's School of Veterinary Medicine. I am writing to ask you to include veterinary health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan. In my day to day work, I have broad exposure to members of the public, rotating fourth year veterinary students, and hundreds of our hospital employees. Given the nature of my work and the small confines of the hospital, we are not able to adequately protect ourselves from COVID-19 infection by social distancing or staying at home. While we have been able to mitigate some risks by means of curbside service, mask wearing, limited social distancing and hand washing, everyday we are still exposed intimately to members of the public and have been since March 2020. We have done this with the purpose of providing essential care to companion animals and their families. Every working day since March, I have had small, yet nerve wracking interactions with hundreds of Wisconsinites. I have no idea of their infection status, including whether I am speaking to someone who may be asymptotically infected or infected and concealing their disease status. Of particular concern, on a daily basis, myself, veterinarians and veterinary support staff all over the state compromise our own personal safety by waiving curbside restrictions and allowing families to be with critically ill and dying pets at the end of their lives. In my own personal experience, I have been put in high risk situations where I am in close contact (often a mere foot or two) with often incredibly emotional and inconsistently masked members of public as I euthanize their pets. I have sacrificed by own personal safety to allow families to be with their pets as they pass as they go through times of incredible heartache. Moreover, as veterinary health care professionals, we have done this throughout the pandemic without proper PPE (such as N95 masks or gowns) in order to preserve resources for our human health care counterparts. I hope that you will consider including veterinary health care professionals in Phase 1b of Wisconsin's vaccine rollout as veterinarians are crucial in the care for food-producing and companion animals, and fill an essential role that society is unable to function without. While people may refute this notion, I would ask you to reflect about your own pets, and what you would do if your veterinarian was not able-bodied in their time of need.

Thank you for considering this request,

[REDACTED] re [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



**From:** [Alan Holter](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 8:08:44 PM

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January 14th, 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 Alan Holter and I am from Dodgeville Wisconsin. I am a veterinarian and writing to ask you to include veterinarian health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

As a past president of the Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association (WVMA) and a practicing veterinarian for over 32 years, I have observed how veterinarians and veterinary staff are vital to the health and well being of our food supply, food safety and our pets.

We cannot work remotely and we cannot socially distance ourselves while working with animals. Keeping the veterinary clinics open and our food safety consistent, needs to be a priority for Wisconsin.

I am also aware of the possibility of certifying veterinarians to vaccinate people with the COVID vaccine. This should be reason enough to include veterinarians and their staff in the Phase 1b group of people.

Thank you for considering this request.

Alan Holter DVM  
Dodgeville Veterinary Service  
Dodgeville, WI 53533  
[aholter@dodgevillevet.net](mailto:aholter@dodgevillevet.net)  
608-574-9711

**From:** [Scott Pertzborn](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 7:56:56 PM

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Dear Secretary Andrea Palm,

Thank you for your dedicated service to the people of Wisconsin during these difficult times.

I am a large animal veterinarian in Lodi, WI. In my profession as an essential worker I care for many dairy cows. I not only treat sick cows but I also develop many protocols to keep our herds healthy. I help our dairy farmers make good decisions that both benefit the cows and the profitability of our dairy industry.

While doing my essential job it is unavoidable that I have contact with farmers and co-workers. This unavoidably increases my risk of exposure to the virus.

If my work is interrupted by a COVID 19 infection the health of our cows and the profitability of our dairy farmers will be put at risk. The welfare of our cows is a huge concern.

Secretary Palm, for the health, welfare and profitability of our dairy industry I ask you to include veterinarians in Phase 1B of the COVID Vaccine Distribution Plan.

Sincerely,

Dr Scott Pertzborn  
Lodi Veterinary Care  
705 N. Main St.  
Lodi, WI 53555  
608-592-7755  
[lodivet.com](http://lodivet.com)



**From:** [Kaitlin Lory](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Veterinary Professionals  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 7:07:07 PM

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To whom it may concern:

Why are veterinary professionals not included in the vaccine rollout? We had to remain open while most everyone (restaurants, schools, stores, daycares, etc) closed last year. Sort of a slap in the face to overlook your “emergency/essential workers” who have seen a drastic INCREASE in patients/clients over the past 9 months and have continued to be required to expose ourselves to keep our jobs.

Please consider including veterinary professionals in these initial vaccine phases.

Thank you,  
Kaitlin Lory

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Romanoski, Mark](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 5:12:48 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.png

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I am writing to support adding zoo caretaker and zoo veterinary technicians in the phase 1B rollout. All veterinary staff in many, many states are designated as first responders and essential workers. Let's stay progressive.

Many states, including California have already added veterinary staff, to the list of essential workers. At the Henry Vilas Zoo specifically, there are two of us who are vital to the zoos animal health program. We have had to report to work during the entire pandemic. We have direct contact with species that are susceptible to COVID-19. With the recent discovery of Covid19 infections in Great Apes at the San Diego Zoo, we, as a home to THREE great apes, have a duty to them to provide them with a safe environment, and that includes vaccinating their caretakers and those in the immediate area.

We provide emergency response to the zoo and absolutely cannot work from home, we had to be here. I am also advocating for dane county zoo keepers. They did not have a choice in whether to shelter at home, we had to be here taking care of the animals that Dane County is responsible for. Exposing ourselves to the public and anyone else who has access to grounds. Please include all active zoo employees in the phase 1B rollout.

Mark Romanoski, BS, CVT, RVT  
Certified Veterinary Technician  
**Henry Vilas Zoo**  
702 S. Randall Ave.  
Madsion, WI 53715  
[Romanoski.Mark@HenryVilasZoo.gov](mailto:Romanoski.Mark@HenryVilasZoo.gov)



Sent Securely via TLS from County of Dane by  
**Proofpoint**

**From:** [jj](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 4:55:25 PM

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January 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 Julie Johnson. I am veterinarian in Waupun, Wisconsin. I am writing to ask you to include veterinarian health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

I am the only small animal veterinarian in our town. Our clinic provides healthcare to the beloved pets of the people in our community. Many of these people live in rural areas. Many are older people. If there were an outbreak in our clinic, we may have to close the clinic and temporarily discontinue providing health care services for client's pets. We would also not have access to their records. Many of our patients are on long term medications for diseases like diabetes, arthritis, epilepsy and thyroid diseases. Without being able to provide services for these pets, their lives may be in danger. Pets seem even more important to clients during this difficult time. Just by being there, they help their owners cope with stress and other problems they may be facing.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Dr. Julie Johnson  
Maple Knoll Veterinary Clinic

**From:** [Douglas Deboer](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Veterinarians - Phase 1b COVID Vaccination Plan  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 4:20:15 PM

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January 14, 2021

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

Secretary-Designee Andrea Palm  
Department of Health Services  
<!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]-->  
<!--[endif]-->

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. Douglas DeBoer and I am from Oregon, Wisconsin. I am a practicing veterinarian and a senior faculty member at the UW-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine. As an educator with extensive student contact, I am already included in Phase 1b as you have outlined it. I am writing to ask you to consider also including all veterinary health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

In our University multispecialty and primary-care practice, as with all veterinary practices in the state, we have seen a dramatic upsurge in demand for veterinary patient care. Our departments currently see nearly 30,000 patient visits annually, from essentially every county in the state or Wisconsin, as well as all neighboring states. This upsurge in demand for veterinary care is well-recognized globally, as pet ownership during the pandemic has soared and companion animals have assumed an ever-greater role in mitigating our society's emotional and psychosocial distress - and mental health challenges experienced by millions of Wisconsin residents.





**From:** [Deborah Sink](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine subcommittee phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 3:59:48 PM

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I was just advised by the WVMA (Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association) that veterinarians are not part of the phase 1B. We truly are essential workers put on the front line with numerous owners and their beloved pets on a daily basis! No different than those doctors that are taking care of human patients! Our client's pets mean everything in the world to them. If we, as veterinarians, were required to close our clinics and ambulatory services due to the fear for our safety, our clients would be lost! If we came down with COVID-19 and unable to be available for them, our clients would be lost! They depend on us to be there for their animal's every need, whether it be large or small, and whether it's day or night.

Please reconsider your decision and include veterinarians in your phase 1B. We truly are part of the essential worker group! Just ask any animal owner... you may be one yourself.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Deborah K. Sink, DVM

[Sent from Smallbiz Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

**From:** [Gmail](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 3:37:20 PM

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January 14, 2021

Secretary-Designee Andrew Palm

Department of Health Services

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee

Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Members

Re: Veterinary Professionals should be included in COVID-19 Vaccine priority Group 1b

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

I would like to respectfully urge you to include veterinarians, veterinary technicians 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.

Staff within veterinary hospitals are often forced to work in close quarters in order to provide the best care for animal care. For example, restraining and obtaining blood samples requires individuals to be very close to each other, increasing the exposure between these two individuals. In order to continue to provide quality care for the pets within the state of Wisconsin, a COVID-19 vaccine is required.

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.

Veterinary also actively participate in protecting public and animal health throughout 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 disease.

As such, I am very disappointed to see 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.

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.

Sincerely,

Marilia Takada, DVM, MS, PhD

**From:** [Nathaniel Van Asselt](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 3:28:13 PM

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January 15, 2021

Secretary-Designee Andrew Palm

Department of Health Services

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee

Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee Members

Re: Veterinary Professionals should be included in COVID-19 Vaccine priority Group 1b

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

I would like to respectfully urge you to include veterinarians, veterinary technicians 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.

Staff within veterinary hospitals are often forced to work in close quarters in order to provide the best care for animal care. For example, restraining and obtaining blood samples requires individuals to be very close to each other, increasing the exposure between these two individuals. In order to continue to provide quality care for the pets within the state of Wisconsin, a COVID-19 vaccine is required.

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.

Veterinary also actively participate in protecting public and animal health throughout 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 disease.

**As such, I am very disappointed to see 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.**

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.

Sincerely,

Nate Van Asselt, DVM, DACVR (RO)

**From:** [Lauren Salzmann](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Zoo Workers for 1B Vaccination  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 3:23:01 PM

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To Whom It May Concern:

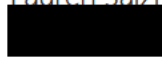
I am writing to request that you please **include zoo staff in phase 1B of the COVID vaccine roll out.**

I work for Henry Vilas Zoo in Madison and have been coming in to work every day since we reopened in June. Our zookeepers never stopped coming in to work. Much like mink farms, we have many COVID susceptible animals at the zoo, including critically endangered species like tigers and orangutans. We also have a Zoo School program on site that has been running this whole school year. Our staff interact with members of the public every day - up to 4,000 on busy, fair weather days.

Zoos are one of the few safe outdoor spaces for families to visit during this time, and protecting our staff and animals ensures that we can continue to be a place for people to go and learn about the natural wonders of the world.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Lauren Salzmann



**From:** [Soto, Johanna](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 3:05:55 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.png

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Good Day,

As an essential member of the Henry Vilas Zoo Animal care team, I respectfully request that all animal care staff at Henry Vilas Zoo be considered as 1B tier vaccination candidates, under the same qualifications as MINK HUSBANDRY.

Daily, at the zoo, we care for exotic animals that are susceptible to the SARS-Cov-2 virus. The following animals are in our care and are documented and known to be susceptible.

- Felids – Tigers and Lions (Several zoos across the USA have had large cats test positive, Tigers, Snow Leopards etc.)
- Non-Human Primates – Orangutans (Gorillas at San Diego Safari park recently tested positive)
- Mustelids (same family as Mink) – Ferrets, North American Badgers, North American Otters
- Skunks (related to mustelids)
- Additionally, we manage onsite pest control of animals such as mink and raccoons and sometimes these wild native pest animals are caught and eaten by species such as Tiger, Lions, Bears and Orangutans.

It has been documented that transmission of the virus to some of these animals has come from covid positive, asymptomatic animal care staff. We do not want this to occur at Henry Vilas Zoo. It is also **not** known yet, if any other species that contracts the virus, other than mink, will mutate the virus, which could be possible.

We want to continue to do everything we can to keep ourselves healthy in order to continue the essential and daily care for the beloved animals of Henry Vilas Zoo, and to ensure we do not inadvertently pass on this deadly virus to any of our susceptible animals. We also do not want to become a vector for any virus mutation that may occur. Allowing us to become eligible in group 1B for the vaccine is paramount to ensure safety for the animals and animal care staff at HVZ.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Respectfully  
Johanna Soto

**Johanna Soto**  
*AZA Studbook Keeper, Harbor Seals*  
Zoo Manager  
Henry Vilas Zoo  
Madison, WI  
(608)225-6950  
[soto.johanna@henryvilaszoo.gov](mailto:soto.johanna@henryvilaszoo.gov)



*Work week Sun-Thurs*



Sent Securely via TLS from County of Dane by  
**Proofpoint**

**From:** [Jacob Jankowski](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee - Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 2:53:01 PM

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Dear Secretary-Designee Adrea Palm and SDMAC Vaccine Distribution Subcommittee:

I am incredibly disheartened to hear that my colleagues and I, as veterinary professionals, were not considered to be included in Phase 1B of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution. I believe that vaccinating the front-line workers found in veterinary clinics throughout the state of Wisconsin will have a resounding benefit on local and state health.

Personally, I have walked to work every single day throughout this pandemic as we cannot do our work remotely. Just this week surgeries have been put off due to a COVID-19 outbreak throughout the surgery team. That is life saving treatment that we could no longer provide. This all comes at a time when veterinary institutions are experiencing an increase in caseloads. An article published in August by the *New York Times* states "Trupanion, a pet health insurer announced...it has 14 percent more cat and dog members than it did at the start of the year."

Not only are we seeing more patients, but these patients themselves are able to carry COVID-19. My service is responsible for disinfecting our isolation ward; the place a COVID-19 positive patient would go. Even if a patient isn't COVID-19 positive owners very well may be. My co-workers have to communicate and meet these owners in order to provide the care their pets need. This coupled with the often extremely crowded work environment means it is very easy for COVID-19 to be transmitted throughout the hospital.

The institution I work at does more than care for personal pets. We also work with the Madison Police Department to care for their horses and dogs. We work with Henry Vilas Zoo to provide treatment for their animals. And, we yield research into COVID-19.

I find it rather disgraceful that veterinary medicine is not only not included within healthcare but is now no longer considered front line and I urge you all to reconsider including veterinarians in phase 1B as the state of Illinois has.

Thank you for your time,

Jacob Jankowski.

**From:** [Jo Hipke](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Phase 1b Covid vaccination plan  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 2:48:29 PM

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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 Jodean Hipke and I am from Lena, Wisconsin. I have been a veterinary technician for 32 yrs and an office manager for the last 20yrs. I am writing to ask you to include veterinarian health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

Our Clinic, Peshtigo Veterinary Clinic LLC has been providing health and wellness care to our patients throughout the pandemic. We have been doing curbside service since March while wearing masks and social distancing as much as possible. This can be difficult while transferring an animal from one person to another. Many times we have to endure verbal abuse from people who are upset with us for requiring masks and not allowing them into the building. This can be hard on us, but we know we are doing what is best for everyone by being safe.

We take the pandemic very seriously and have implemented symptom checker sheets that include daily temperature checks prior to arrival at work. These are filled out by our employees before every shift. Staff have been instructed to contact a supervisor before coming to work if there are any unexplained symptoms so that a supervisor can decide how to proceed. We have also asked our staff to remain diligent with masking, social distancing and avoiding large gatherings outside of work. Just like so many people, we are all suffering from some sort of anxiety caused by the unknown everyday and the isolation from family and friends.

We have been able to remain open without any shutdowns so far, but most of the time has been with a shorter staff due to exposure self isolations or other time off related to the pandemic. Being short staffed further contributes to the extra stress we are all feeling. It is an unprecedented time for us. so we do not have a good way of knowing what is to come. That really makes reassuring staff difficult because we have no way of knowing how long this will be going on. Most of our veterinarians and staff are either in the high risk category or live with someone in the high risk category, so the concern for our safety or bringing the virus home is very real to us. We have also endured all of the hardships the pandemic has caused us without any extra hazard pay or recognition from our government or communities even though we are considered essential workers.

[REDACTED] ne with their pets, it seems there are more animals needing care. We  
[REDACTED] ntly more people and patients than a normal year. Many times we  
[REDACTED] patient is coming from a home with a Covid-19 positive person on  
[REDACTED] household. We take [REDACTED] us and

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] We really feel that veterinarians and staff should be in the phase 1b vaccination plan so that  
we can continue to offer care to our patients without as much concern for our safety. We will  
continue to practice safety measures, but feel this will give us an extra layer of protection.  
This will be of great benefit to us and our clients and will allow us to continue to treat all of  
the animals that continue to need care during these uncertain times.

Thank you for considering [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Jodean Hipke

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [Lorin S](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** Vaccine Subcommittee-Phase1b veterinarian  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 2:27:05 PM

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Dear Committee,

Please consider including veterinary professionals in Phase1b of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. We have been considered an essential business. My staff is interacting with the general public all day long transporting animals from curbside into the clinic. I believe it unethical to separate pet from guardian during the difficult time of euthanasia. I need to be in close proximity of people during this difficult process. Keep working hard to rollout this much needed vaccine.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lorin Shearburn, DVM

Resident Shorewood, WI

Practicing at Parkdale Pet Care West Bend, WI

Lorin

**From:** [Weiner, Laura](#)  
**To:** [DHS SDMAC](#)  
**Subject:** vaccine subcommittee and Phase 1B  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 2:23:49 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.png

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To subcommittee members,

I would like to make a comment for the animal care staff at the Henry Vilas Zoo to be included in the Tier 1B for the COVID-19 vaccination. Our animal care staff work with the public and with many species that are susceptible to being infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Primates, cats, skunks, ferrets, otters and badgers are all in danger of contracting the virus and becoming sick. The last four in that list are mustelids, the same family as mink, and we should be considered similar to mink farmers. Our job to care for these animals is essential and we have been at work every day since this pandemic started caring for them while following protocols for mask wearing and social distancing. We cannot work from home like so many other industries. The nature of our job is that many times we must be in close contact with our fellow zoo keepers and animals; this poses a risk for transmission even when wearing a mask. Just this week 2 members of the gorilla troop at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park in Escondido, CA were diagnosed with COVID-19 and they are showing symptoms of respiratory issues. We do not want to take that risk with any of our primates and especially not our endangered Bornean orangutans. All of the zookeepers were designated in Tier 1B in San Diego and are getting vaccinated as we speak.

We also deal with a decent number of guests who enter the zoo grounds and refuse to wear a mask even though we require them while attending the zoo. Even after speaking with them they get angry and raise their voices. I, along with the rest of the staff, would feel much safer about the animals and our coworkers if we could be vaccinated so as to mitigate the risk posed from guests entering the zoo and the general risk factor of grocery shopping, people not social distancing and the nature of our jobs to be in close contact with our animals and each other.

I understand this is a daunting task and these decisions are not taken lightly. I appreciate your time in reading this and know that our line of work isn't fully understood but know we are providing care that keeps our animals alive just like health care workers keep their patients alive. We would like to continue to do that safely.

Thank you,

**Laura Weiner**  
**Zoo Manager**  
**Henry Vilas Zoo**  
**Madison, WI**  
**(608) 516-7285**  
[Weiner.Laura@henryvilaszoo.gov](mailto:Weiner.Laura@henryvilaszoo.gov)  
*she/her/hers*  
*Work week Tues-Sat*