

January 14, 2020
VIA EMAIL ONLY TO 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 Molly Viner and I am writing you from Madison, Wisconsin. I am a radiology resident at University of Wisconsin Veterinary Care (UWVC). I am writing to respectfully urge you to include veterinary healthcare professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

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

UWVC is a large referral clinic that provides both general and high-level specialty medicine to animals of all shapes, sizes, and breeds from Madison and surrounding towns, cities, and states. As healthcare professionals, we do not have the ability to work remote and as a result, providing needed medical care to our patients requires uninterrupted in-person staffing. Our hospital remains fully staffed without an option to physical distance, due to building size constraints. Furthermore, like human healthcare workers, we work under an altered quarantine procedure, which allows us to continue working after known exposure to COVID-19, if asymptomatic, as continuation of care and hospital operations must be maintained. For these reasons, inclusion of veterinary professionals with the healthcare workers designation for vaccination distribution is urgently needed.

Currently, veterinary clinics around the United States are overwhelmed with both increasing demand and understaffing/closures secondary to illness. In order to prevent further veterinary closures, maintain the high level of both public and animal health veterinarians provide, and continue to surveil for SAR-CoV-2 in nonhuman animals, it is prudent that Wisconsin's veterinary workers are included in phase 1b.

Thank you for considering this request,



Molly Viner, DVM
Radiology Resident
University of Wisconsin-Madison

January 14, 2021

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Department of Health Services

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

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

My name is Natalie Smith 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 work for the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Our hospital provides emergency, specialty referral, and primary care veterinary services for pets and their owners across the state of Wisconsin and from other parts of the Midwest. Importantly, our hospital also provides clinical training for the next generation of veterinarians - the students of the University of Wisconsin [REDACTED]

The work that myself and other veterinary health care workers do simply cannot be performed remotely (and is forbidden under Wisconsin law). My colleagues and I face the risk of exposure to COVID-19 every day that we report to work. Closure of our veterinary hospital would pose serious, and in some cases, fatal, consequences for the patients that we serve.

Veterinary health care workers also play a crucial role in protecting public and animal health via our involvement in food safety and surveillance of zoonotic diseases. A hospital closure would be of great detriment to our students' education – the food safety and inspection veterinarians and epidemiologists of tomorrow. These are consequences that we will not even realize for years to come.

[REDACTED] is disappointed to see that veterinary professionals were overlooked in the recommendation for the next phase of COVID vaccine distribution. I respectfully urge you to include veterinary health care workers in the state of Wisconsin in Phase 1b.

Thank you for considering this request.

Natalie Smith
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
Veterinary Teaching Hospital – University of Wisconsin, Madison

January 15, 2021

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

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

My name is Nicole Kuha and I am from Madison, Wisconsin. I am a veterinary medical student who will graduate in May 2021 as a veterinarian. I am writing to ask you to include veterinary health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

I am currently in my 4th year of veterinary medical school which is my clinical year. I work with the doctors at UW Veterinary Care to learn about the different specialties and to learn how to practice medicine in preparation for treating patients as a doctor in just a short 5 months. Every day we talk to clients and help their pet [REDACTED] services have been shut down for weeks at a time because of staff shortages due to quarantine. This impacts patient care by causing our emergency room to close, cancelling urgent procedures, and causing a back-up of cases so critically ill patients may have to wait even longer to be seen by our specialists. If our veterinary staff and students were to receive the COVID vaccine, not only would it keep our personnel safe but would provide continuity of patient care and continuity of training veterinary students to practice high quality medicine.

Thank you for considering this request.

Nicole K. Kuha
DVM-MPH Candidate, Class of 2021
[REDACTED]

January 17, 2021

VIA EMAIL ONLY TO 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 Rachel McMahon and I am from Madison, Wisconsin. I am a veterinarian at the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine. I am writing to ask you to include veterinarian health care professionals in Phase 1b of the Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccination plan.

As an Oncology Clinical Trials Intern at UW Veterinary care, I am responsible for enrolling companion animals with naturally occurring cancer into clinical trials and overseeing their treatment and care. Many of these clinical trials have the potential to inform future clinical trials for human cancer patients. Unfortunately, several [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and only recently have some trials begun enrolling again. Our service also provides life-saving and/or quality-of-life improving standard of care therapy to pets with cancer from all over the state. If the Oncology Service at UW Veterinary care was forced to close due to a COVID outbreak, many pets would face delays in treatment (clinical trial therapies and standard therapies that cannot be performed elsewhere) that may lead to more rapid progression of their cancer or worsen their quality of life.

UW Veterinary Care is one of few veterinary specialty hospitals in the state of Wisconsin that provides state of the art care to pets with severe or complex illnesses and injuries. Clients often travel several hours to seek care from the Emergency and Critical Care, Surgery, Internal Medicine, Cardiology, Neurology, Ophthalmology, Oncology, Radiation Oncology, Special Species (exotics), Dermatology, Dentistry & Oral Surgery, Large Animal [REDACTED] Large Animal Internal Medicine Services. A hospital closure would have detrimental effects on the health of companion and food animals beyond the city of Madison by delaying or limiting therapeutic options. Further, with the sharp increase in the number of pets requiring emergency care and hospitalization in the last year, many hospitals have had to turn patients away for hours or days at a time simply because they are full. A closure of our hospital would certainly increase the burden for other local or regional veterinary hospitals.

Finally, UW Veterinary Care is a teaching institution that is well known for providing a high quality veterinary medical education to its students. Interns, residents, faculty and staff are responsible for face-to-face teaching both in the laboratory setting (1st-3rd year) as well as in the clinical setting for fourth year students. Face-to-face instruction is essential for students to successfully complete this vigorous program and become competent veterinarians. Veterinary students have already faced delays in and modifications to instruction that may hinder their learning. A hospital closure has the potential to further impact our student's education in a negative way.

Veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and veterinary assistants have been working tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and due to the nature of our work, we are completely unable to socially distance in the workplace. Further, we have daily contact (although outdoors and masked) with the general public which increases our risk of exposure. A hospital closure due to COVID is a real possibility that could impact the health of pets statewide. I urge you to reconsider the addition of veterinary professionals to the Phase 1b vaccine distribution plan for the sake of all Wisconsin residents and their pets.

Thank you for considering this request.

Dr. Rachel McMahon, DVM

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



SCHUFF VETERINARY HOSPITAL LLC

AV 137 HIGHWAY 51 N WOODRUFF WI 54568

Drs Cassidy, Jared & R.J. Schuff

Friday, January 15, 2021

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Department of Health Services

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RE: Veterinarians – Phase 1b COVID Vaccination Plan

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

My name is Dr Randall J Schuff and I am from Woodruff, 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 own and operate a small animal practice in northern Wisconsin in which there is a significant number of elderly retirees. My clients depend on us to maintain the health of their pets as they are integral to these clients emotional well being. We have taken extraordinary measures to stay open and serve our clients during these difficult times. It has been challenging coping with curbside service during the winter weather. The loss of our services should we need to shutdown would in my opinion have a serious impact on not only lives of my patients but on their owner's health as well.

Thank you for considering this request

R.J. Schuff, DVM
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