**NOVA SCOTIA VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

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**Open Letter to Nova Scotians re: Veterinary Medical Services**

The Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association is the regulator of Veterinary Medicine in Nova Scotia and is tasked with ensuring protection of the public interest.

The NSVMA is responsible for ensuring veterinary practices maintain standards of care, both in normal times and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nova Scotia has been challenged a great deal in 2020 due to the emergence of COVID-19, but all Nova Scotians have collectively met that challenge and continue to strive to do so in the interest of public health.

During the past several months, veterinary teams from Sydney to Yarmouth and all points in between have faced considerable challenges in continuing to provide the necessary high level of service, and these veterinary teams have excelled while under immense stress.

Veterinary practices have had to face staff shortages, medical supply chain disruptions, and significant COVID related restrictions around the scope of practice and interaction with animal owners while continuing to maintain emergency services and re-establish preventative care appointments. Food animal veterinarians have continued to provide service throughout rural Nova Scotia in order to maintain a stable and safe food supply for all Nova Scotians.

The NSVMA has been active in developing policy and disseminating information to allow veterinarians across the province to remain fully informed and engaged while keeping veterinary practices open and continuing to serve the needs of the public.

The NSVMA and veterinary teams across Nova Scotia are aware of the stress many animal owners are facing and continue to work daily to achieve the best possible provision of care. Veterinary teams genuinely appreciate the many words of encouragement and kind gestures from animal owners across Nova Scotia.

It is important that animal owners in Nova Scotia be patient and prepared, so your veterinary team can continue to provide the care you expect and deserve. Stress is high during times of emergency or unexpected illness, and timeliness of care is important. The best thing any animal owner can do to be prepared for the unexpected is to ensure that you have a veterinarian in advance of an emergency. Resources for emergency care (personnel and supplies) have been stretched these past several months, and it has been challenging.

Veterinary professionals are genuinely concerned for the well-being of their patients and continually strive to provide the best care possible. Client patience and understanding is needed in this high stress time in order for the veterinary community to continue to provide services.

The NSVMA thanks the public for their patience, and willingness to be prepared, and we thank veterinary teams across Nova Scotia for your continued dedication to all Nova Scotians.

On behalf of the NSVMA Council,

Dr. Jennifer McKay

President, Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association