



July 30, 2020

Dear veterinary colleagues:

I'm writing to let you know that we are facing some challenges at the WCVM Veterinary Medical Centre (VMC) as we resume the hospital's clinical services during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

From March 23 until July 1, the VMC was only open for emergencies and urgent care cases. In the last month, we have been gradually expanding our services in all areas — but there are problems associated with this phased reopening.

Our small animal surgery service is particularly challenged: we are short staffed in surgery, we have a very significant waiting list of referral cases that were postponed when we reduced to emergency services, and we continue to see a huge emergency caseload. We have noted that some of the cases being sent through to our emergency service are not actual emergencies. Because our referral portal is closed, non-emergent surgical cases are being presented to the VMC through this route.

In short, we are overwhelmed with surgical cases. Members of our surgical team are working as quickly as they can through the waiting list, but they can't keep up with the number of cases coming in the doors every day. I regret to say it, but we will likely be in this situation for some time to come.

**If you have a small animal surgical case that is not an emergency, please advise your client that the VMC cannot accept non-emergent surgical cases at this time. Please encourage them to seek referral care elsewhere.** We believe this is the best course of action in the interests of patient care. We will work as quickly as we can to return to a full level of surgical emergency and referral service, but for now, we must limit our caseload.

I am sorry to send this message since I know there are limited options for small animal surgical referral and some clients will need to travel longer distances to access care for their animals. But I'm afraid we have no other choice right now. Please know that the VMC is still here to support your clients and their pets to the limits of our ability.

I will be inviting all of you to join me in a virtual meeting to discuss this issue and other news from the VMC in the very near future, so please stay tuned. If you have any immediate questions or concerns, please call or email me.

Thank you for your understanding and stay safe.

Steve Manning, DVM, MSc, DACT  
Associate Dean, Clinical Programs  
Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM)  
[stephen.manning@usask.ca](mailto:stephen.manning@usask.ca) | 306-966-7109