



michigan veterinary medical association

*Professional excellence.  
Compassionate care.*

April 27, 2020

Honorable Gretchen Whitmer  
111 S. Capitol Ave.  
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Governor Whitmer,

First, I would like to commend and thank you for your leadership during this crisis, and for always putting the health of the people of Michigan first. I also want to thank you for allowing veterinarians to continue essential services and procedures to keep both our animals and our food supply safe.

As you continue to develop plans to safely reopen Michigan's economy, we respectfully request that you allow veterinarians to begin conducting sterilization procedures as soon as possible. Spay/neuter surgery is not just an elective surgery that can be postponed; spay/neuter surgery is an important service performed by veterinarians for both public health and animal health. Pet overpopulation leads to more animals living at-large and more people being bitten by animals resulting in potential rabies exposure. Pet overpopulation also leads to less health care for animals and overburdens animal control and animal protection shelters. We are now in spring and many animals are coming into heat. Now is especially the time sterilization surgeries are needed. If we wait too long, we run the risk of overwhelming our animal shelters, which could result in increased euthanizations of unwanted and potential pets. State law requires that dogs and cats be altered prior to adoption or have a contract for alteration soon after adoption. Complying with state law will be challenging if veterinary clinics are overwhelmed with requests for surgeries that have been postponed.

Veterinarians are doing their best to practice in a manner that mitigates the spread of COVID-19. Spay/neuter surgeries can be performed in a safe manner with minimal or even no contact with pet owners. These procedures can also be performed using minimal personal protection equipment. We believe spay/neuter surgeries provide great benefit to animal health and public health with minimal risk related to COVID-19. Thank you for your consideration of this request. I hope you, your family and your staff are all staying safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Tramontana".

John Tramontana, MS, CAE  
Chief Executive Officer  
Michigan Veterinary Medical Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Melissa Owings".

Melissa Owings, DVM  
President  
Michigan Veterinary Medical Association