

Dear Referral Partner,

Our companion animal emergency caseload is exceeding our capacity, especially after hours, and many of our specialty services cannot meet demand. While grateful for the trust you place in us, this caseload is a detriment to our ability to effectively teach our students and train our house officers, challenges our ability to provide the quality care you expect, and is causing extreme burnout for our clinicians, staff and students.

We have reached a point where we must put the health and wellness of our people first. In an effort to manage our emergency caseload we are implementing the following strategies:

1. **Refer Non-Emergent Cases Back to Primary Clinician** – In order to ensure our emergency service is available to see true emergency cases, we will refer the non-emergent cases back to you, the primary clinician, or facilitate a scheduled appointment with an appropriate specialist. We ask for your help and support by only referring cases that require immediate attention to our emergency service.

Please note that many of our specialty services are currently scheduling several weeks to months out due to extremely high demand. Setting appropriate expectations with clients is appreciated.

2. **Our Primary Care service may see urgent cases at the Frank Stanton Spectrum of Care Clinic (SOCC)** – in some situations a case presenting to the VMC's emergency service may be referred to the SOCC for examination and treatment. Please know that in these circumstances, we will always refer these cases back to the primary clinician/practice for follow-up care.
3. **Temporarily close the Companion Animal ER from midnight – 8am** – Effective June 1<sup>st</sup>, we will close the ER overnight seven days a week. This is a temporary measure until our staffing levels have improved. We will keep you apprised of our timeframe for reopening.

We recognize this decreases our ability to care for our shared patients and clients. Please know we are doing everything in our power to recruit clinicians and staff to the VMC. In addition, we are exploring other solutions to better serve our shared patients and clients. **NOTE-** these temporary changes do not affect our farm and equine emergency procedures, but those emergency referrals should continue to be called in.

We have not made these decisions lightly, and greatly appreciate your understanding, support and continued partnership as we all struggle through these unprecedented times. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you.

Karin



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