



## news&amp;notes

November/December 2019



## Online Support Group to Help Veterinarians at Risk of Suicide

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

In January 2019, The Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association published the results of a study by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on the prevalence of suicide in the veterinary profession. This study reviewed deaths of veterinarians from 1970 through 2015 and found that veterinarians, as a whole were more likely than the general population to die by suicide. The study showed that nearly one veterinarian has died by suicide for every month since 1979. Female veterinarians in clinical practice were 3.5 times more likely than the general US population to commit suicide.

In response to the growing number of suicides by veterinarians in the U.S., many efforts have been made to provide support and prevention for those contemplating the option. One of the largest efforts is an online organization called Not One More Vet (NOMV). Dr. Nicole McArthur created the group in 2014, days after the death of well-known veterinarian, Sophia Yin. The organization gives veterinarians a sounding board and support group for work stressors. There are more than 18,000 members of the Facebook group.

In addition to providing a sounding board, NOMV also provides mental health education, financial assistance for those veterinarians that do not have access to affordable mental health care, and relief workers to give emotionally drained vets to take a few days off to reset. One of the main areas of focus by the group is to train others what to do when someone is contemplating suicide.

The AVMA has also created several mental health resources for members. These resources train members how to identify others at risk and gives resources to help. The organization is also pushing discussions about wellness and work-life balance. The organization hopes that by bringing discussions out in the open, some of the stigma of suicide that prevents those in need from reaching out will be removed. By bringing the issue to the forefront of discussions, hopefully affected individuals will become aware that they are not alone and will reach out for help before it is too late.

The biggest resource for suicide crisis is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. This organization can be reached at 800-273-TALK(8255), by texting HOME to 741741 for the Crisis Text Line or you can reach out to their chat team online at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

# Fewer Animals Are Being Taken to Shelters or Euthanized

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

The New York Times recently compiled data from animal shelters in major cities across the nation. What they found is that euthanasia rates have uniformly declined among pets in shelters. The reasons behind the trend are multiple, but mainly can be attributed to a shift in attitude toward homeless pets.

The original goal of animal controls in early history was to prevent the spread of disease by stray animals – namely Rabies. These animals were taken off the streets and euthanized as a public health service. Early euthanasias were brutal – often by drowning or clubbing. In the late 19th century, gas chambers became more the norm for euthanasia. Today, most shelters euthanize by injection.

The way homeless animals are handled has come a long way since the infancy of major American cities. A change in public opinion about animals in general has sparked a change in shelter operations. The Humane Society estimated in the 1970s that an average of 13.5 million animals were euthanized yearly in shelters. Today, that estimate is much lower at less than two million across the nation.

Most of this trend is attributed to societal pressure to find homes for these animals rather than euthanize due to overcrowding. In response, shelters have changed their operations to keep animals longer and work with rescues to provide fosters and medical care to sick animals so they can be adopted. This shift in society's views have also decreased the number of animals entering shelters as owners are becoming more responsible and spaying and neutering has become more mainstream. Some shelter programs work hard to help owners keep their pets rather than having to surrender them due to hardships. For example, the city of Charlotte, NC has a grant program to help people pay pet deposits for apartments and assist with veterinary bills so financially strained owners can keep their pets.

The shelter industry has also become more professionalized with a new veterinary specialty in



shelter medicine and professional organizations for shelter workers. The shelter industry has its own magazine for members and shelter-specific conferences for continuing education.

Even with these changes, some smaller shelters are still euthanizing due to space limitations. These shelters simply do not have the staff, funds or physical space to house the number of homeless animals in the communities they serve. When faced with this situation, the hard decision must be made to euthanize those animals that are less likely to be adopted so that the funds can go toward housing adoptable pets. In most of these situations, cat populations take the hardest hit. Some communities have implemented community cat programs where feral cats are trapped, neutered at no cost and released back into the communities, thereby preventing further growth of the population and allowing these cats to live.

# New Feline Pain Scale Based on Facial Expressions

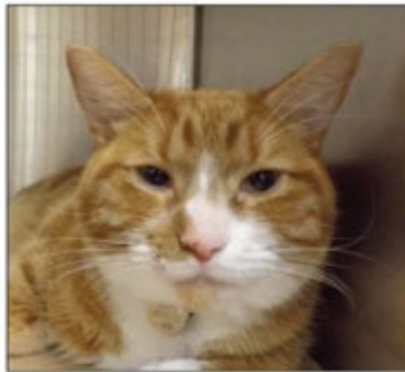
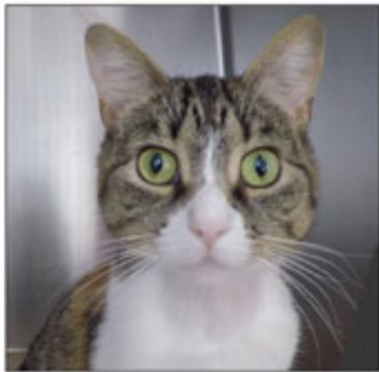
BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

Researchers at the University of Montreal in Canada, recently unveiled a new scale for assessing pain in cats. The scale was first unveiled at the AVMA Convention this August. The validation study was also recently published (Steagall PV, Monteiro BP. Acute pain in cats: Recent advances in clinical assessment. *J Feline Med Surg* 2019;21(1):25-34).

Until now, the assessment of pain in cats was largely based on physical and behavioral parameters wet forth in the Glasgow Composite Measure Pain Scale or the UNESP Botucatu Multidimensional Composite Pain Scale. Although there are other pain scales used, these are the only two that have been validated until now.

The Feline Grimace Scale was developed by the Montreal team of Dr. Paulo Steagall (associate professor of veterinary anesthesia and analgesia) and Dr. Marina Evangelista (a doctoral student). The scale scores from 0-2 on five different facial action units. A total of 4 or greater indicates that analgesia is needed. A zero score indicates absence of the action unit, one is moderate or uncertainty and two is an obvious appearance of the action unit. The facial action units are as follows:

- **Ear position:** (0) Ears facing forward, (1) ears slightly pulled apart, or (2) ears flattened and rotated outward.
- **Orbital tightening:** (0) Eyes opened, (1) eyes partially opened, or (2) eyes squinted.
- **Muzzle tension:** (0) Muzzle relaxed (round), (1) muzzle mildly tense, or (2) muzzle tense (elliptical).
- **Whisker position:** (0) Whiskers loose and curved, (1) whiskers slightly curved or (2) straight, or whiskers straight and moving forward.
- **Head position:** (0) Head above the shoulder line, (1) head aligned with the shoulder line, or (2) head below the shoulder line or tilted.



The scale has been validated for veterinarian use, but Steagall and Evangelista are also evaluating its usability by support staff and potentially pet owners. Further research is being done to better determine cutoffs for analgesia as well.





## New Strain of Canine Distemper in Wild Animals in NH, VT

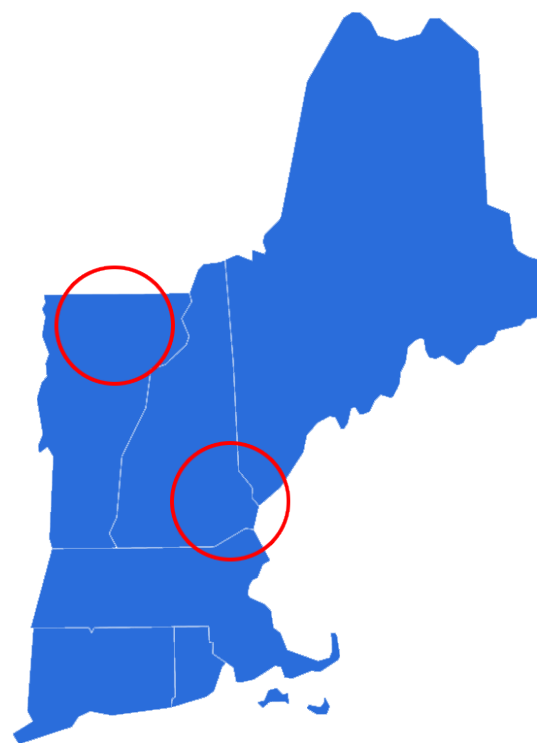
BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

Pathologists at the New Hampshire Veterinary Diagnostic Lab have identified a new strain of canine distemper virus. To date, no virus in this subgroup has been reported in domesticated dogs. The new virus has been diagnosed in eight carnivorous mammals in southeast New Hampshire and north central Vermont over a one year period.

Canine Distemper is a morbillivirus, the same genus that includes measles. The virus is highly contagious and capable of jumping to different species. Dogs infected with the virus most often have respiratory disease with oral and nasal discharge, gastroenteritis and, eventually, neurologic disease. Distemper virus vaccine is a core vaccine in the standard protocol for domestic puppies and dogs.

This new strain is significantly distinct from the strains targeted by current vaccines. The virus was previously identified in a single raccoon in Rhode Island in 2004. So far, animals affected include gray fox, skunk, raccoon, mink and fishers. This can have a significant impact on the wild carnivores in New England. The results of these cases are published in the *Journal of Veterinary Diagnostic Investigation*. Pathologists found lesions from the virus on necropsy of animals acting strangely. The samples were sent to Cornell University and the University of Georgia where the virus was isolated and sequenced.

Although no domestic pets have been affected by the virus, this does not mean they are safe from the new strain. Researchers recommend vaccinating dogs if they are not up to date. To date, there is no word if current vaccines protect against the new strain. However, the growth of the anti-vaccine movement in veterinary medicine means that more and more owners are opting not to vaccinate their dogs with even the basic core vaccines. This puts even more dogs at risk of contracting and suffering severely from any strain of canine distemper virus.



## NOVEMBER CE

Speakers: Holly Brown, DVM, PhD, DACVP (Clinical Pathology)

Leah A. Cohn, DVM, PhD, DACVIM

Dr. Thomason

Adrienne Willett, DVM

Date: November 17th, 2019

CE: 4 Hours

Sponsor: IDEXX

Location: Brio

502 Nichols Rd

Kansas City, MO 64112

Fee: No fee to attend this event, but  
RSVP is required by Nov. 12th.

Current membership dues cover  
all CE.

### SCHEDULE:

**7:30 am** – Breakfast

**8:00am – 9:20am**

Advanced Hematology: Reading Between  
the Lines, Connecting the Dots, and Adding a  
Microscope

Speaker: Holly Brown, DVM, PhD, DACVP (Clinical  
Pathology)

**9:20am – 9:30am** Break

**9:30am – 10:30am**

Making Sense of Ehrlichiosis

Speaker: Leah A. Cohn, DVM, PhD, DACVIM

**10:30am – 10:45am** Break

**10:45am – 11:45am**

Cardiology rounds-elderly small dog cases!  
Dr. Thomason

**11:45 – 12:30** Lunch

KCVMA Business

**12:30pm – 1:00pm**

Hybrid

Speaker: Adrienne Willett, DVM

Identifying Kidney Disease Earlier for Optimal  
Care during the Patient Visit

Fecal Antigen Tests: Hookworm,  
Roundworm and Whipworm

### Classifieds

Send your classified ads to: Wanda Geis, PO Box 12468, Shawnee Mission, KS 66282-2468, or email them to [classifieds@kcvma.com](mailto:classifieds@kcvma.com).  
Ads must not be over 100 words in length. Classified ads will be run at the sole discretion of the editor and may be edited for content.

#### September 3, 2019

Associate veterinarian needed for a mixed animal practice North of Kansas City, MO. Salary between \$80-\$100K with competitive benefits package.

#### September 4, 2019

Westwood Animal Hospital is seeking a responsible, reliable, hard-working individual to join our team as a kennel caregiver. Job responsibilities include caring for cats and dogs, general cleaning duties, bathing cats and dogs, and assisting the vet techs and veterinarians when needed. This position is full-time and does require availability to work on Sundays. Some experience working in veterinary clinic, animal shelter, or boarding facility is preferred.

Interested parties may fill out the employment application available on our website.

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**September 11, 2019**

Town & Country Equine and Pet Hospital is seeking an energetic, compassionate, self motivated licensed technician to join our ever growing mixed animal practice. If you are passionate and and interested in a progressive practice inspired to provide veterinary medical care and client service, we would love to visit with you about joining our team. Located in a rural setting in north Miami County, we have a complete IDEXX in house lab, digital x-ray, ultra sound, cold laser, Cardell surgery monitor and so much more. In return, we offer a challenging, flexible unique work environment, benefit package based on experience and opportunities for advancement and a long time career. Please email your resume' to [staff@townandcountryequinehospital.com](mailto:staff@townandcountryequinehospital.com)

**September 12, 2019**

Wildcat, Drexel and Paola Veterinary Clinics are looking to hire an associate mixed animal veterinarian to join our practices. We have clinics in Louisburg KS, Drexel MO and Paola KS and see a good combination of small animal, bovine and equine patients.

Each Clinic has digital radiography, in house IDEXX blood machine, Sonosite Edge Ultrasound, and Midmark Cardell Touch anesthesia monitoring. We provide high end medicine and surgical services with a personal small town feel. We have two certified animal chiropractors on staff and specialize in small animal reproduction (side by side, TCI and Surgical AI.) We have a great team/family work environment.

You will work 4 days a week and every other Saturday until 1. On call will be split evenly between our other 5 mixed animal veterinarians. New/recent graduates are encouraged to apply as we provide great mentoring to all of our veterinarians and staff. Call Aaron Stohs at 913-660-4040 or email at [stohsdvm@yahoo.com](mailto:stohsdvm@yahoo.com)

**September 16, 2019**

We desire a Full Time (but will entertain Part Time) veterinarian, and can work with "flex scheduling" for the busy professional parent.

Learn more at [kcvma.com/classified-ads](http://kcvma.com/classified-ads)

**September 29, 2019**

KC Pet Project is looking for a Veterinary Clinic Practice Manager to join one of the most progressive, effective, and innovative animal shelters in the country. We believe in "Solutions, Not Excuses" when it comes to lifesaving.

The Veterinary Clinic Practice Manager leads a fast-paced, high volume veterinary clinic at the largest no-kill, open admission, municipal shelter in the city of Kansas City, Missouri – providing veterinary care to animals within KC Pet Project's shelter system (with an annual intake in excess of 10,000 animals per year), and with a future goal of also providing affordable veterinary care to publicly owned animals for the surrounding community. Duties will also include leading the medical team in the move to our new Kansas City Campus for Animal Care facility in Swope Park in late 2019.

Learn more at [kcvma.com/classified-ads](http://kcvma.com/classified-ads)

**October 16, 2019**

Licensed Veterinarian Needed! The position offered will be part time initially and graduate into full time later. Our clinic is a privately owned, small animal practice located in Olathe, KS. Our convenient location would accommodate both suburban and rural lifestyles, with easy access to many Kansas City events and attractions. Initial schedule is negotiable. We believe in a family friendly atmosphere with our patients, clients and employees. Please check out our website at: [www.santafepetclinicolathe.com](http://www.santafepetclinicolathe.com). Salary negotiated at time of interview.

Learn more at [kcvma.com/classified-ads](http://kcvma.com/classified-ads)

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### October 21, 2019

Farview Veterinary Hospital in Independence, MO is seeking a full time Associate Veterinarian to join our team.

Farview Veterinary Hospital is a busy small animal practice located in Independence, MO. We provide our clients and patients with the highest-quality care and have a long-standing clientele who support doctor recommendations.

We have registered veterinary technicians and a generous support staff to assist you in examinations, procedures and surgeries allowing you to practice quality medicine. We also utilize surrounding emergency facilities so you won't have any on-call or after hours responsibilities.

Our Practice Offers:

- Surgical Laser
- High-speed Dental Unit
- Digital Radiographs
- Ultrasound
- Therapy Laser

For more information, please visit our website at: <https://farviewvethospital.com>

Current licensure in Missouri, BNDD and DEA are required. FVH offers a generous benefits package as well as pays for continuing education, licensing and dues.

Farview Veterinary Hospital has been serving our community for over 35 years. We have a long-standing reputation for providing high-quality medical care with compassion. We are proud to be a part of the community we serve. Come join our expanding practice and help us continue to grow!

### October 24, 2019

Bayer Animal Health is looking for a Veterinary Product Support Technical Consultant.

Learn more at [kcvma.com/classified-ads](http://kcvma.com/classified-ads)