



## news&amp;notes

November/December 2021



## AVMA Designs First Standardized Program to Train Veterinary Disaster and Emergency Planning and Response Certification

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

The AVMA has developed a list of competencies for certification in veterinary disaster and emergency planning and response. This will be the first standardized training program in this field for the nation. The 35 competencies finalized by the Committee on Disaster and Emergency Issues cover logistical and health issues that must be addressed during disasters and animal health emergencies. The Committee is accepting submissions for training courses to be approved based on these competencies.

The American Veterinary Medical Foundation's board of directors voted last November to provide the AVMA \$80,000 to develop the certification program for veterinary first responders. To date, there is no standardized program for veterinary disaster and emergency planning and response in existence.

Initially, most courses will be offered directly by colleges and other organizations with programs that have been approved by the CDEI. Some courses will be aired on AXON – the AVMA's online continuing education platform. The program will be ready to be certifying individuals by 2022.

There are 8 core competencies with several subcategories (for a total of 35) required as part of the certification program. Seven of the competencies deal with planning and preparedness, organizational roles and community response, knowledge and solutions to potential health concerns, impacts of disasters on resources, biosecurity and animal welfare principles, reporting and responding to zoonotic and foreign animal diseases, knowledge of depopulation techniques and humane euthanasia that may be required in animal health emergencies. The eighth competency requires completion of selected Federal Emergency Management Agency courses that are offered online.

More information can be found at <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/disaster-preparedness/avma-veterinary-first-responder-certificate-program>.

# Tools to Help Treatment and Monitoring of Diabetes Mellitus in Cats and Dogs

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

Recently, at the AVMA Virtual Convention, the subject of monitoring in complicated and uncomplicated diabetes mellitus cases was discussed. While diabetes mellitus is relatively easy to diagnose, getting the disease under control is often not so straight forward. The session, entitled “Updated Strategies for Monitoring Diabetes and Troubleshooting Your Difficult Diabetics”, was presented by Dr. Jessica Pritchard who is a clinical assistant professor of small animal internal medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Numbers of cases of diabetes mellitus are increasing in both cats and dogs. In 2016, Banfield’s State of Pet Health Report showed an increase of 80% in dogs and 18% in cats over a 10-year period. Management of diabetic pets is multi-modal and includes regular monitoring and adjustments of insulin, client education and encouragement of compliance, and management of diet and lifestyle. Confounding factors often include the presence of other disease processes, owner compliance, dietary habits and lifestyle changes.

References for managing diabetes mellitus include the American Animal Hospital Association’s (AAHA) 2018 Diabetes Management Guidelines for Dogs and Cats and the American Association of Feline Practitioner’s (AAFP) 2019 Diabetes Education Toolkit for managing cats. While the AAHA guidelines stress frequent reassessment and monitoring, the AAFP toolkit places importance on client participation in the pet’s treatment and education by the veterinary team with constant dialogue.

Traditionally, monitoring diabetic pets involved a day long hospital stay for a glucose curve. While this is still a valuable tool, it does have drawbacks. Pets in hospital are often stressed which often significantly affects their glucose metabolism. In addition, many pet parents are not fully comfortable leaving their pet for an entire day and feel confused by the process. Recently, more veterinarians have been using flash continuous glucose monitors (FCGMs) to get a better idea of their patients’ blood glucose trends over a longer period of time.

FCGMs, such as the Freestyle Libre, involve attaching a sensor to the skin of the patient and using a reader or smartphone to scan the sensor periodically for glucose measurements. This allows a curve to be done over multiple days without interrupting the patient’s routine or causing stress through hospitalization or blood draws. It also allows the owners to have more involvement in their pet’s care and can be used as an educational tool to help the better understand what is going on with their pet.

The sensors can last up to 2 weeks although some are dislodged sooner by the pet. The owner can scan the sensor periodically and the data will be stored in the web where it can be forward to the veterinarian to view the patient’s trends over the two-week period. FCGMs do have their limitations – namely that they are extremely inaccurate at very low or very high blood glucose levels. The key is to monitor for trends to see if the patient is responding appropriately to the insulin. Dr. Pritchard usually places a sensor every 2 weeks until the pet is regulated and then every 3-6 months. She has the owner’s email her the data weekly to review the trends. Dr. Pritchard also notes that you want to pick your clients for this method of monitoring. Her ideal client for using FCGMs is one that is not overly anxious, is willing to listen to instructions and wants to be involved.

For difficult to control diabetics, Dr. Pritchard advises more in-depth exploration of home life. Her first suggested step is to ask about the insulin including is it shaken or rolled and is it stored correctly. You also want to ask who normally administers he

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insulin injection and if there have been any changes noted in the color or consistency of the insulin over time.

She also advises to check diet and feeding habits. Check if the owner is free-feeding or if the pet is on set meal times. Ask about treats and between-meal snacks. Diet changes and changes in appetite are also important to discover. If the pet is not eating well, it may be time to change the diet, recheck diagnostics or add in an appetite stimulant.

Also, of importance is to review the patient's medication history. Often overlooked are topicals and ear and eye drops that contain steroids. Make sure the pet isn't being exposed to hormone creams used by the owner. If the pet is intact, hormones can be playing a role in insulin resistance. If there are suspect medications, try to find alternatives or discontinue the drugs if they are not necessary. You may need to increase the insulin dose if the medications cannot be discontinued.

Baseline diagnostics for any diabetic include weight, physical exam, CBC, chemistry, triglycerides, urinalysis, urine culture and a thyroid panel. Look for signs of concurrent conditions such as renal disease, urinary tract infection, hypertriglyceridemia, hypothyroidism, hyperadrenocorticism (canine), hypersomatotropism (feline), or pancreatitis and run additional diagnostics as appropriate.

## Researchers Studying Immune Cells to Target Canine Gliomas

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

Gliomas are tumors of glial cells, the support cells in the spinal cord and brain. Gliomas are the second most common type of CNS tumor in dogs. Median survival time in dogs treated with radiation is 9-14 months. Gliomas in dogs come in three forms: oligodendroglioma, astrocytoma or undefined glioma. Each type is further characterized as high or low grade based on microscopy.

The study of canine glioma behavior has implications for human gliomas as both cancers share similar characteristics. Immunotherapy, used to treat many types of cancers, has as yet been unsuccessful in treating glioma. Researchers believe gliomas act to suppress the immune system to allow further tumor growth and this may interfere with immunotherapy.

Researchers at NC State College of Veterinary Medicine set out to determine further the relationship between immune function and gliomas. They found that regulatory T lymphocytes (Tregs) and M2-polarized macrophages are found in higher quantities in high-grade tumors in comparison to low-grade tumors. Tregs act to inhibit immune response, which serves to prevent auto-immune reactions in otherwise healthy individuals. Some cancers have the ability to use Tregs to prevent the immune system from attacking cancer cells allowing the cancer to grow and spread. Polarized macrophages have two phenotypes, M1 and M2. M1-polarized macrophages have pro-inflammatory and anti-tumor functions whereas M2 macrophages are the opposite. Using these findings, the researchers hypothesize that the immune suppression that occurs in canine glioma is driven at least in part by Tregs and M2-polarized macrophages.

The hypothesis will require further research before it can become definitive. However, researchers are hopeful their findings can help develop immunotherapies that target Tregs or macrophages to help both dogs and humans with gliomas.

The research results conducted by the team at NC State College of Veterinary Medicine was published in the July 2021 edition of Veterinary Pathology. **Immunohistochemical evaluation of immune cell infiltration in canine gliomas.**; 030098582110239 DOI: [10.1177/03009858211023946](https://doi.org/10.1177/03009858211023946)





## AVMA Supports Legislation to Improve Standards and Oversight of Importation of Dogs

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

In August, Senators Tina Smith and Chuck Grassley introduced the Healthy Dog Importation Act (H.R. 4239) to the Senate after its introduction to the House of Representatives by Kurt Schrader and Dusty Johnson in June.

The act would allocate the necessary resources for the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to screen dogs entering into the U.S. each year. The act would also require presentation of a certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI) signed by a licensed veterinarian for each imported dog that confirms the dog is in good health and is not a risk for spread of disease within the country.

The Act also includes resources for the creation of an electronic database to contain documentation and import permits that will make federal oversight between the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Centers for Disease Control and Customs and Border Patrol more efficient and streamlined.

The introduction of the Act was mostly in response to CDC action in July suspending the import of dogs from certain countries with high rabies risk. Estimates by the CDC show that almost 1 million dogs enter the country every year. About 100,000 of these dogs originate from high-risk countries. The CDC discovered a 52% increase in fraudulent rabies certificates for imported dogs into the U.S. In June 2021, a rescue dog imported with 33 other dogs and cats into the US from Azerbaijan was confirmed positive for rabies after it had made it to its new home in Pennsylvania exposing several people along the way.

While rabies is a big concern for public health, there are other diseases that can be brought in by imported dogs. In May of 2021, a dog imported from China eventually tested positive for *Brucella canis* while another dog from China tested positive for Influenza A. In addition to being a threat to other dogs in the country, both of these diseases are public health risks as they can be transmitted to humans.

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has expressed support for this legislation emphasizing the risk to public health due to improper screening of imported dogs. “Safeguarding the health of every dog imported into the U.S. is essential to helping maintain animal health and reducing the potential spread of zoonotic diseases,” said Dr. Douglas Kratt, AVMA President. Dr. Kratt also went on to stress the importance of having a strong and organized system for inspecting imported dogs at all ports of entry.

The bill is currently in the House being reviewed by the Subcommittee on Livestock and Foreign Agriculture.

# COVID-19 Magnifies Veterinary Workforce Crisis

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

During the height of the pandemic, veterinary clinics were seeing patients “curbside” and frantically trying to deal with a large number of appointments all while maintaining COVID-19 protocols and communicating exam findings and treatments to worried and confused pet owners over the telephone. Things are starting to return to normal, but many clinics still are not back to normal workflow operations. The changes wrought by the pandemic made an already stressful and challenging profession more so and saw many people leaving the profession or reducing hours. Clinics are understaffed and experiencing high turnover rates. Emergency clinics in particular seem unable to entice a full complement of staff. Pet owners are finding it harder to obtain same day appointments and are having longer wait times for emergencies.

The cause of this change in the profession is multifaceted. The pandemic pet adoption boom was not really a boom. Data extrapolated from shelter adoption records show that, if anything, pet adoptions were down in 2020. Appointment requests did increase in 2020 but only by 4-5%. However, clinic operating efficiency was down considerably at 25%, meaning the same number of doctors was only able to see about 75% of their normal number of appointments in a day. This decline in productivity, dramatically increased the physical and mental stress of the veterinary staff during this time. That stress has continued to some extent with the continued staff shortages and turnover the industry is experiencing.

Veterinary staff are overworked and burned out. The solution is to address the root causes. Rather than hire more people, work in improving the productivity of the current team. By engaging employees and providing them opportunities for professional development and growth, a company is more likely to retain those employees for a longer period of time. Employee longevity is a key component of team satisfaction and efficiency.

A company that gives existing employees the chance to fully use their skills and pays them accordingly is more likely to have satisfied and fulfilled employees that stay with the company. Letting technicians perform the tasks legally allowed by their state frees up veterinarians for other tasks and allows the team to help more patients in a day. While adding additional employees may be necessary in some cases, keep in mind that we do not know whether the demand for veterinary services will continue at its current rate now that the economy is starting to open up and people are going back to work. The rise in inflation may also affect pet owner’s disposable income in regards to their pets.

Some have suggested the development of a new role in veterinary medicine that acts as a mid-level player between a licensed veterinary technician and the veterinarian. This role has been described as a veterinary professional associate or advance practice registered veterinary nurse. This position would diagnose, prescribe and perform surgery to a limited degree under the supervision of a veterinarian. Another role, the veterinary extender, has not been well-defined, but would not extend into the scope of practice of a veterinarian, but would deal more with managing the clinical aspects of the practice. No in-depth analysis of these roles has been conducted to date and the need for such roles is uncertain. In addition, training and education for these roles would need to be established and developed before implementation could occur. The American Veterinary Medical Association

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(AVMA) is currently conducting research into the need for these types of roles in the profession. Currently, the AVMA feels that using the skill sets of current veterinary positions fully is a more effective and efficient solution.

The AVMA recommends several solutions that hospitals can implement to improve productivity and job satisfaction among the veterinary team. Consider technology to help with practice workflows, vendor management and purchasing, accounting and telehealth. These tools can help practice efficiency and provide better client communication. Allowing employees more job responsibility and helping them gain new skills improves efficiency and gives veterinarians more time to focus on medical aspects. Finally, creating an inclusive team environment will enhance job satisfaction and wellbeing, reduce turnover and improve overall efficiency.

The AVMA has several tools to help practices implement these strategies. Many of these can be found at <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools>. This site has tips on improving utilization of technicians, financial tools, guidelines for telehealth, market reports, continuing education on veterinary business and training to support mental health and wellbeing.

## NOVEMBER CE

**Speakers:** Libby Robertson, DVM (In-person) and William D. Saxon, DVM, DACVIM, DACVECC (Virtual)

**Date:** November 14th, 2021

**Time:** Registration: 11:30am

Lunch & Presentation: 12:00pm

**Location:** TBD

**Sponsor:** IDEXX

**Topics:** • Hematology at a Glance: What Are You Missing without a CBC?

• Reticulocytes Count: Why They Are More Important Than Just Classifying Anemia

**CE:** TBA

**Fee:** No fee to attend this event, but RSVP is required by TBA. Current membership dues cover all CE.

## 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). Classified ads will be run at the sole discretion of the editor and may be edited for content.

### September 9, 2021

*Rediscover your passion for keeping pets and people together as you join an exceptional team committed to customer service and veterinary excellence in an empathetic, warm and friendly environment...*

Here at the Pet Resource Center of Kansas City we recognize that our team is the foundation of not just our business, but of our way of life. Through consistent growth based on the quality of our service and our desire to help, we have the opportunity to welcome a new team member who will join us in the next exciting phase of our journey.

### About Us

Since 2002, Pet Resource Center of Kansas City has delivered accessible and affordable Veterinary services and pet resources, and has developed a well-earned reputation for being a trusted resource for the Greater Kansas City community. Our contributions to ending pet homelessness and increasing pet retention has helped

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create the no-kill community we celebrate today. For established Veterinarians we offer manageable and direct caseloads, a great support team, and a fair Work-Life Balance with no "on-call" scheduling.

"I like working at PRCKC because of the passion of the team. Everybody here is in it for the animals and the people." – Jess Nichols, Chief Veterinarian

About This Role  
As a Veterinary Professional you already have a pretty good idea as to the day-to-day requirements of being a great Veterinarian. Here are just a few of the key tasks that you will be contributing to together with the rest of our team:

- Examine and triage pets to determine in-house treatment eligibility and recommend referrals, as needed, for best practice treatment in our wellness clinic. Treat common medical cases such as skin, ear and eye infections.
- Examine and consult with clients regarding sick or injured pets in our special medical program, which provides low cost options and financial assistance to pet and clients in need. Provide medical and surgical care to special medical cases, such as enucleations, amputations,
- Routine HQHVSN at an advanced level – other surgical expertise will also be highly regarded to support Special Medical cases.
- Rotate through our wellness clinic, HQHVSN and mobile clinic. Our mobile clinic is a great way to get out of the office and into the community.
- The ability to prepare and deliver internal best practice veterinary skills training to the entire team
- Actively work with a committee of your peers and leadership to establish veterinary standard operating procedures

### About You

- You genuinely care for pets, your fellow team members and clients
- You have an enquiring and inquisitive mind
- You understand that attention to detail and documentation is as essential as great expertise
- A strength in spay/neuter surgery skills is essential
- Enjoy a fast-paced but rewarding work environment

### About Kansas City

Kansas City sits on Missouri's western edge, straddling the border with Kansas. It's known for its barbecue, jazz heritage and fountains. This richly historic area that is Kansas City, offers a wonderfully unique place to live and provides options for all lifestyles. The city is composed of several neighborhoods, including the River Market District in the north, the 18th and Vine District in the east, and the Country Club Plaza in the south. If you are not a fan of a long commute, you will love living in Kansas City.

Kansas City is known for its long tradition of jazz music and culture, especially theater, and noted for its cuisine, including its distinctive Kansas City-style barbecue, and its craft breweries. This is an ideal area to live for those who enjoy a flexible lifestyle with a wide range of options for housing, schools, sports, activities and travel, and a low cost of living.

### Our Offer

- Part time and relief help starts at \$65-\$80 an hour
- Full time help starts at \$85k to \$100K + in salary pending experience – Sign on bonus \$5,000 for full time positions.

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- Health, dental, vision and life benefits options
- 3 weeks paid annual leave with flexible scheduling ability
- Paid holidays
- 401k
- \$1,200 contribution towards skills development, professional expenses and continuing education.
- Eligibility to participate in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF)
- Monday-Friday Schedule, no on call, regular lunch breaks

By now you will have realized that the Pet Resource Center of Kansas City is a genuinely unique environment and one that encourages quality and excellence in all that we do. This is very important to us, but harmony is equally important, as is ensuring a great working atmosphere where honesty through transparency builds trust. It is time for you to make the next step in your career and join us.

[Apply Now!](#)

**September 16, 2021**

Odessa Animal Clinic is seeking a full-time Associate Veterinarian to join our team. We are a well-established two doctor small animal practice located just 30 miles east of downtown Kansas City, Missouri. Our hospital is equipped with an IDEXX in-house lab, sedivue, direct digital radiography, ultrasound, Companion Therapy Laser, and Vet-Scalpel Surgical Laser.

Our experienced team is friendly and tight knit. We work together on difficult cases to create the best plan for our patients and clients. We provide mentorship to new grads. If you would like to practice progressive high quality medicine in a facility that also honors the importance of a quality work-life balance, we would love to hear from you!!

We offer a very competitive compensation package.

Please contact Dr. Sean M Croucher at Odessa Animal Clinic, 100 W Main Street, Odessa, Mo 64076 or email at [scroucherdvm@gmail.com](mailto:scroucherdvm@gmail.com) or (816) 517-1235.

**September 20, 2021**

We are looking for an associate veterinarian for a small animal practice family owned business, flexible hours, sign on bonus, starting pay \$150,000 per year, paid vacation, and many other benefits. Please email or text [Kklmnorris@yahoo.com](mailto:Kklmnorris@yahoo.com) or 913-206-2964