



## FDA Approves New Drug to Calm Cats During Transportation and Veterinary Visits

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved a medication to reduce anxiety and fear in cats during transportation and veterinary visits. The drug, Bonqat, is a nerve pain medication and is the first FDA-approved animal drug containing pregabalin. The medication is available through Zoetis and is a 50mg/mL solution to be administered orally or in food.

The drug is given orally and dosed at 5mg/kg to be given 1.5 hours before traveling or a veterinary visit. The FDA states it can be given consecutively for 2 days. The drug is Schedule Class V under the Controlled Substances Act with potential for human abuse.

In a field study conducted by Orion Corp of client-owned cats with anxiety, slightly more than half of the cats had good to excellent response during transportation and veterinary visit compared to one-third given a placebo. Adverse reactions include sedation, ataxia, and lethargy.

The FDA warns that precautions should be taken when handling Bonqat. Avid contact with a person's skin, eyes and other mucus membranes. People that have been exposed may have dizziness, sleepiness, weakness, dry mouth, blurred vision, and difficulty concentrating.

## Job Satisfaction Rises for Veterinarians

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

The Merck Animal Health Veterinarian Wellbeing Study, in collaboration with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), queried approximately 4600 veterinarians in the United States to explore mental health and general wellbeing. The results were more positive than previously believed.

Among veterinarians under 55 years of age in practice, less than 2.5% feel they are likely to leave the profession within the next two years. The majority (74%) of veterinarians have overall career satisfaction. More than half feel they are flourishing in their career and have a high level of wellbeing. The flip side of these findings is that younger veterinarians and those with a high debt load often struggle more with wellbeing. Companion animal veterinarians struggle with burnout more than food animal veterinarians and practice owners.

These findings counter earlier assumptions that veterinarians were leaving the profession in masse. Compared to the first veterinarian wellbeing study conducted by Merck in 2017, veterinarians have vastly improved in terms of mental health, wellbeing, and burnout. Veterinarians are more comfortable with the topic of mental health and accepting of treatment and more aware of people suffering with mental health issues. In addition, more resources are available through employers and health insurance companies for those seeking mental health treatment.

The AVMA also has a set of tools available to support wellbeing for the veterinary team. There is also a program to connect team members with mentors. Resources for financial planning and debt management as well as suicide prevention are also available. The AVMA also offers work place wellbeing certificate programs through AVMA Axon. These resources can be found at [avma.org/wellbeing](https://avma.org/wellbeing).

## Survey Results Show Overall Salary Increases for Veterinary Staff Members

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

The Veterinary Hospital Managers Association (VHMA) announced findings from its 2023 compensation and benefits survey in December. The survey was distributed to over 4000 members of the VHMA and Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society. Responses came from 275 veterinary practices and 3,289 non-veterinarian hospital staff members.

Compared to 2021 survey responses, the median salary for hospital administrators rose 13% and the median salary for practice managers increased about 8%. Median salaries also increased for office managers, receptionists, credentialed veterinary technicians, veterinary technician specialists, veterinary technician assistants, kennel assistants and bookkeepers. The report helps veterinary leaders remain competitive and recruit and retain quality team members. The executive director of the VHMA, Christine Shupe, states that she does not expect to see further increases in salary along the level of the past few years since staff are becoming more available.

The most common benefit provided by veterinary employers was reduced cost veterinary care with most practices typically covering half the cost. The least commonly offered benefit was child care offered by only 1% of employers. Most practices offered coverage for some or all costs of health insurance and offered paid time off.

The report is available to view on the VHMA website and can be a valuable resource for helping veterinary hospitals attract and retain workforce members.



## Questions Remain About Canine Respiratory Disease Outbreak

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

The canine infectious respiratory disease complex (CIRDC) outbreak of late last year appears to have subsided. The Oregon Department of Agriculture received over 200 case reports for CIRDC starting in August 2023. During the month of January of 2024, no new reports came in. Cases also spiked in Colorado, California, Florida, and New Hampshire. There were also reports from parts of Canada.

A professor at the University of Guelph Ontario Veterinary College and director of the Centre for Public Health and Zoonoses, Dr. Scott Weese, believes that the outbreak is most likely a commensal bacterium that has been overlooked. CIRDC is known to be caused by nine different bacteria and viruses and outbreaks are relatively common. The disease complex is rarely serious and often multiple organisms are involved. The outbreak last year was not typical for the disease. Many dogs had coughs lasting several weeks and secondary bacterial pneumonia that was not responsive to most antibiotics.

The source of this disease has not yet been found. Possibly because many of the samples were taken from ill dogs that had already been undergoing treatment. Speculation ranges from a new organism to a new variant of a known organism is causing the more serious disease. Currently there is no consensus within the veterinary community.

The New Hampshire Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (NHVDL) and Hubbard Center for Genome Studies at the University of New Hampshire have found a novel organism in several of the samples they have received from New Hampshire, Oregon, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Researchers at NHVDL described the organism as a bacteria-like organism similar to Mycoplasma. Additionally, they described the organism as non-culturable. The organism was sequenced in 31 of 226 screened dogs. The director of the NHVDL acknowledges the findings are preliminary and no causal connection has been identified yet.

The NHVDL is continuing research and has received additional samples from various other states. They encourage veterinarians that are experiencing increased cases of respiratory disease to contact them and send samples to aid in the research. As of January 2024, no new reports have been released from the lab.

# Puerto Rican Veterinary School Will Open This Fall

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

The American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education (AVMA COE) has issued a letter of reasonable assurance to the Ana G. Mendez University-Gurabo School of Veterinary Medicine after a site visit in August 2023. The letter indicates that the school may become accredited in the future if they complete all of the plans sent to the AVMA COE.

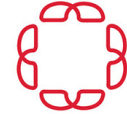
The new School of Veterinary Medicine will contain a veterinary degree program and the existing associate and bachelor degree programs in veterinary technology. Planned facilities include teaching hospitals for both small and large animals and specialized laboratories for anatomy, pathology, diagnostic imaging and surgery and anesthesia. Existing facilities and libraries will also be used by the new program.

The university's veterinary program will be a four-year curriculum with the fourth year focused on clinical studies. Although the teaching hospitals will be the main resource for clinical rotations, the school has entered into agreements with outside teaching hospitals at Kansas State University, Michigan State University, Oregon State University, Purdue University, the University of Florida, and the University of Missouri to host fourth-year students in their clinical rotations.

The university is currently accepting applications directly through its website for the first class to start this fall. Next year's class will be able to apply through the Veterinary Medical College

Application Service (VMCAS). Tuition and fees for first year students will be \$75,350.

The Ana G. Mendez University – Gurabo is a private university located about 25 miles south of San Juan. The university's veterinary technology program received accreditation from the AVMA Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities in 2018. It is the first program in Puerto Rico to receive accreditation for both associate and bachelor degrees in veterinary technology. The university plans to hire 11 faculty members for the initial veterinary class. As the program develops, more faculty members will be added. Veterinary students will also have opportunities to pursue further degrees such as a master's in environmental science or public health.



UNIVERSIDAD  
ANA G. MÉNDEZ

**UAGM**

School of  
Veterinary Medicine

## MAY CE EVENT

**Speaker:** Dr. Carmen Yeamans-McGee, DVM, MRCVS  
**Topic:** Intervertebral Disc Disease. . . It's All Changing  
**Date:** May 15th, 2024  
**Time:** Dinner/Registration: 6:30 | Presentation: 7:00  
**CE:** 1 Hour

**Location:** Grand Street Cafe (Lenexa)  
**Fee:** No fee to attend this event, but RSVP is required by **March 8th**. Current membership dues cover all CE..  
**Sponsor:** Blue Pearl Pet Hospital



**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.

**April 22, 2024**

Calling Passionate Veterinarians to Join Our Family (3 Days/Week, Rotating Saturdays) New Grads Welcome!

Bradford Pet Hospital, a privately owned practice and home to 2 experienced K-State veterinarians, is seeking a compassionate veterinarian to join our team! We offer a unique opportunity to provide high-quality care to pets in the heart of Johnson County, KS while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Why Bradford Pet Hospital?

- Collaborative and supportive environment with experienced veterinarians and a talented veterinary team
- Welcoming and respectful workplace
- Diagnostic equipment: In-house IDEXX lab equipment, digital x-ray, digital dental x-ray, ultrasound
- Surgical equipment: Bovie electrocautery, CO2 laser, cold therapy laser, full anesthesia monitoring equipment

We offer:

- Work/Life Balance (3-day work week 8:00am-5:30pm, rotating Saturdays 8:00am-12:00pm) Position can grow into 4+day if needed.
- Benefits (Medical, Dental, Eye)
- Simple IRA with employer match
- Group rates with Aflac
- Employee assistance program
- PTO & paid holidays
- Stipend for licenses and CE

Please contact Dr. Allen Baldrige or Kalah Talley at [bradfordpetmgmt@gmail.com](mailto:bradfordpetmgmt@gmail.com) or 913-768-6688 for more information!

**April 15, 2024**

The Animal Health Center of Leawood is looking for a veterinarian passionate about high quality patient care to join our fantastic team in a part-time or full-time capacity.

The Animal Health Center of Leawood is a PRIVATELY OWNED small animal general practice with wonderful clients and patients in a growing suburb of Kansas City. Our current two doctor practice prides itself on practicing the highest standard of veterinary care while providing exceptional client service. We have curated a truly dedicated, caring, and fun-loving team creating a great work environment. Our clientele is very friendly, compliant and care deeply for their animals

Competitive compensation commensurate with experience.

Interested candidates please contact Dr. Morgan Wilcox at [drwilcox@ahcleawood.com](mailto:drwilcox@ahcleawood.com)

**April 9, 2024**

The Barry Road Animal Hospital (<https://barryroadanimalhospital.com/>) is seeking a full-time veterinarian to join our team. Please send your resume to the Hospital Manager at [obrunhoeber@vetcor.com](mailto:obrunhoeber@vetcor.com) or apply online at <https://jobs.avma.org/jobs/19950392/40k-sign-on-veterinarian-in-kansas-city-mo-leadership-potential>

**March 21, 2024**

Tired of your present position? If you consider yourself self-reliant, self-confident, entrepreneurial, and wanting to manage only yourself consider contacting me. I am looking for an owner, want to be, to grow an overflowing mobile practice in the Northland with probable expansion into Jackson county. With the mobile clinic Dr. Nieman has for sale this could be almost immediate or we can work together to customize your own mobile clinic. I see some salaries listed in other adds so I will simply say the right person could earn 125,000 to 150,000 the first year with potential to earn 200,000 to 250,000 in later years. I have had my practice evaluated by Simmons Midwest and will share that information with the right person. Any one interested contact Lawrence Kovac, DVM 816-616-2349. [www.nmvckc.com](http://www.nmvckc.com).