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## COVID-19 Vaccinations

### A Letter from the TVMA President

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Dear TVMA members,

As COVID-19 vaccinations have begun in most areas of Tennessee, TVMA would like to update our membership regarding our efforts to determine where we, as veterinarians, and our staff fall within the current state phased vaccination guidelines. This, unfortunately, has not proven to be a simple or easy task. Our state government has been continually updating its phased vaccination guidelines and there has not been, nor is there currently any specific mention of veterinarians within the outlined phases. It is unclear when evaluating the Tennessee phased vaccine schedule where veterinarians will be placed, or even if we may be divided as to agricultural and non-agricultural veterinarians. It is possible and even probable that veterinarians in different regions and counties of our state may be eligible for vaccination at entirely different times due to 1) differing regional allocations of the vaccines and 2) citizens that qualify in the early phases declining vaccination which would result in an acceleration of the phases.

Early this year, TVMA worked on many fronts to ensure that veterinarians were identified as essential critical infrastructure workers. TVMA's position remains that veterinarians are critical and essential to the infrastructure of our state and we will continue to advocate this position with regards to COVID-19 vaccination.

We have requested guidance from the Department of Health and the state of Tennessee as to where veterinarians can expect to be included in the phased vaccination process. To be clear, we are not advocating for a position ahead of any front line health care workers or the highly susceptible population segments of our society who should receive vaccination at the earliest possible date. We are requesting this information so that we can inform our membership when they and their employees can expect to be appropriately and timely vaccinated if they so choose. We are also communicating with the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine as well as other state VMA's in regards to this matter.

TVMA is always working on behalf of its members to represent the interests of veterinarians and we will advise our membership promptly when we have concrete answers to this question.

Matt Povlovich, DVM  
TVMA President

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Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association, PO Box 803, Fayetteville, TN 37334  
931/438-0070, [tennesseevma@gmail.com](mailto:tennesseevma@gmail.com), [www.tvmanet.com](http://www.tvmanet.com)

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