Defining “Essential Appointments” in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Can telemedicine be used to address the condition?
See updates on veterinarian-client-patient relationship regulations here (avma.org/advocacy/state-local-issues/vcpr-provisions)

Yes
- Use telemedicine appointment to consult and recommend treatment and medications as needed

No
- Delay procedure and appointment until public health and government officials recommend incorporating non-essential services into veterinary care again. Reconsider if animal or public health risk status changes.

Classify the animal condition via teletriage
- **Emergency** (Likely to result in death, loss of vital function [e.g., vision], or become significantly worse) in less than 6 hours
- **Urgent** (Likely to result in death, loss of vital function [e.g., vision], or become significantly worse) in 6 hours–24 hours
- **Stable Chronic Conditions, Wellness, or Preventative Services**

Emergency
- See appointment as soon as possible—take team protection precautions*

Urgent
- Schedule appointment as staffing permits and animal condition dictates—take team protection precautions*

Stable Chronic Conditions, Wellness, or Preventative Services
- Will individual or herd animal health, animal welfare, or public health be affected by a 4–8 week delay? Consider geographical disease/infection concerns, zoonoses, animal age and condition.

Food Producing Animal
- Schedule as far out as advisable or when restrictions on non-essential services are lifted

Companion Animal
- Does the procedure require PPE?

*Team Protection Precautions to consider: Reduce traffic/number of people in the clinic; utilize curbside service only; limit number of team members in contact with clients; provide those team members with masks (preferably N95 masks if available) and gloves, and consider face shields if available; consider having team wear surgical or cloth masks routinely while at the clinic; and consider working in teams and have no contact between teams.