

Ms. Lawrence Spence and members of the Joint Special Committee on Corona Virus,

I am writing to you today to pay testimony to how this corona virus epidemic has affected our business. We are a small, locally owned veterinary hospital that has been serving our community since the early 1960s. Within the veterinary industry we have seen a great uptick in corporate consolidations as the cost of medicine and education rise, making it less profitable and more difficult for veterinarians to own the hospitals they work in. Our hospital employs 16 full time workers. Because of our independence we are able to conduct business according to our values by keeping our spending in the community, pairing with our clients to offer goods and services as often as possible, and finding creative solutions to lessen our impact on the environment.

Profit margins are low and we do not have the same access to cash as our corporate counterparts do. While facing potential closure or at least severely reduced business, we are looking at potential layoffs to keep our business afloat. Many of our employees have worked alongside us for 10, 15 years and the possibility of jeopardizing their wellbeing is devastating. We are still paying down debts from the 2008 recession and have very little flexibility to maneuver through this situation. If reduction in spending and layoffs are not enough, it is my greatest fear that we will be forced to sell our local, family run practice to a corporate consolidator. To my knowledge there are not currently veterinary corporations located in Oregon or that would allow us the autonomy to continue practicing as we do now.

It is my hope that you can find ways to help my employees maintain their wellbeing during this time – providing stipends for those who need to stay home for their health or who are laid off. I am hoping we can access a lower interest emergency loan to keep our business afloat. I am already working with our vendors about the possibility of delayed billings. Knowing I had access to secured cash at a reasonable rate would extend our risk tolerance in keeping people on payroll knowing we have a way to pay them. Additionally, and I know this is difficult, it would be helpful to have an expected timeline. If this is going to mean closures for a few weeks we can plan for that, but if experts expect this to continue for months we need to make different plans.

I don't envy your task and I thank you for requesting small business impact statements. My hope was to keep this as brief as possible, but let me know if you would like more detail I would be happy to supply it. Good luck, stay healthy and let me know if there is anything I can do to be of help.

In Joy,

Dana Bredeweg  
Practice Manager  
The Veterinary Hospital  
[www.thevethosp.com](http://www.thevethosp.com)