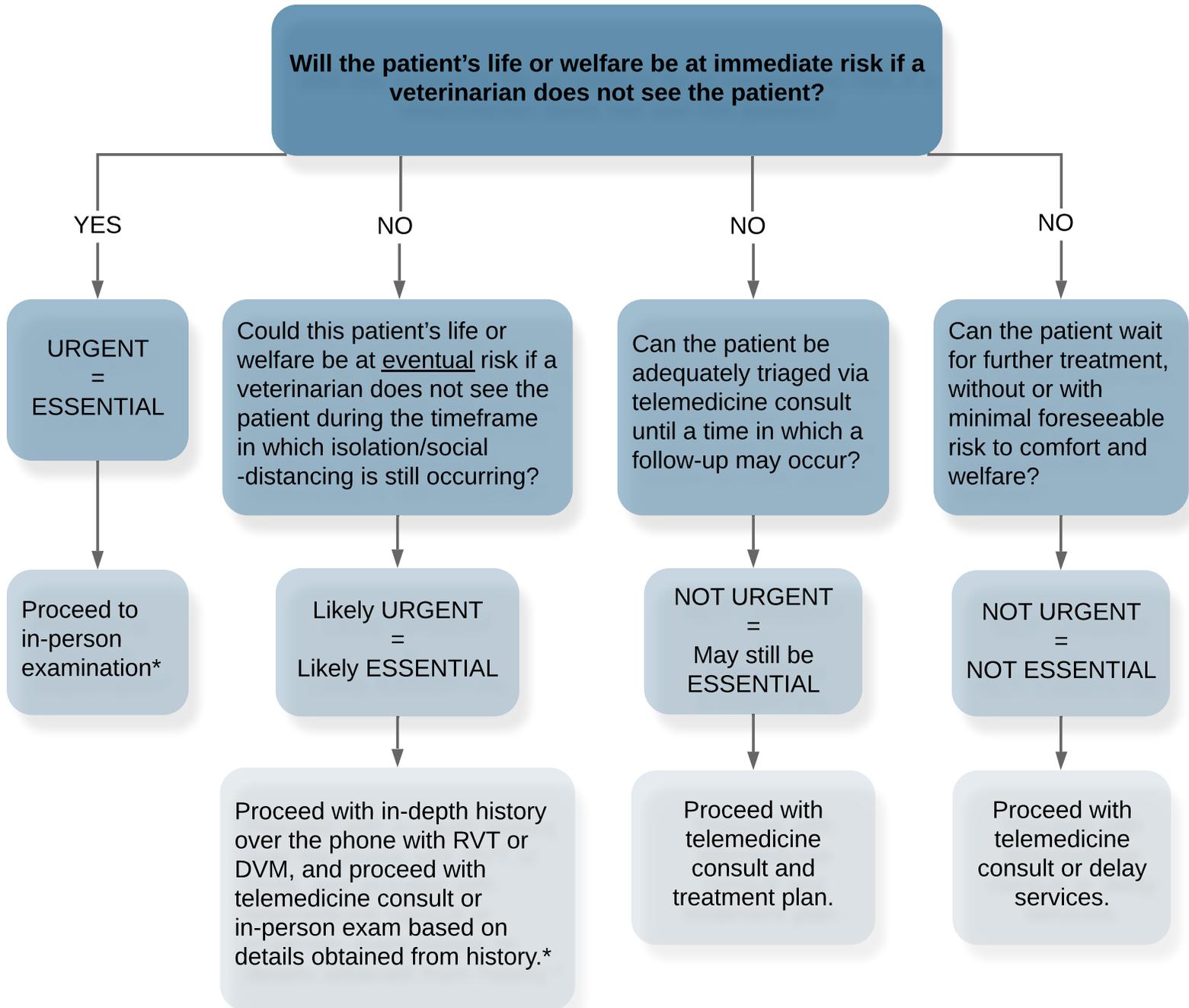




EVALUATION OF ESSENTIAL VS NON-ESSENTIAL VETERINARY PROCEDURES



* All in-person exams to be preceded by the human-health screening questions to assess risk associated with the owner. Appropriate precautions and use of PPE to be considered based on this screening.



Evaluation of Essential vs Non-Essential Veterinary Procedures

Members are reminded that guidelines are just that – guidelines. Members should use their professional judgement in assessing if a case is essential and requires treatment. These decisions will often come down to your judgement and opinion based on the factors presented.

What is Essential Veterinary Service:

Essential veterinary services cases occur when the patient's life or welfare is at immediate risk or may progress to be at risk if an in-person veterinary intervention does not occur. This should also take into consideration public health concerns such as Rabies vaccinations, herd health/food safety, and owners who may be immunocompromised.

Obvious examples

- Seizures, haemorrhage, fractures, hit by car, respiratory distress
- Prolonged or severe vomiting/diarrhea
- Unproductive attempts to urinate
- Dystocia
- Lameness
- Colic
- Euthanasia

Less obvious examples

- Puppy/kitten vaccination series
- Vaccination of animals for which the risk of exposure cannot be managed (West Nile/EWT/Influenza, Rabies, etc.)
- Spay/neuter for high-risk patients (i.e. likely to develop unwanted pregnancy due to environment)
- Disease surveillance
- Pruritus leading to self-trauma

Examples of Non-essential Veterinary Service:

- Vaccine boosters for 2-year core vaccines (DA2PP/Rabies), i.e. they may be extended to 3 years
- Spay/neuter for healthy young animals with minimal environmental risk
- Surgical removal of benign and non-painful lumps/masses
- Routine dental prophylaxis with no overt concern for pain and infection

Important distinction: All urgent cases require essential service; however, not all essential services are urgent cases. Thus, the way that they are managed takes into account patient welfare, and human risk (both veterinary staff and owner)

What is Urgent and, therefore, Essential?

Will this patient's life or welfare be at immediate risk if a veterinarian does not see the patient?
(Urgent = Essential)

Could this patient's life or welfare be at eventual risk if a veterinarian does not see the patient during the timeframe in which isolation/ social distancing is still occurring? (Likely Urgent=Likely Essential – needs clarification via detailed history or telemedicine consult)

Can the patient be adequately triaged via telemedicine consult until a time in which a follow-up may occur? (Not urgent = may still be essential)

Can the patient wait for further treatment without or with minimal foreseeable risk to comfort and welfare? (Not essential)

Essential Service Triage Questions

1. Based on an initial patient history, is the case considered Urgent or Potentially Urgent (see below)?
2. Can the patient be adequately triaged via telemedicine consult until a time in which a follow-up may occur?
3. Can the patient wait for further treatment without or with minimal foreseeable risk to comfort and welfare?
4. How will the treatment of this patient affect the amount and type of PPE used, and risk to veterinary staff?
5. Is the client in a higher risk category based on the human health screening questions asked below:
 - a. Have you been ill (fever, cough, sore throat) within the past 14 days?
 - b. Have you been in self-isolation/quarantine within the past 14 days?
 - c. Have you tested positive, or have you been in direct contact with a known positive COVID-19 person within the past 14 days?
 - d. Have you travelled internationally, or within Canada, within the past 14 days?