

# A message from Dr. Vlad Stefanescu

May 2021

Dear valued clients,

This month, Yonge-Davenport Pet Hospital celebrated its 6<sup>th</sup> year anniversary since we first opened our doors in May of 2015. The last year has shown to be a very challenging year for many of us, and the team at Yonge-Davenport Pet Hospital has not been spared.

We have remained open throughout the global pandemic and constantly evolved our protocols to meet the demands of our clients, while keeping our staff safe.



The nature of our profession - the need to care about the well-being and outcome of every patient that walks through the door - can be a heavy emotional burden. When that burden comes at the detriment of one's own self-care, it results in what's commonly known as compassion fatigue. Chronic compassion fatigue can have a critical impact on one's physical, emotional and mental state. A 2017 survey of 1,403 Canadian veterinarians — published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association— found that 26 per cent of vets had considered suicide in the year prior to being surveyed. The number of veterinarians who completed the survey accounts for about 10 per cent of all Canadian vets. This is a very alarming statistic.

Unfortunately, many of us at Yonge-Davenport Pet Hospital have experienced, and continue to experience, significant burnout and emotional fatigue. One of the biggest contributors for my burnout has been the rise of cyberbullying that we encounter in this profession. Instead of doing what I love most (practicing medicine and performing surgery), I now spend a significant portion of my days fighting keyboard warriors that make it their mission to slander us or complain, either online or via email, often times without any validity to their claims.

In the last year alone, Yonge-Davenport Pet Hospital accommodated a total of 18,093 patient visits. This week, we welcomed our 9500<sup>th</sup> patient to the practice. Of these 9500 patients, 236 have chosen to write us online reviews, on platforms like Google. Although the majority of those reviews have been solid 5-Star reviews, it's those few (five to be exact) 1-Star reviews that really affect us emotionally. They not only portray inaccurate depictions of the events that took place, but they also shatter the spirits of our entire staff, from our receptionists, animal care attendants, veterinary technicians, office manager and, of course, our veterinarians.

As such, **I am taking the month of June as well as part of July, off from clinical practice and will not be seeing any appointments other than a few select pre-booked cases. I will continue to do dental surgeries that are already scheduled, but will not be taking on any new bookings during this time.** This time will not be spent staying home and relaxing. I will still be in the clinic, but my focus will be on rebuilding the team morale back. Our associate veterinarians Dr. Brown, Dr. Odell, Dr. Haroutunian and Dr. Sun will continue to see appointments in my absence. We are also happy to announce that Dr. Leslie Burke will be joining the team this month as our new Medical Director. I will also spend a lot of my time during this period training her, to ensure she also delivers the same consistent and quality medicine Yonge-Davenport Pet Hospital has been providing over the last 6 years.

I hope to be able to return to my regular schedule at some point in July or August, but until then, I ask you to be kind, be courteous and please respect our staff. We are all there to help your pets and kindness can go a long way. If there is something you would like to discuss with management, please reach out so we can address them directly, rather than turning to an online forum to express your concerns.

Thank you for your continued support of Yonge-Davenport Pet Hospital,

Sincerely,

Dr. Vlad Stefanescu