

Hope: The Shot in the Arm We Need



Kara M. Burns,
MS, MEd, LVT, VTS (Nutrition),
VTS-H (Internal Medicine,
Dentistry)
Editor in Chief

As we move through spring and approach summer, I sense a renewed feeling of hope. It is a feeling that I have not felt from society or our profession in well over a year—since the pandemic began—that sense of brimming optimism we experience as we anticipate positive outcomes in our lives. Yes, we are certainly hopeful that as a nation we are beginning to get ahead of the coronavirus (if we stay vigilant with the CDC guidelines and receive our vaccination).

We are also hopeful that our profession will have learned from this experience. The veterinary profession, long believed to change at the speed of a turning cargo ship, adapted and adjusted swiftly to the needs of the clients, the veterinary team, and the patients. The pandemic called for new protocols to be implemented, team members to be utilized more fully, and change to be embraced. Simply put: all members of the veterinary healthcare team rose to the occasion.

We are not out of the pandemic yet, but we are finally seeing the light at the end. The veterinary profession has come a long way and pivoted to the needs of the time. I have hope we will get to the finish line, reflect on the changes implemented, and start refreshed and anew as an all-encompassing team truly utilizing all team members to provide the best care for our patients and the people who love them.

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The pandemic resulted in people from all walks of life and professions resorting to emergency measures. This is especially true of the veterinary profession. Our protocols changed, our veterinary teams worked overtime, our clients carried their stress into the clinic. This led to fatigue, burnout, and depression. And it occurred just as the veterinary profession was increasing the focus on wellbeing for all team members. As mentioned, I hope the profession has learned from this experience. The veterinary team rose to the occasion, but we cannot lose sight of protecting our own. We must evaluate our priorities, continue to utilize all team members to their fullest, identify burnout in our team members, and ensure the wellbeing of each and every person in the veterinary profession. What an enormous opportunity missed if we do not. Remember, it is our reaction to adversity that determines how our profession will succeed.

Hope is the one thing that can help each of us through the darkest of times. I hope we are through the darkest of times and are ready to embrace the light. Desmond Tutu famously said, “Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness.” Thank you to every veterinary healthcare team member for your perseverance and for seeing the light. I am proud to be a member of this profession. **TVN**