

October 31, 2018

To Our Valued Cat Hospital of Chicago Patient Family Members,

Good afternoon, and we hope that you and your kitties are enjoying our Chicago fall.

In an effort to keep our pet parents in the loop regarding our post-fire situation at Cat Hospital of Chicago, we thought an update was appropriate. As is the case with any catastrophe similar to what we have experienced, we receive new information every day, resulting in changes in our processes and plans moving forward, and thus in our timeline. There's a lot more to consider than one thinks about initially in a crisis like this, especially when we start digging into the details, from the repair and restoration of the hospital itself, to the investigation of temporary set-up options! The wheels do not move as quickly as we might like, but we know that they are moving as fast as they possibly can right now and that absolutely everyone involved with the situation has been very proactive about doing everything possible to work with us and get us back up and running as soon as reasonably possible.

A brief synopsis of our Cat Hospital of Chicago post-fire update is as follows:

-  Repair (roof/electric), replacement (HVAC, ceiling tiles), cleaning and restoration is ongoing, with some work already started, major repairs to begin later this week or early next. It's a tremendous undertaking with many details going into its planning. We feel lucky that although it seems like a long time since the fire, it's only been 2 weeks. To achieve all that we (landlord, insurers, and us) have in such a short period of time is quite a feat! The smell of smoke is still very strong in the hospital, despite several large hepa filters running 24/7.
-  All of our major medical equipment is in the process of being assessed to determine if it can be cleaned or needs to be replaced
-  Inventory of every single item in our hospital has been completed, and a repeat inventory will be taken when it all returns. We lost a lot of smaller non-salvageable items due to the smoke damage. Items are replaceable. Kitties and our team are not!
-  I am so proud of our Cat Hospital of Chicago team members during this challenging time! They have really stepped up to the plate and worked well as a team, despite the many challenges. Although not reporting to work in our facility for the past 12 days, everyone has been working remotely checking and responding to emails, calling in prescriptions for patients, and otherwise coordinating care for our patients to the best of their ability with a very inefficient system. Our Team Leader group has met twice since the fire (at Dr. Thompson's home last week), and will be meeting again this week to assess 'where we're at, and based on information we've obtained to date, what's our next step'. Our staff meeting this week will be at my home on Halloween – the first time we've all been together since the fire on 10/16/2018.
-  Timeline for reopening? We still don't have an exact date at this point, but given the scope of work that we now realize yet needs to be done and all that has had to be accomplished before we were even able to start, we are likely looking at another 2.5 – 3 months before we will be able to reopen.



So is there any good news?! Yes!

- We have been diligently working on researching options that may help us to continue to offer service to our patients, even if just temporarily and on a somewhat more limited scope until we can reopen our hospital doors. We should have all the details needed to make a decision in that regard by late this week so that we can move forward. Until then, we are doing all we can to coordinate care for our patients, including efforts to provide home visits for our patients most in need (sick, due/overdue for lab tests/vaccinations/blood pressure, etc). Let us know if you have interest in a home visit.
- When all is said and done, we will also have a very 'newish' hospital for you to visit! Following treatment to all the walls to remove the smoke smell, every wall in the hospital will be repainted. Choosing colors for our 'new look' is one little piece of 'fun' in all that we are facing during this otherwise difficult time. We will also be rearranging and moving our boarding area, as well as our therapeutic food section. The result will be a bit of a new look and we look forward to that. On the bright side as well, our team will also be better organizing our 'behind the scenes' areas (pharmacy, treatment areas) which we hope will help us to more efficiently serve you when we do reopen.



Lastly, to further clarify a point that we may not have made completely clear in the initial email sent shortly after the fire, Illinois law will not allow veterinary clinics to prescribe or dispense medications for patients that they have never seen, even with a valid prescription from another veterinarian. Why? Because veterinarians are not licensed pharmacists, the law only allows us to dispense medications to our own patients. Thus, our veterinarians can write prescriptions that can be taken to/called into human pharmacies or to licensed online pharmacies (because they are staffed with licensed pharmacists), but not to other animal hospitals. If the medication that your cat needs is not carried by human pharmacies or online pharmacies not affiliated with Cat Hospital of Chicago, the available options, as outlined in the mailing we sent last week (also available on our website), include our own online store, [VetSource](#), (which carries many, but not all, medications that we use), or for you to take your cat to another veterinarian for an examination, which will then allow that veterinarian to prescribe and dispense medication to you.



Again, how do we contact you? Please feel free to leave a message on our hospital voicemail (773-539-9080) or email us at catlovers@cathospitalofchicago.com (both monitored 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM daily except Sundays).

Our doctors can be reached at:

Dr. Currigan: drcurrigan@cathospitalofchicago.com

Dr. Czerwonky: eczerwonky@cathospitalofchicago.com

Dr. Thompson: drthompson@cathospitalofchicago.com

Dr. Foose: mfoose@cathospitalofchicago.com

If emailing, we suggest sending any correspondence to the general email box alone, or if you are emailing your veterinarian, include the general email box as well for a more timely response.



The opening crew the morning of the fire – making phone calls from their vehicles to the day's appointments as we could not enter the hospital yet

Thank you again for your patience. We will update next as we get more information, probably later this week or early next week. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us as above. We will do all we can to coordinate care that your kitty or kitties may need. We dearly miss seeing our patients every day, and want to do all we can to help relieve any angst that you may have about your cat(s), especially those that have medical needs now that we are not able to address as we historically have been able to do.

Dr. Colleen Currigan, Hospital Director

Cat Hospital of Chicago