

Message from Dean Whiteley:

Since 1990 Dr. Sandra Manfra Marretta has been expanding the dentistry program at the College's Veterinary Teaching Hospital, and she currently heads the surgery section as well.

One of eight founders of the American Veterinary Dental College in 1988, she is passionate about the importance of addressing dental problems in small animal patients—and about educating veterinarians in these issues.

“Dental disease is the most common health problem in small animal patients, afflicting 85 percent of pets,” notes Dr. Manfra Marretta. “Our goal is to have every Illinois graduate be proficient in conducting a thorough dental exam, recognizing dental diseases, and recommending treatment as well as knowing how to take dental radiographs, perform surgical extractions, and provide periodontal treatment.”

Dentistry education in the Illinois DVM program has expanded to a required 5 hours of lecture and 4 hours of lab. A high percentage of students also take the advanced dentistry elective, which entails 10 hours of lecture and 10 hours of lab. In addition, all students choosing the small animal track for rotations spend 2 weeks in the dentistry section.

Dr. Manfra Marretta has a strong commitment to dental education beyond the DVM. She oversees one of only four university-based dental residency programs in the country. She trained the veterinary dentists practicing at two of the five other U.S. veterinary college that have board-certified dentists.

Her influence is obvious in Illinois and CVMA. The only other board-certified dentists in the state are Dr. Barbara Stapleton (IL '85), who was trained by Dr. Manfra Marretta, and Dr. Cindy Charlier (IL '84), who was trained by Dr. Stapleton. Dr. Steve Juriga (IL '87) is completing work with Dr. Manfra Marretta for board eligibility now.

Practitioners across the country can benefit from Dr. Manfra's expertise "any time, anywhere" by taking her continuing education offerings through the Veterinary Education Online program, available at www.VEOillinois.org.

The dentistry program commonly treats periodontal disease; stomatitis in cats; maxillofacial trauma including fractured jaws and teeth, in consultation with the orthopedic surgery section; and oral tumors, in consultation with the oncology team.

Recently, dental resident Dr Keith Stein studied a new engine-driven technique for root canal therapy and found that the new approach decreased the procedure time by 50 percent and resulted in no leakage, which the conventional hand-filed approach showed leakage in 20 percent of cases. These results will be published soon, and the dentistry program will begin offering this procedure to clinical patients.

Dr. Manfra Marretta credits CVMA as an early supporter, donating equipment for the dental teaching laboratory at the University of Illinois. I add my acknowledgement for your collaborations with the College. At the spring awards ceremony it was gratifying to see the CVMA President's Scholastic Award go to Dr. Nathan Kice and the CVMA Scholarship go to third-year student Cynthia Olsen.

Thanks, and feel free to contact me at dean@cvm.uiuc.edu.--Herb

