Our ER, At Your Service

“Service first” is the motto of Dr. Maureen McMichael, who heads the small animal emergency and critical care service at the University of Illinois Veterinary Teaching Hospital. And she means service for veterinarians as well as for animal owners.

“You’re welcome to call to discuss a case at any time,” says Dr. McMichael. “And we’ll see any case, any time, from anybody. Are you just too busy to see something? Send it here. We’ll take it! We’re here to help you.”

Dr. McMichael joined the faculty last fall, coming from Texas A&M, where she built a busy ER and ICU on the twin foundations of great service and great communication.

“We routinely had vets from Dallas sending cases to us in College Station, 180 miles away,” she says. “I see no reason why it wouldn’t be the same with practitioners in Chicago referring emergencies to Urbana.

“Our ER offers in-room diagnostics, radiographs, ventilator care, a range of blood products, and blood transfusions. And there’s not a better place for your critical patient to be than in our hospital, which offers all clinical specialties, cutting-edge clinical trials, and the newest pharmaceuticals.”

To assure excellent care 24/7, small animal ER at the hospital now has another criticalist, Dr. Mauria “Mo” O’Brien, as well as Dr. Tiffany McFadden, who provides
back up and supervision for interns on all busy shifts. The ER and ICU are also staffed round the clock with certified veterinary technicians trained in emergency care.

Along with focusing on service, Dr. McMichael puts a high priority on communication with the primary care veterinarian.

“Within 24 hours of a patient’s arrival, the referring veterinarian gets faxed a copy of the transfer sheet or discharge papers,” she says. “We let you know ‘this is what we found, this is what we’re doing, this is where we transferred the case, or we recommended the client see you.’ ”

In fact, of all the new equipment added to the ER under Dr. McMichael’s direction—the ultrasound, point-of-care blood gas analyzer, ventilator, electrolyte machine—one of the most important is the telephone.

“We encourage referring veterinarians to call us to consult or to send a case our way,” she says.

The number is 217/333-5300. Or you can reach Dr. McMichael by email at mmcm@illinois.edu.

And don’t forget the new “portal” Web site that gives one-click access to a host of information and services of interest to veterinarians: www.vetmed.illinois.edu/4dvms/.

You have access to my ear any time as well. Send your questions or comments to me at dean@vetmed.illinois.edu.—Herb Whiteley