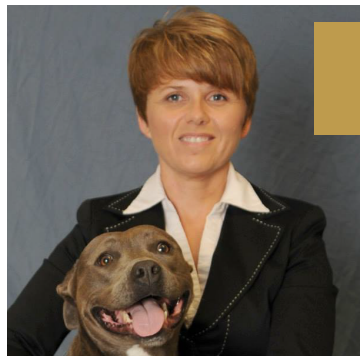


IVPA UPDATE

News for Independent Veterinary Professionals

June 2020



From Disruption Comes Opportunity



Well, the first half of 2020 has taken us on quite a rollercoaster ride. Between clients not being allowed in hospitals and the implementation of curbside check in, restrictions that ranged from essential services to emergencies only (depending on state guidelines), and the fast and furious learning curve surrounding telehealth, our practices have been challenged in ways we could not have imagined when we were wide-eyed, idealistic veterinary students all those years ago.

Many of us are back at work now, feeling our way through operational changes that could be here to stay for while. The good news is we are now on the other side. We can look back at all we accomplished, pause briefly to pat ourselves on the back, and begin looking forward with the knowledge that, if we can get through the past few months, we can survive anything.

Perhaps even more exciting is the renewed purpose we have in our mission to provide high quality medical care to our patients. This was a scary time for people and pets. For a while, there were concerns that animals could spread and/or contract COVID-19. (Fortunately, this doesn't seem to be the case in any meaningful way.) Clients were worried about the ramifications of delayed preventive and wellness services. They looked to us for guidance; we were able to calm their fears and ensure their pet's health was still our priority. Through this trial by fire, our skills have been honed and we are better doctors for it.

Even with social distancing measures, it's safe to say our relationships with our clients grew stronger during this crazy time. This is an important outcome and one we should continue to build upon as we strive to maintain our independence. It's a reminder of why we chose to become veterinarians, and why we must continue to advocate for the needs and promote the value of our locally owned and operated practices that aren't just in the community, but *intrinsic* to the community. There's no better time to be a practice owner. It's a badge of honor, and we at IVPA hope you wear it proudly. Thanks for all you've done -- and will do -- in service to the pets of your community. Let's see where we can take it from here.

Bonnie Bragdon, DVM, MS
President, IVPA

Supporting Small Business Matters to Your Clients - and to Your Community

MAIN STREET MEANS BUSINESS
and your support means a lot!

IVPA recently discussed the importance of promoting your locally owned practice as a small business during a webinar hosted by The Veterinary Cooperative (TVC). Participants were polled to see how many were already doing so, and the results suggested that 66% of practices were actively engaged in communicating what has become an important point of distinction for our industry over the past decade. We were a bit skeptical, so we decided to do a little informal research of our own.

After a brief review of about a dozen attendee websites, social media, etc. we found **only one practice actually emphasized this fact**. It was not featured information on the home page, but rather buried in the website copy halfway down the page. There's no doubt that small businesses have been disproportionately affected by the events of the last few months. Consumers know this and are eager to do their part in helping rebuild their communities. If you missed our email, be sure to check out the local, small business-themed marketing resources we have available by visiting www.vetlocal.us/resources. You can't say it too much!



What a Relief!

Utilizing Relief Vet Services - The Why and The How

by Cindy Trice, DVM

Founder/CEO, Relief Rover (www.reliefrover.com)

Hiring a relief vet is a sound investment in the most important asset practices have: their people. Relief practitioners promote veterinary wellbeing and allow for uninterrupted clinic productivity so owners and/or associates can take necessary time away.

WHY HIRE A RELIEF VET?

- **Relief for You:** As a practice owner, it's hard to disconnect from the day to day pressures, yet that's exactly what's essential for both productivity and career satisfaction. Hiring relief vets to mind the practice while owners or associates take that hard-earned vacation, personal day, sick day, maternity/paternity leave, or even a sabbatical, is a wise investment for the health and wellbeing of the business.
- **Relief for Your Team:** A coverage strategy that does not have associates carrying the caseload of an absent doctor on top of their own schedule not only prevents burnout, resentment, and guilt, but preserves quality of patient care and maintains client satisfaction.
- **New Perspective:** Working across multiple practices of varying sizes and styles, relief vets pick up a range of case management approaches, treatment tips, communication strategies, storage ideas, organizational techniques, and more. This knowledge can be invaluable and improve protocols.
- **Extra Help when it's Needed:** seasonal upticks in business can be managed without commitment beyond the busy period. In fact, some relief vets choose this path for lifestyle reasons and are interested in relocated to different areas in pursuit of new experiences.
- **Try Before You Hire:** If you're looking to increase staff in the future, working with a relief vet is a great way to "vet" a candidate. While there may be some vets who prefer to remain independent contractors, there are others that are actively seeking a "perfect fit" practice. Yours may prove to be their forever home.



HOW TO MAXIMIZE RELIEF VET DAYS

- **Avoid the "R" Word with Clients:** The perception of relief vet may be akin to "substitute doctor", which of course is not the case. Train receptionists to present the relief vet by name, and as a trusted colleague or partner vet, so clients know this is someone in whom the practice has confidence.
- **Inform your clients of the doctor who will be handling their appointment at the time it's scheduled.** Lack of communication and transparency is never a good strategy and will affect client satisfaction/loyalty. Doing so will also avoid the inevitable awkwardness that results from a relief vet walking into an appointment where the client expecting to see someone else. Be upfront so there are no surprises.
- **Likewise, if follow up/recheck visits are scheduled for a relief vet day, make sure clients are aware.** This is also an opportunity to assure them of your confidence in the attending veterinarian's medical judgment.
- **Most practices have a few particularly seasoned managers, techs, and receptionists.** If possible, make sure they are scheduled on relief days. Relief vets work with many different types of practice management systems and rely on employees to help them navigate the particulars of how each clinic uses the software.
- **Even though one of the relief vet's superpowers is decoding illegible or incomplete medical records, keeping clear records improves quality of patient care.** Enough said.
- **Encourage clients to bring in their sick, (or well), pets as work-in appointments rather than having them wait to see the primary vet.** The pets will be cared for faster, the clients will greatly appreciate having their problems addressed quickly, and the relief vet will be productive for your practice.
- **Find out if your relief vet has special skills that will contribute to your practice.** Perhaps they have extra training in dentistry, ultrasound, or surgery. Utilize their expertise on relief days to keep a high standard of patient care and the appointment books full.

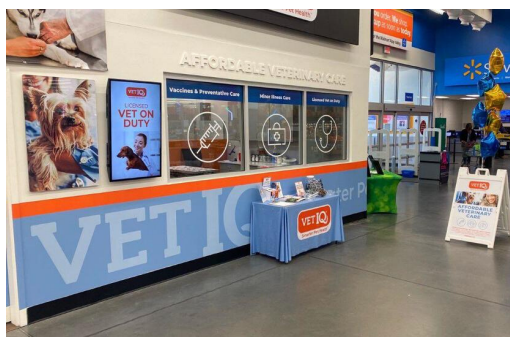


Photo: Newsbreak

Think Walmart Veterinary Services aren't a big threat to your practice? Think again.

A recent study conducted by Diggo that focused on pet owners' perceptions of Walmart's veterinary services suggests the retail giant has the potential to be a major player in the industry. Most concerning is that the study focused exclusively on pet owners who listed private practice as their primary source of veterinary care. **71% of respondents expect the quality of care from Walmart to be the same or higher than their current clinic, and 75% would consider a Walmart-based practice for services such as exams, vaccines and minor infections.** Click on the photo to learn more.

Free RACE-Approved Ultrasound CE Course



Level up on your sonographic and diagnostic skills while earning two free RACE CE credits with **"The Broad Scope of Ultrasound,"** a course recently launched and offered compliments of SonoPath (an IVPA affiliate).

You can access this course by clicking on the image above or [HERE](#).

In addition, SonoPath is offering a 20% discount on all courses available for purchase at www.shopsonopath.com. Use the special code **IVPALOVE** at checkout. This code is valid until 7/31/20.

Course Overview: Explore the extent to which ultrasound and ultrasound-guided procedures can be applied to nearly every organ system for a fast, efficient and accurate diagnosis. This course covers all abdominal and thoracic organ systems.

FNA/Tru-cut biopsy sampling for in-house procedures

- **Areas of Focus:**

- Urogenital System
- Adrenal Pathology
- Pancreatitis
- Liver Pathology and Presentations
- Orthopedic Ultrasound Diagnosis

Hospital/Team Photos and Videos Wanted

IVPA wants to highlight its members on our website, social media, and marketing materials, so we're making a call for photos and videos you have - or will be taking - of your hospital, your staff, patients, clients, etc. Send us the pics that you feel best represent life and culture as an independent veterinarian. Please be sure to include the name of your hospital and the names of any doctors and staff featured in your submissions. Everyone in the photos should sign a release form. A template is available at www.vetlocal.us/resources.

Please send all photos and videos to Terry Tosh, IVPA Executive Director, at terry@iveterinarians.org and feel free to reach out to him with any questions. If the files are too large to email (which is probably going to be the case), check out WeTransfer for free file sharing with no registration required. It's easy! Or, if you are using a file sharing platform (DropBox, One Drive, Google Drive, etc.) make sure you give Terry editor status so he can download the materials.



Not sure how to get started with videos? Check out the following article from Veteos by clicking on this image:



Dr. Grant Jacobson
(above), the Hometown
team (right), and
newest member,
Dr. Nick Schmit (inset)

Practice Spotlight: The Hometown Veterinarian

The Hometown Veterinarian in Marshalltown, Iowa was established in October 2018 by Grant Jacobson after the hospital he planned to purchase - and where he served as an associate veterinarian for 19 years - was sold to a corporate consolidator. "Rather than re-apply for my job for a reduced salary, as that's what was offered, I decided to step away and realize my career-long dream of opening my own practice," Dr. Jacobson said. "While it continues to amaze me that non-veterinarian owned corporate practices are somehow able to operate in a state where the law mandates veterinarian ownership, I've channeled my energy into providing expert, ethical medical and surgical care for beloved pets and an unmatched service experience for their loyal humans."

In less than two years, The Hometown Veterinarian has become known throughout central Iowa as a referral practice of choice for complicated cases and has received a warm reception from the community. "Our team members do a wonderful job of building relationships with our clients, and love on their pets well," he added. Dr. Jacobson's team also includes Nicholas Schmit, DVM (Associate), Jami (Practice Manager), Emily (Office Manager), Tiffany, Abby, Lana and Page (Veterinary Assistants), Jodie (Receptionist), Grace (Treatment Room Assistant). "No matter the circumstance that brings a person to our hospital, be it a happy wellness appointment or a sad, sick patient exam, we want our clients to be confident they made the right decision in visiting us." Based on the kind words and frequent tasty treats the practice has received - and even a request to assist in a marriage proposal that took place during an appointment (She said "Yes!") - this formula is working well.

Dr. Jacobson sums up his experience and philosophy as an owner as follows: "Being independent gives us the freedom to operate in our own unique way and make decisions that are in the best interest of our patients, clients, and the community. If we want to make a video of our staff mopping the floor in T-Rex costumes, engage in a hissing cockroach-paperclip-radiograph April Fools' prank on Facebook, or turn a scruffy but lovable tom cat our hospital mascot and social media star, we go for it. Most importantly, we can practice ethical veterinary medicine, as it should be, and go home feeling good about making the day a little bit brighter for the people's and pets' lives we touch every day."

Welcome New Members



Our membership has grown significantly in the past three months! We're excited to announce that the following members have joined IVPA from 2/18/20 - 5/31/20:

PRACTICE OWNERS

Jerry Hinn, Hayfield Animal Hospital, Alexandria, VA
Paula Rode, Chelsea Animal Hospital, Chelsea, MI
Danielle Churchill, West Park Animal Hospital, Westchase, FL
Jody Spencer, Veterinary Associates, Monticello, FL
Kevin Schmidt, Patton Veterinary Hospital, Red Lion, PA
Tanya Higgins, Davie Creek Animal Hospital, Davie, FL
Claudia Casavecchia, Society Hill Veterinary Hospital, Phila, PA
Robin Westood, Country Friends Veterinary Clinic, Royse City, TX
Jane Mayo, Cornerstone Veterinary Hospital, Largo, FL
June LaFave, Urban PetRX, Chicago, IL
Laurainne Haenni, Advanced Animal Health Center, Rock Falls, IA
Kristan Gutowski, Herndon Animal Medical Center, Annandale, VA
Kevin Soncrant, Maumee Bay Veterinary Hospital, Oregon, OH
Greg Nutt, Riverstone Animal Hospital, Canton, GA
Michael LoSasso, Frisco Emergency Pet Care, Frisco, TX
Gail Waldman, Rivendell Large Animal Hospital, Mocksville, NC
Lynnel Rowan, Animal Medical Center, Selah, WA
Aaron Wentzell, Fairfax, Veterinary Clinic, Fairfax, CA
David Beauchamp, Leland Veterinary Hospital, Leland, NC
Sabine Capehart, Barrow Veerinary Hospital, Winder, GA
Taylor Truitt, The Vet Set, Brooklyn, NY
Jennifer O'Driscoll, Cat Clinic of Lawrence, Lawrence, KS
Trevor Singer, Pine Island Animal Clinic, Saint James City, FL
David Rowland, Access Veterinary Care, New Albany, IN
Karen Todd, Altitude Animal Hospital, Highlands Ranch, CO
Leanne Brandt, Red Butte Veterinary Care, Salt Lake City, UT
Craig Buffington, Stonebrook Family Pet Clinic, Frisco, TX
Heather Redmon, Madera Veterinary Hospital, Tucson, AZ
Elizabeth Maimon, Hills and Dales Veterinary Clinic, Kettering, OH
Kelly Cummins-Brown, Animal Care Center, Granite City, IL
Erica Weiss-Laroche, Geary Veterinary Hospital, Walnut Creek, CA
Heather Evans, At Home Mobile Veterinary Clinic, St. Davids, Ontario, CN
Hannah Levy, A Cat Practice, Silver Spring, MD
Ashley Manos, Mill Creek Animal Hospital, Nolensville, TN
Calvin Lum, San Francisco Veterinary Housecalls, San Francisco, CA
Elizabeth McClure, Boone Veterinary Hospital, Boone, IA

VETERINARIANS

Gail Golab, Schaumburg, IL

AFFILIATES

ASPCA Health Insurance, www.aspcapetinsurance.com
Hippo Manager Software, www.hippomanager.com
BabelBark, www.babelbark.com
Independent Vets, www.independentvets.us
RX2Live, www.rx2live.com
Mark R. Hafen Hospital Design and Architecture, markrhafen.com
Animal Intelligence Software, Inc., www.animalintelligence.com

PARAPROFESSIONALS

Nicholas Benedetto, Syracuse, NY
Allison Rye, Virginia Beach, VA
Emily McCarthy, Waltham, MA
Amy Martin, Denver, CO
Lee Holter, Colorado Springs, CO
Charlyce Altom, Reno, NV
Jayme Richardson, Chicago, IL

STUDENTS

Christie Donahue, Ann Arbor, MI

Industry News

Following are links to articles that may be of interest to you (spoiler: we're featured in one)



Opinion Piece: "Why We Need to Advocate Now for Independent Veterinary Practices" (DVM 360)



Platform Bridges Veterinarian-Client Conversations Virtually (Veterinary Practice News)



Meet Dr. Moose: Virginia Tech Awards One of its Therapy Dogs an Honorary Doctorate Degree



2.8% of dogs, less than 1% of cats in the U.S. carry health insurance



IMPORTANT LINKS



Members-Only
Facebook Group



Members-Only
Discussion Forum



Member
Survey



Newsletter Suggestions
and Contributions

for Practice Owners and Veterinarians