Core Values Handbook
Of
Countryside Veterinary Hospital

PREFACE

Countryside Veterinary Hospital will be known for its distinction of being a practice that sets and trains their healthcare team with high core values. Our core values encompass all arenas in our hospital such as client service, quality care of the patients, teamwork and leadership. In order to provide exemplary service to our clients, we must uphold our core values at all times within our practice culture. The following pages are detailed with Countryside Veterinary Hospital's core values and operating procedures that every healthcare team member must learn and implement in their respective role within the practice.

VISION

Countryside Veterinary Hospital will be a practice that :

Is organized through job descriptions, standards and operational procedures
Has better communication which will create consistency
Will be efficiently staffed with happy people
Has increased quality care for clients and patients

CLIENT SERVICE MEETINGS

Client Service Meetings are to be held every Tuesday between the hours of 12:00 noon and 2:00pm. All Staff members should be in attendance for entire meeting every week. So please don't plan any other activities that would draw you away. The weekly Client Service Meeting serves to rejuvenate the culture on a routine basis. It serves as the well of communication from which we draw to satisfy our clients' needs.

Each and every healthcare team member is asked to bring incidents of either good or bad client service from the previous week to the meeting. As these incidents are shared, we all learn how our clients are being treated. If the incident is a good one it reinforces the guiding principles of client service and is rewarded by public recognition among peers. If the incident is a bad one no repercussions are felt other than to learn how to prevent the incident in the future. Positive steps are made to implement permanent changes that will prevent this from happening again. Staff members are taught how to listen to clients to gather important client information, and then they are taught how to act on that information to change their actions as well as those of their co-workers to better serve the client.

CORE VALUE OF EXCEPTIONAL CLIENT SERVICE

Service . . . it's one of the most valuable core values we have at Countryside Veterinary Hospital. Is it more important than quality medicine? No, but it is equally important. Client service is so important because while our healthcare team and our clients feel more positive about the practice, we will also be more successful financially. Businesses whose clients rate their client service very highly

- Keep their clients 50% longer than their competition
- Have 20-40% lower marketing costs, and
- Have 7-17% higher net profits

BASIC ELEMENTS OF CLIENT SERVICE

RELIABILITY is the ability to provide what has been promised. This means if you personally tell someone you will call her back by Friday, you call by Friday. Reliability pertains to promises made by you, our brochure and our advertisements. We must make good on our promises in a dependable and accurate fashion in order to be reliable.

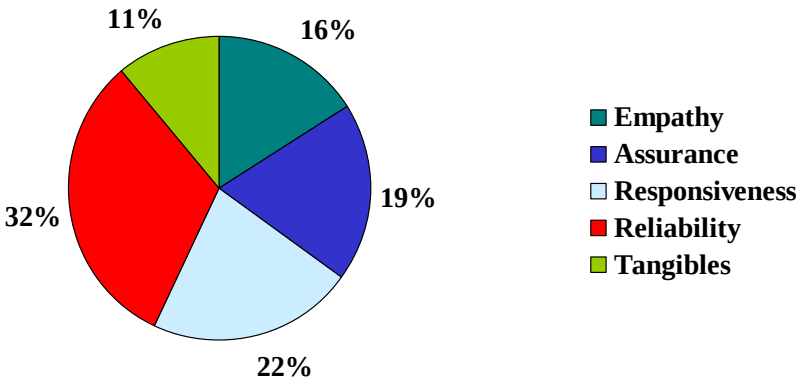
RESPONSIVENESS is how promptly we get things done for our clients. For example, Mrs. Jones makes an appointment to bring in her dog at 4:00 on Thursday. We get behind on appointments and see Mrs. Jones dog at 5:15. We've been reliable because we delivered on our promise to examine the dog, but we haven't been responsive because we've kept her waiting for an hour and fifteen minutes.

ASSURANCE is the ability to get our clients to believe in our competence and confidence in entire healthcare team, our products and our services. Our clients trust we have the knowledge and courtesy to get them what they want.

EMPATHY is the ability to make the client know we care and understand what he and/or she is going through. Empathy is saying, "I can understand why that would make you angry."

TANGIBLES are the physical appearance of our facilities, our equipment, our healthcare team and our doctors.

Which is <u>MOST</u> important?



Two MOST Important Things

- **RELIABILITY**

  Consistency is one of the greatest challenges we have in providing service to our clients.

TIME

- **Time is the MOST precious commodity of the American consumer.**

The above define the BASICS of client service and our clients are expecting us to provide that level of service every time he or she walks into our practice. But the basics aren't enough if you want to keep the clients coming back.

SIMPLY SATISFYING OUR CLIENTS ISN'T ENOUGH. WE'VE GOT TO EXCEED THEIR EXCECTATIONS.

GREETING OUR CLIENTS/PATIENTS

You will greet every client as they enter the reception area, exam room or any area of the practice as quickly as possible. Make it a point to give the client good eye contact and always introduce yourself if you have never met this particular client. Once you "hand the client" to another staff member, always introduce them to the client as well.

<u>Use the client's and pet's name when greeting them if at all possible. Review the schedule each day so you will be able to refresh yourself with the client's names and the pet's names that will be coming in each day.</u>
<u>Remember to smile when you greet every client</u>. We want our clients to feel welcome when they are received by us. They are our guests and we need to be hospitable hosts and hostesses while they are in our practice.

It is very important to greet every pet as well. 80% to 90% of pet owners see their pet as a child or a family member. Clients want their healthcare providers to “make on over” their beloved pets. Use pet’s name as often as possible and if the opportunity allows, petting and loving on the pet is an exceptional greeting.

MEETING THE CLIENT’S NEEDS

Many people join the veterinary industry because they love animals. However, working in a veterinary practice is a service oriented job. The definition of service is “the act of doing things for other people.” These cuddly, fuzzy animals never walk in the practice all by themselves. They always have a human attached to them. It is a priority to serve our clients by meeting their needs. Most of the time, our client’s do not have their needs specifically identified and it is our responsibility to educate them about their needs of their pets.

If a client asks you a question and you do not know the answer, you never say “I don’t know.” You tell the client, “That’s a great question; let me find out the answer for you.”

GENUINE AND THANKFUL CLIENT DEPARTURE

It is essential that you wish every single departing client an enjoyable day. A sincere goodbye is necessary to compliment the overall experience of the client. They will leave knowing they were appreciated. Remember to always invite them back again.

“Mrs. Jones, we look forward to seeing you and Buffy next time.”
“Goodbye, Mr. Lawrence, please come back and see us again soon.”

POLITENESS

Politeness is defined as having or showing good manners and being courteous, considerate and tactful. Another core value in client service is **politeness**.

ESSENTIALS OF POLITENESS

EYE CONTACT AND FACIAL COUNTENANCE

When you give our clients good eye contact, it shows the client you are truly listening. The ability to skillfully listen is one key to gaining influence with others. It shows respect, it builds relationships, it increases knowledge and it builds loyalty.

This will make you display facial expressions that convey concern and warmth. In short, the key to attentiveness and facial response lies in the eyes.

USE OF DISTINCTIVE PHRASES OF ANTICIPATION AND GRATITUDE

This is an especially important aspect of telephone and in-person courtesy that requires some imagination and effort. Essentially, studies have shown that most phrases have a negative value as perceived by the guest. For example, "Thank you... Come again" can be considered an insult if the patron had an unsatisfactory experience. Also, when a healthcare team member asks, "Is

everything all right," the guest could react negatively if he feels that the healthcare team member is not really concerned, or if this question is posed just prior to asking for another service. More often, however, the phrases simply have no meaning to the client and do not serve their purpose of enhancing the "image" of politeness.

On the other hand, when a healthcare team member makes a statement that is outside the usual terminology of staff-client language, it tends to become an impressive experience. For example, if a healthcare team member includes the following type of comments in a departure, chances are significantly better that the client will respond positively:

"Did Muffin have anything serious?"
"Did the Doctor explain everything thoroughly?"
"We will be looking forward to your next visit with us, Mr. Jones."

We are not suggesting these exact remarks, but the idea is to create and utilize language that is outside the norm, while maintaining and reinforcing the attitude of consideration and friendliness.

USE OF PERSONAL NAMES

It is no secret these days that use of surnames has become a key issue to the service industry. Clients always respond instantly and positively to the use of their names. Usage of a client's name is also a sign of recognition and respect, which make the clients feel valuable. The client in turn will show his respect and appreciation when paying his bill. These impressions are crucial in future veterinarian selection and word of mouth marketing.

TIP – Ask the client how they came up with their pet's name. Pet owners love to talk about their pets.

POSITIVE BODY LANGUAGE

Body Language is the unspoken communication that goes on in every face-to-face encounter you have with another human being. It tells you their true feelings towards you and how well your words are being received. Between 60-80% of our message is communicated through our Body Language, only 7-10% is attributable to the actual words of a conversation.

Here are some examples of positive body language:

NOTHING CROSSED. Keep arms, legs, and feet relaxed and uncrossed. Also, if you are wearing a jacket, open it up. It relays the message... I am open and honest with you.

LEAN FORWARD. Move within 6 to 8 feet of your client. Lean slightly forward. Interested people always pay attention and lean forward. Leaning backwards demonstrates aloofness or rejection.

DIRECT EYE CONTACT. Direct eye contact is a compliment to most people and builds trust in you. But be aware of the customs of people from other countries. It may be a sign of disrespect.

HANDSHAKE. Not too hard and not too soft. Pay attention to how you are shaking someone's hand.

CORE VALUE OF PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

To be effective and successful, you must be aware of the nonverbal messages you send. Studies show that first impressions are influenced 55 percent by visual cues, 38 percent by vocal cues and only 7 percent by verbal content. The criteria that you are judged by include physical appearance, grooming, poise, eye contact and body language.

DRESS CODE

It's no secret that different kinds of clothing leave different impressions and even influence people's reactions. Let's face it, a client not only judges your communication skills, but also will be influenced by the visual image projected by your appearance.

The client wants your clothes to say, "I am productive. I'm confident. I know what I am doing." For this reason, we must wear a uniform that is professional and fits into our culture of practice.

At Countryside Veterinary Hospital our required dress code is as follows:

A clean complete Approved uniform must be worn at all times, with proper shoes, a nametag and a SMILE.

The uniform is to be clean (no Spots) when you come to work.

No additional personal wear is to be worn with the uniform; i.e., sweaters, hats, scarves, etc.

CLOTHING, UNDERGARMENTS AND SHOEWEAR

Underwear shall be worn and discreet in nature. Both male and female healthcare team members may wear white, grey or black undershirts under their required uniform. Female healthcare team members should wear a bra or equivalent support system. No sandals or open toe shoes will be allowed for the safety of the healthcare team member.

PERSONAL HYGEINE

Cleanliness shall be of utmost importance. All healthcare team members shall employ clean personal habits to include but not limited to clean neat hair, clean fingernails, use of deodorant, and of course showers or bath to control any body odor.

MAKE UP, COLOGNE, AND FACIAL HAIR

Make up shall always be minimal, with any make up being used in consistency with their race, color, sex, and skin tone. No beards or mustaches may be grown while working. Any facial hair should be kept short and neatly trimmed so to avoid contamination to the clinic environment. Any

cologne worn shall be minimal and not deemed offensive to others working with the healthcare team member.

HAIR COLOR AND LENGTH OF HAIR

Any hair coloring done should be in good taste being natural to race, and color. Extremes in dyeing, bleaching, tinting, frosting, streaking, and any unnatural hair color (platinum, beige, pink, green, blue, etc.) will not be permitted. Hair is to be worn in a natural style, close to the head. It should be neatly combed and attractively arranged. Those who prefer long hairstyles should take special care that it is neat and well groomed. If your hair is beyond shoulder length it should be worn pulled back in a neat fashion.

JEWELRY

Rings: A maximum of two simple rings on each hand is allowed, although one ring per hand is preferred. Wedding and engagement rings are considered one ring.

Bracelets/Chains/Wristwatches: one ONLY.

Necklaces: ONE ONLY and no extreme style.

Pins/Broaches: NO attachments other than the name tags on ANY UNIFORM. Unless approved by management. (Certain tasteful animal-like pins are acceptable)

Earrings: No large or extreme styles. Not more than two sets of earrings, with at least one set being a stud only—and the other not to exceed 1/2" in diameter, nor hang more than 3/4" from the ear.

FINGERNAILS

Men's fingernails not to exceed 1/8" from the finger tip.

Women's fingernails not to exceed 1/4" from the finger tip.

AFTER HOURS DRESS CODE

While on duty and working at Countryside Veterinary Hospital during after hours, the dress code will not be in effect. Clothes worn should be neat, in good repair and generally in good taste.

Each healthcare team member should take the responsibility for any litter or messes in or around the building or parking lot by simply handling it when noticed, or seeing that it gets handled quickly.

EYEGLASSES

Eyeglasses must be conservative in design. Sunglasses or heavily tinted glasses will not be permitted.

SHOES

It is the responsibility of the healthcare team members to furnish shoes. Closed-toed shoes are a must. Shoes should not be extravagant in style and should match clothing.

CLINIC TOURS

We are very proud of our facility and our healthcare team! We are very proud to get the opportunity to show off our facility to an interested client. But please check in the back treatment area first to insure area is free and presentable. It may be best because of surgery or other treatment to schedule another time. If so, please make an appointment with the client for the tour.

CORE VALUE OF POSITIVE ATTITUDE

BEHAVIORAL TRAITS

Be Communicative.

Our healthcare team must be able to answer questions, volunteer information and communicate knowledge to our clients and our fellow healthcare team members.

Be Conscientious.

Our healthcare team should assist clients with their pets. Minimize noise as much as possible. Report client's comments for future action and be alert to remember references to other clients or clinics. Listen for complaints from our clients. Do not allow a client to wait for service and make eye contact when you cannot speak to a client.

Be Considerate.

Always give the client the right of way. Excuse yourself when leaving the exam room or the presence of a client. Use words such as "please" and "thank you," "good-bye" and "good morning". Respect other healthcare team members' needs.

Be a Self Starter.

Start necessary jobs even if it is not part of your job description. Ask intelligent questions and volunteer suggestions to our clients and to the healthcare team.

Be Reliable.

We must make good on our promises in a dependable and accurate fashion in order to be reliable. Be on time for your scheduled shift and be thorough in work.

Be Willing to Accept Direction.

No one knows everything about everything. Utilize the knowledgeable people around you. Allow yourself to be open to constructive criticism from your manager, supervisor, and your peers and from our clients.

TIP: "Criticism should be a like a sandwich. If you want to motivate people, slip the criticism in between layers of praise." – *Henry C. Rogers*

"A successful man is one who can build a foundation with the bricks that others throw at him" – *David Brinkley*

PROFICIENT SKILLS

Abilities:

- Have natural inclination for serving people
- Well synchronized motions
- Neat in your work
- Able to concentrate amidst noise and confusion
- Possesses "loyalty" for the job because of interest in pets and people

Organization:

- Able to carry more than one idea or purpose in the mind at the same time
- Able to "catalogue" orders and plan work to save steps
- Reduces trips to and from exam room, reception area, treatment area, and pharmacy.

Promptness

- Energetic
- Quick
- Enthusiastic
- Active
- Readiness to act -- a "self-starter"

HOW TO CONDUCT YOURSELF IN THE HOSPITAL

Your Personal Conduct

- Be sure to walk quickly but never run in the hospital.
- Speak softly in the hospital.
- Smoking, drinking, eating will not be tolerated in the reception area or in view of a client
- Be alert and attentive at all times. Your hands should be at your sides not in your pockets or on your hips.
- Call your superior as soon as possible when you cannot be at work on schedule.
- Pay attention to the details in your respective role especially when administering medication
- Remember NO short cuts. This is a health care facility and excellent health care is our business
- Anticipate the doctor's needs.
- No cuss words or emotional actions in the clinic.
- Do not sit on or lean against the counter.
- Clean up your mess as soon as possible and definitely before leaving your shift.

You and Your Co-Workers

- Avoid unnecessary conversations with your co-workers
- Don't complain to other co-workers about work-related difficulties. They cannot change the problem. Go to your supervisor and/or the practice manager to resolve the issue.

- Never stand around in-groups.
- Always conduct yourself in a professional manner when interacting with other staff, to ensure smooth operation.
- Treat personnel as LADIES and GENTLEMEN.

You and Our Clients

- Always greet your clients, referring to the pet by name.
- Never argue in the hospital, especially with a client
- Do not count money or jingle coins in the presence of clients.
- Don't hurry your client.
- Always be courteous, even if you disagree with a client.
- Don't point in the hospital. Take a client to where he/she needs to go.
- Whenever there is a complication with a client notify the veterinarian immediately.
- A client should never have to request a service or vaccination.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Healthcare team member performance reviews will be conducted every 12 months by the Practice Manager. In judging performance, the Practice Manager will use the healthcare team member's job description, documentation of the healthcare team member's increased value to the practice, and increased responsibilities assumed or extra work performed which has resulted in extra workload for other staff or contributed to the growth for the practice. The Practice Manager and the healthcare team member being reviewed should sign the completed evaluation.

HEALTHCARE TEAM ACTIVITIES

ALL Staff is expected to be productive during their work hours, doing only those things that contribute to the function of the practice. Any other types of activities during working hours are not acceptable, such as running your own separate business, or soliciting clients for another business.

DATING CLIENTS

Sometimes a client would like to date a healthcare team member or doctor, and sometimes it is the other way around. Whichever direction it comes from, it would present problems for the practice, and IT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED UNETHICAL! This includes flirting in any fashion. We are here to provide a professional service to our clients. If a situation should present itself, it should be immediately discouraged.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF PATIENT RECORDS

Information discussed in your presence between the Doctor and the Client should be considered confidential. If a client relates information to you, you should pass it onto the Doctor, Practice Manager, or any appropriate Staff Member that may be involved in servicing the client and who would need the data, BUT NO FURTHER! Doctor/Patient information is confidential and should be considered as such.

ATTENDENCE AND PUNCTUALITY

All healthcare team members of Countryside Veterinary Hospital are expected to be available and present on their assigned workdays according to their work schedule and job description. Each healthcare team member is expected to be on time and ready for work at their appointed time.

Absence from their post is to be only excused by the Practice Manager or their immediate supervisor. A healthcare team member is to report herself/himself absent from work by notifying the Practice Manager or their immediate supervisor.

LEAVE POLICY

We offer Paid Time Off at Countryside Veterinary Hospital. After your 90 day evaluation you will begin to accrue hours. Employees who have worked for us less than 3 years will accrue at a rate of 1.5 hours per every 40 hours worked and employees who have worked for us more than 3 years will accrue at a rate of 2.5 hours for every 40 hours worked. 120 hours will roll over at the end of the year and anything over that amount will be paid out to the employee. Any money owed to the clinic will be paid back first and then a check will be written to the employee for 50% of what is left. We hope that everyone takes advantage of their vacation days and this is incentive to do so. If you are terminated or quit you will be paid 100% of your PTO.

BREAK POLICY

You will receive a paid ten minute break in the morning and in the afternoon. You are required to clock out for these breaks. Any time taken over ten minutes will not be reimbursed.

SMOKING POLICY

Out of consideration for our healthcare team members and our clients, and for the public relations image of our facility, SMOKING IS NOT PERMITTED in the building or in the company vehicle. Healthcare team members who do smoke are asked to do their smoking outside of the building. There are canisters provided for this. Do not throw/discard cigarettes elsewhere on the property. Smoking is only permitted during your break time or lunch time.

CELL PHONE USAGE DURING WORK HOURS

All personal cell phones will be shut off upon entering the building at start of shift. Calls/texts are not to be received or sent during work hours. You may use your cell phone during your breaks.

INTERNET USAGE

Internet has to be available at the clinic to run credit cards and many of our client education tools. It is not meant for personal use. You are allowed to use it while clocked out for break, on lunch, or after hours. Please refrain from personal use during business hours.

CONTINUED EDUCATION

Employees are encouraged to participate in CE, however it is on a voluntary basis. We will not require any employee to attend CE seminars. We will cover the cost of some CE seminars and other expenses such as hotel, travel, and some meals associated with these events. If attending CE causes you to miss a day from work you will be reimbursed for the hours that you would normally work on the day missed. You will be paid "per mile" for the drive to and from the seminar. CE paid for by the clinic will need prior approval by the doctors or practice manager.

We feel that attending these seminars increases your knowledge and helps you and us as a clinic stay on the cutting edge with what's new in our field.

CORE VALUE OF EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION

Communication not only means talking with our clients but also our written materials such as medical records, educational handouts, invoices, estimates and release instructions. How we communicate with our clients determines their perception of our quality of medicine.

Communication is a key factor to success with our clients and with our healthcare team.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Our choice in words is very important because it represents the image of our hospital and the image of our veterinarians. The goal for Countryside Veterinary Hospital is to have a professional healthcare team who communicates with our clients on a professional level in order that the client is instilled with confidence in our entire team.

.**Professional Verbiage**	**Unprofessional Verbiage**
"Welcome”	"Hi"
"Good Morning"	"What's Up?"
"Certainly"	“OK"
"My Pleasure"	“Yeah”
"Have a Nice Day"	“Un-Huh”
“Yes, of course”	“No Problem”
“It’s a pleasure to meet you”	“I don’t know”
“How may I help you?”	“Hang on”
“Could you please hold?”	“Kind of”
“Thank you”	“Pretty much”

It is very essential we communicate sincerely and speak from our hearts with a smile -- convincing the client that we care for their pet's well being.

<u>As a team, we must hold everyone accountable for changing our habits in our own personal communication while in the hospital.</u> Be open to your peers and your supervisors of reminding you to use professional verbiage. <u>These are not guidelines. They are required hospital policies.</u>

ADDRESSING CLIENTS AND DOCTORS BY THEIR SURNAME

Doctors should be addressed as "Doctor Last Name" in the presence of clients and within other professional environment such as seminars, over the office telephones and etc. Clients should always be addressed by their surname as well.

THE ART OF COMMUNICATING BY TELEPHONE

Clients expect and often demand excellent service at all times. In our world of instant communications, satisfying those clients is a challenge. To meet this challenge, our healthcare team must possess not only content/product knowledge, but superior interpersonal communication skills as well. When a client is in crisis, the correct telephone response may be the one opportunity to create or keep a satisfied client.

Every healthcare team member will answer the telephone when required. The way you handle the telephone reflects on you and the hospital. These guidelines will help you project individual professionalism and an overall image of professionalism for our hospital. The most successful approach to telephone usage is to place importance on the client, not on ourselves. Always be courteous and helpful so the client will feel good about calling.

YOU AND YOUR VOICE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

- **Your voice** reflects your attitude and enthusiasm. Project interest and energy with your voice. Add depth and volume to your conversation. Make the choice to project a positive, upbeat attitude. The telephone is an important tool in our hospital and not a nuisance. Show a sincere desire to help people when they call.
- **Your pace of speech** is the tone and inflection and it should vary to emphasize good or bad news, serious or funny comments.
- **Your clarity** reflects how fast or slow you speak. The normal rate is 120 words per minute. Speaking faster than this rate can make your words difficult to understand: speaking too slowly can make it difficult for the client to follow the conversation. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly so you can pace your speech and sound calm. This technique improves client understanding and encourages clients to ask all the questions they want.

HAVE A HELPFUL, FRIENDLY ATTITUDE

Smile with your voice; give yourself a second before answering the phone to smile with your voice. It is difficult to be harsh when you are smiling. Show that you are interested in being helpful. The client should think you’re giving them your total, undivided attention. Personalize your conversation by using the client's name.

BE CONSIDERATE AND DIPLOMATIC

Use phrases of politeness such as "Please," "Thank you," and "You're welcome." Be a good listener. Do not interrupt the client while she/he is speaking. Be flexible, acting skills… the call could be an emergency, a euthanasia, etc. Avoid extravagant claims or obvious exaggerations. Never say “no” to a client. Instead rephrase it in way that explains what we CAN DO.

TREAT EVERY CLIENT VALUABLE

Be cooperative and useful. Make the client feel he/she is getting your personal attention. Be careful not to convey impatience. The client doesn't know it may have been a bad time to call. Dealing with clients in a professional manner helps establish trust, respect, and confidence.

HOW TO USE THE TELEPHONE

Placing a Call

Identify yourself when you place a call. It is courteous and saves time. There are 4 lines coming into the hospital. Line 3 is to be used for outgoing calls to clients or for outgoing personal calls. Line 4 can be used for incoming personal calls only. DO NOT call clients from this line!! Please, have your personal calls come in on line 4 to leave the first three lines open for clients. Also remember that line 4 is the fax line, so keep your personal calls short. Remember how important it is for our clients to be able to reach us when needed!.

Screening Calls

To ask "May I ask who is calling" is the most awkward way to screen a telephone call. Remember, the most successful approach is to place the importance on the client.

But sometimes calls must be screened. The person for whom you are answering which usually is the doctor does not always have time to talk to every client, especially if the client could be helped by you or technician. Our objective is to successfully screen calls without putting down the client. So when you screen calls, never ask who is calling before you tell the client whether or not the person being called is available. The key word is available. If the person being called is in the office, but does not have time to talk, he/she is not available. If the person cannot be interrupted, he/she is not available.

And if there are certain people he/she does not want to talk to, the person is not available to those people.

Ask the client for name and telephone number only after you have said whether the person being called is not available.

Example:
Receiver: "Thank you for calling Countryside Veterinary Hospital. This is Stacy. How may I help you?"
Client: "Hello, may I speak to Dr. Adams please?" (You have no idea who is calling.)
Receiver: I'm sorry, Dr. Adams is not available. May I help you?"
Client: "No, you can't. I have to speak to Mr. Adams."
Receiver: "I'll be glad to ask him to return your call if you will leave your name and number." Also find out what it pertains to.

Handling the call in this manner saves Dr. Adams's time without making the client feel unimportant.

But what if the client is an important person who simply fails to identify himself?

Receiver: "I'm sorry, Dr. Adams is not available. May I help you?"
Client: "No, I have to talk to Bill; this is Felix Sanchez; tell him I called and ask him to call me

back."
(You know Dr. Adams would want to talk to Mr. Sanchez.)
Receiver: "Mr. Sanchez, Dr. Adams has asked me to interrupt him if you call. I'll get him for you."

There are some people you want to talk with no matter what. It is a good idea to give a list to whoever answers your phone.

By telling a client "I have been asked to interrupt him if you call," or "I know Dr. Adams would want to talk to you," you are placing even more importance on the client. By asking the client for his/her name after saying whether or not the person is available, you avoid making the client feel unimportant; by putting a call through after you have told the client the person is not available, you make the client feel even more important.

Placing the Client on Hold

Always ask the client if he/she would like to hold. Avoid the abrupt phrase "hold please." Let the client know how long it will take and ask whether he/she prefers to hold or be called back.

Update the client periodically (possibly every 30 seconds). Be as specific as you can be.

Example:

"Dr. O'Brien is on another line; would you like to hold?"

If the client agrees to hold, remember to return to the line and ask him/her if he/she would like to continue to hold.

Although it is preferable to complete business in one call, if information is required and some delay will occur, ask the client if he/she would like to call back, would he or she like us to call, or would they rather hold? For example:

"It will take a few minutes to locate the information. Would you like to wait, or may I call you back?"

If the client chooses to wait, return to the line every 15 - 20 seconds to inform the client of the progress being made. Check to see if the client wants to continue holding. For example:

"Mr. Smith, I'm still checking on that. Would you like to continue holding or do you want me to call you back?"

Progress reports assure the client that the call is receiving continued attention.

When you return to the line, address the client by name (if known), and thank him/her for waiting. For example: "Mr. Jones, thank you for waiting. I have that information now."

When a call comes in and you are on another line, ask the first client to hold the line while you answer the second call. For example: "Would you hold, please?"

Finish with the business of the second call immediately. If it cannot be done immediately, let the client know you will be right back. Take his or her name and number. Return to the first client and thank him/her for waiting, or apologize for the wait. For example: "Thank you for waiting," or "I'm sorry to keep you waiting."

If the telephone rings, and you are with another client, excuse yourself from that client and say: "Excuse me. I'll be right with you."

*Answer the phone by saying: "Thank you for calling Countryside Veterinary Hospital, Could you hold, please?"

Wait for the client to respond, thank them and put the call on hold and finish the business of the first client. Then, return to the client and say: "Thank you for waiting. This is (your name). How may I help you?"

Transferring Calls

When transferring a call to another location in the hospital, tell the person receiving the call that you are transferring and why. Giving them this information eliminates the need for the client to repeat the information and it saves time. For example: "Wayne, I have Mr. Smith on the line and he has a question about..."

Using the Intercom

When using the Intercom please try to call the specific area. For example, for hospitalized patients call the treatment area.

Assume a client can hear what you are saying over the intercom until the phone is picked-up. You may respond to Intercom without picking the phone up.

When someone calls your work area on the Intercom please respond to the person immediately if you can in a very polite but firm tone so that they will hear you.

Always use a very pleasant voice on the Intercom or telephone and use extreme courtesy when communicating with your fellow staff members. Always wait for a reply to make sure someone has heard you. If no one responds assume that they are either with a client and cannot respond or that they did not hear you. Please hang up gently or use to finger to avoid a loud bang over the Intercom.

Taking Messages

A complete message includes the following:

- Name of the client and his/her pet
- Account number
- Which doctor the note is for
- Date and time of the call
- Complete telephone number-even if the person being called already has the number (noted in computer)
- Any other information the client gives you (noted in computer)

Repeat the message to the client to make sure you have taken the message correctly and to give him/her the opportunity to check what has been told to you.

If someone is covering your telephone for you, be sure to pick up your messages. Do not expect the person covering your phone to bring them to you. If everyone is on voice mail, this is unnecessary.

Answering the Phones

Answer the telephone promptly, on the first ring if possible.

Smile when you pick up the receiver. A pleasant look will help assure a pleasant voice.

Identify yourself and our hospital name. Offer your assistance. For example:

Thank you for calling Countryside Veterinary Hospital, this is Jaime. How may I help you?

After being greeted, the client will usually tell you his/her name and what they want. Acknowledge the client's name and request. For example:

"Yes, Mrs. Smith, the doctor is in. I'll get him/her for you."

If the client does not identify himself/herself, ask if you may say who is calling. For example:

"Yes, he/she is in. May I tell her/him who is calling?"
(Don't say, "Who's calling?")

Using Good Manners

Be pleasant on the telephone. Your treatment of the caller may determine his/her impression of your hospital. Be professional. Remember we are here to be helpful to the clients. End calls with a pleasant "goodbye" or "thank you," not with a "bye-bye" or an "okie-dokie." And let the caller hang up first.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS AND GIVING INFORMATION ON THE TELEPHONE

Many of the calls you will receive will be clients who have perceived a problem with their pet. Get as much information as possible about the condition of the animal. Get the client's name and the pet's name. Find out how critical the situation is and how long the symptoms have persisted. Ask the following questions:

1. Species, Breed, Age, Sex
2. What seems to be the problem?
3. How long has this been going on?
4. Is the pet presently on Medications?
5. Are her/his Vaccinations current? Or, when was it last vaccinated?
6. Has the pet been tested for heartworm?
7. Does the pet stay inside or outside?

When a client asks about hours or how late we are open, give the client the complete information about our hours. For example:

"The practice is open Monday thru Friday from 7 AM to 5:45 PM, and Saturday 8 AM to Noon. We are closed Tuesday from 12 Noon until 2:00 PM for staff training. Patients are normally scheduled for care between 8 AM until 5:00 PM, and 8 AM to Noon on Saturday.

When a client asks the price of a service, respond by telling them what the service includes, and then cite a price. If you quote the amount first, the client may decide he/she does not want the service before hearing what is involved.

For example:

"A bath and heartworm treatment includes (explain the service, for twenty-five." (It is not necessary to say "dollars"). May I make an appointment for you?" "Did you want to come in today? I'd be glad to make an appointment for you."

DEALING WITH A RUDE OR IRRATE CLIENT

98% of the time, things can be worked out and we can recover the client. We need to think of a complaint as an opportunity to learn something about what broke down so we can fix it and move on. 1 out of every 9 clients takes the time to complain when they are upset. Recovered clients are more deeply bonded to our practice. Follow these guidelines:

Seek First to Understand

Ask the client for their name and their pet's name. Immediately use their name and explain you're taking notes while they talk. Continue to ask probing questions and allow the client to vent.

Ask for Clarification

"Ms. Smith am I correct to understand the doctor only spent 2 minutes with you in the exam room. Summarize the client's position and concerns. Ask, "Is there anything else you would like to share?"

Show Understanding

Acknowledge their anger or frustration. Put yourself in the client's position. Offer empathetic understanding by saying "I can understand why you feel the way you do." You are not agreeing or disagreeing with the client. You are simply confirming that you have heard the concern. Even if the client is wrong, let them know you understand how they feel and, that you regret the inconvenience. If it is a matter that needs correcting, do so immediately or refer the matter to someone who can correct it.

State What Action Will Be Taken

Express a sincere desire to help. Tell the client exactly what you plan to do about the situation. Tell them how long it will take. If there is nothing you can do, explain that to the client. If the client is not satisfied with the action or inaction, and if they ask to speak to the veterinarian or the practice manager, let them do so. Thank the person for calling and ask if they are in need of further help.

Follow Up

Once you have assured the client the situation will be taken care of, follow up to make sure it has been. If a problem will take longer than you thought, call the client back and tell them. Keep them updated. In some cases you may need to call the person to be sure they are satisfied with the action that has been taken. Inform the veterinarian or practice manager of any major or recurring problems or complaints.

TELEPHONE SHOPPERS

Often as a healthcare team member, we are so busy there is little time to think about our job and how it relates to the overall success for the practice. Sometimes, those who spend much of their day on the telephone talking to outsiders do not consider their jobs to be very important. The fact is that anyone regularly involved with clients has one of the most important jobs in the practice.

Superior client service is a strategic choice for attracting and retaining clients. It impacts every area of practice including the telephone. Client service is more than just answering the phone by the third ring, providing the information and smiling for clients. It means going out of your way for them, doing everything possible to satisfy them and making decisions that benefit them.

Marketing our services, our team and our facility is a vital ingredient to turning a shopper into a new client. Marketing is simply providing the client with sufficient information about the facts and benefits of what we can provide that they will desire to accept our recommendations

The following will help you successfully market our service & products:

Know What We Offer

Know the facts and benefits of what we can provide – both services and products.
(Educate Yourself)

Know What the Client Wants and Needs

You get this information by asking questions and listening to the client.

Really Listening and Displaying a High Energy Level

Enthusiasm is the best attitude when trying to convince someone of the possible benefits.
(Educate the Client)

Believe in What We Offer

Believe you are doing what is best for both the client and the pet.

Know Your Limits

If you don't know the answers to questions, ask someone who does.

Our goal is to help the client make better "buying" decisions. Few staff members have a background in sales and marketing, yet the success of our hospital depends on marketing our services. Therefore we must all learn the fundamentals of marketing.

Dialogue

1) Greet the client as usual, and then listen to question.
2) Before answering the question, obtain information about the pet - especially the pet's name.
3) Tell the client what Countryside Veterinary Hospital has to offer and describe why we are unique.

4) Tell the potential client why she/he needs our services and how we will help solve the problem at hand and help the pet in the long run.
5) Tell her/him an estimate of how much this will cost, but keep low emphasis here.
6) Allow the potential client to decide that Countryside Veterinary Hospital offers value.
7) Schedule the appointment.
8) Reinforce the value we offer by assuring the client she made a good choice, i.e.:

"We're looking forward to seeing you and Fluffy on_____ and repeat appointment time."

It is vitally important that everyone here understand this sequence must be done exactly and completely in this order. If you tell the client only the price, or discuss price first, she/he will make her/his decisions based on fee alone, without considering benefits.

IF TIME IS NOT AVAILABLE AT THE MOMENT TO TALK TO THE CLIENT:

Get Permission To Call Back: Ask for their telephone number explaining that you will have some time in a few moments to talk if they will allow you to call them back. Explain to the caller you want to give them quality time to explain our services and the needs of their pet.

Have Estimates Ready: Call them back with the estimate for the procedure in question. Sometimes shoppers just want to find out the price so they know how much money to bring.

Offer to Mail Information:

An excellent follow up for those few clients that will not schedule an appointment (those who have to "discuss it with their spouse") - ask for the address and volunteer to put together some information on the subject discussed to mail to them. Include with this information a short note or card thanking them for the opportunity to discuss their pet's health with them. This must be done immediately following the conversation in order to be effective.

Asking the potential client to schedule an appointment - and offering one for the next day - conveys convenience. Suddenly, the estimate quoted represents much more than a "shot" for her/his pet.

Follow through is very important. When this client comes in, she must be given the value promised. Remember – under-promise and over-deliver. Remember, only 13% of the population on the average is looking for price only leaving 87% that are somewhat discerning. Hopefully once the shopper sees our very professional practice providing excellent care, they may very well become a loyal client referring additional new clients to our hospital.

Telephone Rules

A few more rules to remember for telephone manners:

1) Never let the phone ring more than three times - everyone should be aware of the telephone at all times.

2) Do not put someone on hold and then forget about him or her.

3) Always ask the client's permission to put them on hold.

4) Always put them on hold - do not ask a question of someone else by putting your hand over the receiver.

5) If you need to call a client back, do so in a timely fashion. That means the same day!

6) Follow up on your messages to others.

7) Tell client's your name and the name of the person they will be speaking with - use their name and their pet's name in your conversations with them.

APPOINTMENTS

Recording Appointments

Our hospital operates on an appointment scheduler. Appointments are made for all services including exams, vaccinations, surgeries, animals being dropped off, (if possible), and picked up, consultations, boarding and grooming. We will accept "walk-ins" and work them in the best we possibly can. The "Urgent Care Fee" needs to be explained to the client. Therefore, we do not want to encourage clients to not make an appointment before coming to the hospital. This allows us to plan our day so that we might provide our clients with the best possible service.

Outpatient Appointments:

Scheduling Outpatient Services

Out Patient Services Scheduled	Allotted Time
Canine Exam/Vaccinations	45 minutes
Feline Exam/Vaccinations	30 minutes
Sick/Injured Pet (?)	45-60 minutes
Recheck Exam	30 minutes
1st Puppy Exam	30 minutes
1st Kitten Exam	30 minutes
2nd, 3rd, 4th Puppy Visits	30 minutes
2nd, 3rd, 4th Kitten Visits	30 minutes
Nail Trim	
Suture Removal	
Collecting Blood work	15 minutes
Release of Routine Surgery Patient	
Euthanasia with Client Present	45 minutes

Examples of Setting Appointments

Regular Client/Pet-Outpatient

Countryside Veterinary Hospital Employee (CVHE): Thank you for calling Countryside Veterinary Hospital. This is _____. How may I help you?
Client (C): I would like to make an appointment.
CCE: Certainly. May I have your name and you pets name?
C: My name is Mrs. Smith and my dogs' name is Fluff.

CCE: Thank you Mrs. Smith. What does Fluff need to come in for?
C: Fluff need to have his shots for this year.
CCE: Great Mrs. Smith, what day did you have in mind to bring Fluff in?
C: I would like to come on Thursday if that is OK.
CCE: Yes ma'am Thursday would be great. I have a 10:10 appointment or a 3:20 afternoon appointment.
C: I would like to come in the afternoon but I don't get off until 4:00. Could I come in at 4:30?
CCE: Yes ma'am that will be fine. We will schedule Fluff for a canine annual and an update on Fluff's HWP.
C: What is that and what does it cost?
CCE: A canine annual consists of a physical exam by the doctor, a rabies vaccination, and a distemper-parvo vaccination. We also include an intestinal parasite test and a heartworm test. The cost for all these services is $------. The HWP will be extra and the cost depends on Fluffs' weight.
C: Okay, that will be fine.
CCE: Great Mrs. Smith, we will see you and Fluff on Thursday at 4:30!

Regular Client-New Pet-Outpatient

CCE: Thank you for calling Countryside Veterinary Hospital. This is _____. How may I help you?
C: I would like to make an appointment for my new puppy.
CCE: Oh! A new puppy, how exciting! Could I get your name, please?
C: This is Thelma Jones and Joe is my other dog.
CCE: Great Ms Jones, I have located you in the computer. Please give me your new pup's name, age, and breed and I will get the information into the computer.
C: Her name is Chance and she is a min. poodle. She will be 6 weeks old on Sat.
CCE: I bet she is a cutie! What day do you want to bring Chance in for her new puppy exam?
C: How about Saturday?
CCE: That would be fine. I have a 10:00 opening. Would that be convenient?
C: Yes, that will be fine.
CCE: Wonderful! We will see you and Chance on Sat. at 10:00.

New Clients

CCE: Thank you for calling Countryside Veterinary Hospital. This is _____. How may I help you?
C: I would like to make an appointment for my new puppy.
CCE: Oh! A new puppy, how exciting! Could I get you name, please?
C: This is Thelma Jones
CCE: Great Ms Jones, however I don't find you in our computer, have you been to Country Clinic before?
C: No this will be my first visit.
CCE: That's wonderful! We are so happy you have decided to come to our clinic and we look forward to having you as a client. We are a wonderful clinic that offers a full range of services as well as boarding and grooming. Let's get you scheduled for your first visit. How old is your new puppy and what is his or her name?
C: Susie is 6 weeks old.
CCE: Susie will get a full exam by one of our doctors and she will get her first set of puppy shots. We also recommend a fecal exam to be sure Susie doesn't have intestinal parasites. Our doctor will discuss heartworm prevention, nutrition along with other topics that will ensure a long and happy life for your new puppy. What day do you want to bring Susie in for her first visit?
C: How about Tuesday.
CCE: We could see you at 9:30a or 2:30p, which one would work best for you?
C: 9:30a would be best.
CCE: Great, we look forward to meeting you and Susie.

Drop Off / Surgery Appointments

Surgery/Drop Off-Regular Client

*Client calls to set up an appointment for a spay for their 5 month old kitten.
*Make sure the kitten has had all the boosters required at this age.
*Schedule the appointment for a day convenient for the client.
*Check the phone numbers on file and change if necessary.
*Ask the client to take up the kitten's food and water at 10pm the night before the surgery.
*Ask the client to have their kitten at the clinic between 7 and 7:30am the day of the surgery.
*Ask the client to allow some extra time to sign consent forms the morning of the surgery.

Surgery-New Pet

*Same as above plus….
*Go over the options we offer to keep the pet safe and pain free during and after the surgery as it may have been quite a while since they have had an animal undergo surgery.
*Get the information on the pet and get it in the computer so you can schedule the appt.
*Ask them to bring proof of vaccinations with them the morning of the surgery.

Surgery-New Client

*A new client will generally call to inquire about surgery prices.
*Go over the base price for the surgery. Also let the person calling know about the options we offer to keep the pet safe and pain free during and after the surgery, along with the prices for the extras.
*Talk with the person about the vaccinations that the pet has had. If the pet has not had the required vaccines then inform the caller of the vaccines required and the fees associated with them.
*Let the caller know that our concern is for the well being of the pet.
*Use the same procedures as above.

Grooming

Grooming services are available Monday through Friday.

Boarding

Boarding services are available during open hours throughout the year. If a pet will be boarding during peak times of the year, request that the pet be updated on vaccinations at least 10 days prior to the boarding time.

Notify the client that the pet must be free of fleas and we ensure this by administering a Capstar to all patients. We also do a physical examination by a tech, fecal check (if needed), and feed prescription Purina food designed especially for the digestive system. If the client wants special food or medications they are notified to bring them along. There is an additional fee for giving medication (Premium).When the boarding period exceeds 14 days, we require the boarding fees be paid at drop-off.

With all information in the computer, schedule the appointment.

Sunday Pick-up

Sunday Pickup is offered as a service to our clients. There are a few rules to follow and make sure that the clients are aware of before they schedule to pick up on Sunday. The charges for all services must be paid for when the client drops off for boarding. The owners can not show up on Sunday and expect to pick up when it was not planned to do so beforehand. We do not do any financial transactions on Sunday. Animals that have had surgical procedures are not allowed to go home on Sunday because the proper staff will not be here to discharge them. And last but not least we are only open between 4:30 and 5:00p for pick-up. Staff will be at the clinic taking care of the other pets that are boarding at other times throughout the day but this is the only time for pick-up. The front door will be locked at 5 pm to ensure safety while letting out the other pets at the clinic and should not be re-opened to let additional clients in.

Boarding Scenario

CCE: Thank you for calling Countryside Veterinary Hospital. This is _____. How may I help you?
C: My name is Jack Smith. I would like some information about boarding my dog.
CCE: I will be happy to help you Mr. Smith. Have you ever been to our clinic before?
C: No, I haven't.
CCE: That's not a problem. What is your dog's name? (To develop a relationship)
C: Rover
CCE: And what breed is Rover? (To see what size accommodations and what additional services he may require)
C: Rover is a poodle.
CCE: I will go over our boarding options and we'll choose the one that best suits Rover. We have indoor runs for kenneling, and for exercise times we have outside concrete runs, grassy areas and/or leash walking available for Rover.
C: How many times a day will Rover be let out?
CCE: A minimum of 2 times per day.
C: Rover is also on medication and a special diet. Will that be a problem?
CCE: I'm glad you mentioned that. We actually have Premium boarding that was designed for special pets like Rover. For a minimal additional fee Rover will receive his medication. How long were you considering leaving Rover with us, Mr. Smith?
C: I need to bring him in on Fri the 9th and will pick him up on Friday the 16th.
CCE: Let me check those dates to make sure I have an opening then. (To check and to try to lock the client in). Yes, I do have an opening that week and since Rover is staying for 7 nights he will be entitled to a free bath on the day he goes home. You may also want to speak with our groomer, Whitney, about having him groomed on that day as well. She is really good. May I go ahead and book those days for Rover to board, Mr. Smith?
C: Yes, please do.
CCE: Okay, I have Rover scheduled from Friday the 9th until Friday the 16th with a free bath on the 16th. Is that correct?
C: Yes, that's correct.
CCE: Mr. Smith, for the safety of Rover and all the pets staying with us we do require that their vaccinations be current. I would be happy to call your previous vets office and have them fax over his records.
C: What shots is he required to have?
CCE: We require that within the past 12 months they have had a Distemper-Parvo and Rabies. We also require that they have a Kennel Cough vaccination within the last 6 months.
C: Rovers' shots are due next month anyway so can we do them while he is there?
CCE: Certainly! What we recommend is called a Canine Annual, and it consists of a physical exam by one of our five veterinarians, the rabies and distemper-parvo vaccinations, a fecal intestinal parasite test, and a heartworm test. By the way, what type of heartworm preventive is Rover taking?
C: He takes Interceptor.

CCE:We also offer that. Do you need directions to the clinic, Mr. Smith?
C: No. I pass by every day on my way to work.
CCE: Great! We will see you on the 9th and remember that our hours are 7 am to 5:45 pm M-F and 8-12 on Sat. We look forward to taking care of Rover for you.

NEW CLIENTS

New clients are the lifeblood of our practice when it comes to growth. They are to be extended every courtesy in an effort to get them to "know us".

We request that all new clients fill out the CLIENT INFORMATION SHEET kept on the front counter in reception. This is the basis for our information and central files. If the client is reluctant to fill out, please help the client to fill in the info sheet as much as they will allow. Make a note on the medical record for the Doctor to see, and he/she can explain the necessity for us knowing such information.

When a new client comes in the receptionist should find out from the new client how they came to chose us for their veterinary services and write in on the client info sheet.

CHECK-IN PROCEDURES

N.A.G.P.E.T.

N.A.G.P.E.T. is an acronym used to remind the healthcare team member of the major questions to be asked of every animal left at the clinic.

N -- New client? -- This is very important so that an Owner and Patient Registration Form can be completed prior to departure of the client. This is a good time for a regular client to make sure the address and phone numbers are current. You can also inquire of the status of any other pets the client may have in the file but that have not been here for a while.

A -- Accessories? -- This question and the proper handling of the accessories will prevent the most common mistake made in handling of a boarding client.

G -- Grooming? -- Check the pet for fleas and if they are present then a bath and flea treatment is in order. Ask the client if they would like their dog to be groomed prior to going home.

P -- Pick-Up? -- When will they pick up the pet? Be sure to find out if it is an A.M. or P.M. pick-up. This will allow all paperwork to be finished. Also the groomer will know when to have the pet ready.

E -- Emergency? -- This should clue you to get an emergency phone number. This may be a number to reach the owners. If the owners are not going to be available by phone, the number of someone that they trust with the care of their pet is recorded. This should also clue you to have them sign the release on the Registration form and on the Boarding form.

T -- Treatment? -- Is there any procedures that the veterinarian needs to do or any problem that the pet is experiencing that needs attention? Vaccinations, tumor removal, dental, ear flush. These require a Consent Form for sedation.

PRE-REGISTRATION-Boarding

For certain of our clients pre-registration is recommended during peak boarding times. In these cases a pet is made an appointment with the veterinary staff 7 to 10 days before the boarding appointment. This allows all the paperwork to be completed prior to the reservation. If indicated the patient will receive the physical examination in the presence of the client so that the thoroughness and care will be perceived by the client. The vaccinations are updated at this time so the immunity will be developed to protective levels by the boarding appointment time. Payment for hospital services could be done at this time eliminating the delay during checkout for these charges to be compiled.

The boarding client is a valued client that usually takes advantage of most of the services offered by our hospital. The following Pre-registration check-in procedure should be followed to insure an efficient transference of the pet while gathering all the information necessary.

Each morning, the Boarding appointment schedule is checked for appointments for the next day. Call each client to confirm the appointment. You may also do a "pre-check-in" which would involve completing the Owner and Patient Registration Form and Boarding Information Form and confirming the vaccinations.

Many times the client is rushed when leaving town. This fact makes our job more difficult and emphasizes the need for preparation prior to arrival of the client. Many clients that board with us are repeat clients who travel frequently. These clients may find it hard to accept the rigors of the questioning process that they are put through every time. Since these people are frequent travelers extra effort is made to have the paperwork ready and waiting. Asking the owner if the information from the last visit has changed and noting only the changes. This shows more client service and also makes our job easier.

THE MOST COMMON MISTAKE REGARDING A FREQUENT CLIENT IS ASSUMING THAT "EVERYTHING ON THIS PET MUST BE CURRENT THEY ARE IN HERE ALL THE TIME".

<u>This emphasizes the need to be consistent in record checking and confirmation of vaccinations even in the most frequently seen clients</u>. It is very embarrassing for a good client's pet to come down with "Kennel Cough" and it not be current on vaccinations. Our clients depend on us to take care of their pets.

CLIENT CHECK-IN

We want to greet all of our clients by name. We should also greet the pets by name. The first thing we do is to make sure the client knows we are glad that they are here. If a client feels that he is interrupting your day then he will be less likely to return.

The proper check-in procedure depends on foresightedness and preparation. The client record is in the proper location. The cage the pet will be staying in is clean and ready, the vaccinations are ready and the records are confirmed.

The client will usually bring the pet in with him to check in. As it is awkward to fill out paperwork while holding a pet, the pet should be taken first. (YES_NO<u>X</u>)

It is best to have the pet taken by a healthcare team member from the owner to the kennel or cage assigned to it.

If the pet is small and in the hands of the owner a healthcare team member or kennel person should gently take the pet into their arms in a loving but secure way.

If the pet is a small dog on a leash then the kennel person should have a slip leash available and place this on the pet. Picking the pet up at this time is optional. If the pet will allow the kennel person to lead it into the cage room then that is what should be done. If the pet resists the leash then the pet should be picked up and carried to the kennel.

If the pet is a large dog, the person should place our slip leash on the pet and attempt to lead him to the kennel. If the pet refuses then the staff member should stand there and wait until the owner leaves.

It is best for the pet in the above case is to allow the pet to watch the owner leave the building so that it knows the client is gone and not waiting for them. The owner is told: "Mr. Jones let us let Fido watch you leave so that he will know you are gone. Thank you Mr. Jones."

The owner must realize that we must sooner or later handle his pet if we are going to take care of him while he is away.

The client should be given the collar and leash of the pet to take home. The client is told that we have our own equipment and that the collar and leash are not necessary. The collar may become entangled in the cage, causing struggling and potential damage. If a leash is admitted with a pet it is labeled and placed in a bag and the bag is placed in a location that anyone can find. The location is marked on the cage card and chart.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD A LEASH BE HUNG ON THE OUTSIDE OF A CAGE OR LEFT ON A PET WHILE IN A CAGE.

If the client is a new client then have the clients complete the "Client Information Form." You must be sure the client has signed the form and that the pet information is correct.

This form includes diet and it should be mentioned that we feed Purina prescription foods. Occasionally a food change may cause intestinal upsets or refusal to eat.

If they are feeding a commercial grocery store food then Purina food should be recommended on checkout and a sample sent home along with literature demonstrating the advantages of Purina food.

The vaccination information is checked and confirmed. The client should have written certification of vaccinations or a telephone number of a vet that you could confirm vaccinations with while the client waits.

The medications recorded on the form are recorded on the boarding sheet and on the client record. The medications are also recorded on the cage card for administration purposes.

The "Boarding Grooming Information Form" or "Authorization for Medical or Surgical Treatment Form" is completed with all questions being asked on the form! Use the N.A.G.P.E.T. format to help remember all pertinent data.

The pet is checked for fleas prior to the client leaving. Any fleas or flea dirt will be brought to the attention of the client. "Mr. Jones, Fluffy has signs of fleas so we will need to give him Capstar right away." Flea control is discussed with the client and a recommendation that the house and yard be treated while the pet is here.

The client is asked to sign the release at the bottom of the boarding form.

The check-in person shall mention the grooming services. "Mr. Jones. Would you like Fluffy to be groomed prior to going home? Our groomer is excellent and I am sure you will be proud of the way they will make Fluffy look.

Requested grooming services are booked with the Groomer by the person checking in the pet. There is a notation made regarding the location of the pet in the Boarding Kennel so the groomers will be able to easily find the pet for grooming. The appointment is made for the morning of the pick-up date if pick-up is to be in the afternoon. This procedure is mentioned to the client so they will understand that if they arrive here unscheduled the pet may not be groomed.

The groomer needs to talk to the client in person or the directions on how they would like the pet groomed should be written down by the receptionist.

Any other bits of special knowledge about the pet are gathered at this time. Such as the pets' birthday or that the pet smiles when a treat is given or the pet may shake hands or any special trick or command the owner may have taught him. These are recorded for mention at the checkout time.

The charges are discussed for the boarding, grooming, and veterinary services so there will be no misunderstanding at the time of checkout.

The requested services such as vaccinations and doctor checks are entered in the computer schedule under Drop Off and noted that the patient is boarding so the staff will know where to find the pet when services are ready to be performed.

The veterinary services requested should also be placed on the Treatment Board so that the hospital staff can attend to the prescribed needs of that pet.

Bordetella vaccination is done orally at check-in time by the person admitting the animal for boarding or grooming.

The cage card is filled out with the owner's wishes and instructions and placed on the cage of the pet. An identification band is placed on each pet to include the client's name, pet's name and any other pertinent information.

The medications, heartworm preventative, food, treats, toys, blankets, are labeled and placed in the appropriate location so that anyone can locate them at checkout time.

NEVER TRUST THE OWNER'S COLLAR OR LEASH.

NEVER DRAG A PET ON A LEASH IN FRONT OF A CLIENT OR ANYWHERE ELSE FOR THAT MATTER.

The person who checks the pet in should enter the vaccinations needed and services needed and initial them for further input.

The vaccinations needed depend on the species and age of the pet and also, on the past vaccination history of the pet. If the vaccinations were given here, then records should be present in the client's computer file.

If the vaccinations were given by another veterinarian:

1. Written vaccination record from that veterinarian is needed. Or, telephone confirmation of vaccination records.

2. The confirmed vaccinations are updated in the computer and the vaccines are placed into recall so that a reminder will be sent to them at the appropriate time.

3. If the vaccine records cannot be confirmed at check in time, the pet owners are notified that the records will be confirmed and any past due vaccines will be administered at their cost.

4. If the pet is a dog then the Bordetella vaccine is given orally when the pet walks in the door.

When calling another animal care facility for vaccine records, be friendly and courteous. State your name and that you are with “your clinic name” and that you need vaccination records on the pet belonging to the client in question.

1. Check dates of vaccination as they may not require the same vaccination interval as we do.
2. Check to see that the Bordetella vaccination was an intra-nasal/oral variety and given in the past six months.
3. Check to see when the last fecal exam was done and if there is any history of parasites.
4. Check to see when the last heartworm check was done and if it was an occult or a filter test and check if the pet is on heartworm preventative. Ask if there has been any serious medical problem that we may need to know in boarding this pet. Thank the person you are talking with and record all the information in the chart, computer and the Boarding Form.

If the Bordetella vaccine was given and the pet was already current on this vaccination, then the client is not charged.

The vaccine is recorded in the client’s file and the charge is zeroed out to place the vaccine into recall.
The clients are told this vaccine would not harm their pet if it is not due at this time and may in fact, help him prevent any disease.
The client should be assured that our primary priority is not in charging them but in the protection of their pet. We always have their pet’s best interest in mind.

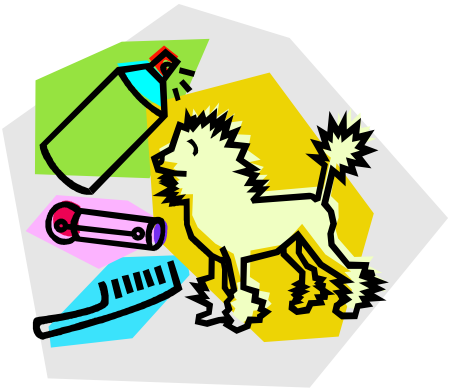
If the vaccinations cannot be confirmed because there is no record of the vaccinations here. Or, there is no way of promptly reaching the other health care facility (e.g. weekend or holiday and the other clinic is closed for the next few days), then, the vaccinations must be administered to the pet to protect him as best as possible.

A note to the client from the technician is in order at this time. The note should read:

Dear Mrs. Jones,

We were not able to confirm Fluff’s vaccinations. These vaccinations are very important to protect Fluffy during his stay here at the boarding kennel. Because our primary concern is the well being of your pet, we have administered the vaccines to Fluffy. This will in no way harm him if the vaccines were not due at this time but, it may protect him from the diseases that others may pass to him during his stay here. Our vaccination policy is strict to protect all animals boarding here but we are not trying to force you to pay for vaccines already administered elsewhere. If you can show us proof of current vaccination, there will be no charge to you. We have your pet’s best interest in mind and hope you will understand our position as pet health care providers. Thank you for your trust and business.

Sincerely,
Jane Doe



IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE FOR A HEALTHCARE TEAM MEMBER TO TAKE IN A GROOMING PET WITH THE ONLY INSTRUCTION BEING;

"THIS PET NEEDS TO BE GROOMED."

The healthcare team member should recommend that the client talk directly to the groomer. If the groomer is not available to talk directly with the client then the healthcare team member should get a phone number from the client or have the client call back at a time that the groomer will be available to talk to him.
If the client will be out of town or not available then he must be told that you will do your best to communicate to the groomer his desires but you cannot guarantee satisfaction with the clip.

All animals that go through the grooming department are treated the same. That is; we will comb out the mats if present, pull the hair from the ears, and clean the ears, trim between the toes, clip the nails, and express the anal glands on all pets. A pet cannot be dropped off for a "bath" without this conditioning first. It is damaging to the hair coat, ears and feet for water or shampoo to be applied prior to the conditioning process. If not done this way the mats would become worse, the ears may become infected, the delicate skin between the toes may be irritated or the anal glands may express over a freshly cleaned pet.

A "Bath" includes combing the hair, clipping the nails, cleaning the ears, and expressing the anal glands along with a bath. A flea treatment is given if indicated. All animals that are left in the clinic for any reason get brushed out, and perfumed before going home.

CHECKOUT PROCEDURES

The checkout procedure is the last chance we get to make a good impression. A good last impression insures the client will return in the future, refer other clients to us, and feel good about using out services. The secret to a smooth check out procedure is preparation.

CAGE AND MEDICATION CARD

The "Cage Card" is the most convenient way of addressing the immediate care instructions to the kennel personnel. The cage card should be completed during the check-in procedure and to note any obvious Medical problems. Use stickers to notate special food, pet carrier, certain medical disorders, surgery, etc.

TREATMENT PROCEDURE BOARD

The clinic procedure board is used to communicate to the doctor and technicians the status of all animals in the hospital. Its use is usually restricted to animals that are present on an outpatient basis. This means they need to go home today or soon. Patients having procedures performed using the laser should be written in RED.

As a pet is admitted to the hospital for any reason it must be entered on this board. The location of the pet and the procedures are listed for the pet. For example:

H) "Buffy" Jones- Ck Ears, DHLP-P,

FK) "Jody"Sanders- Vomiting and Diarrhea

H) "Chelsea" GardnerTeeth Cleaning

FK) "R.J." Forer- Spay, CA, IVF, #2, PM , LASER

HOSPITALIZED PATIENTS BOARD

All patients should be added to this board after being admitted to the hospital. You should list what the patient was diagnosed with, a quick list of symptoms, treatments, that are being done, and your initials.

"Honey" Smith- Pancreatitis- V/D- IVF- JS
"Bo" Jones- Parvo- V/D- IVF/antibiotics- JS

ARK BOARD

All ARK patients that are not out on foster and are at the clinic for treatment/surgery should be placed on the ARK board as well as the treatment board. This helps us to keep track of which animals are at our facility and when they are ready to go back to the ARK. The ARK board has 4 sections- Surgery, Hospital, Treatment, and Ready to Go. The animal's ID # should be placed on this board in its appropriate spot and moved as needed to support proper tracking of its progress while here.

RABIES OBSERVATIONS

ALL dogs and cats admitted for Rabies Observations should be current on vaccinations to board for the required number of days. The DHLPP and Bordetella are given upon entry into rabies observation. The rabies vaccination is given upon exit and after the pet has been checked by a Doctor. The owner MUST PAY IN ADVANCE FOR THE RABIES OBSERVATION AND ALL VACCINATIONS.

HEALTH CERTIFICATE POLICY

When a client calls for an appointment or arrives at the hospital with the pet as with Drop Offs/Walk Ins, please get all the pertinent information to fill out the Health Certificate. A requirement for the country or state of destination must be checked so we will know what exactly is required for shipment. This way the Certificate can be filled out in advance of the Doctor, and this alerts the client that such information is needed. It certainly helps avoid confusion.

The Doctor must examine all pets to be placed on the Health Certificate. A Doctor can lose his accreditation if not done so. The original certificate goes with the client/pet(s), and the copies are mailed to the Alabama State Veterinarian's Office in Montgomery.

STRAY ANIMAL POLICY

We should if at all possible avoid keeping stray animals. As kind a gesture as it may seem, it costs large amounts of money in food and labor and takes up space for hurt, injured, or regular client's pets. If we must admit a stray, the following must be done:

Collect $50.00 adoption fee
Make sure animal is Healthy - NEVER PUT A SICK ANIMAL IN THE KENNEL
Give all vaccinations
Bath if needed and flea treat before putting in the kennel
Transfer all info regarding vacc on Cage Card

The ARK

The Ark is a no kill shelter on the out skirts of Huntsville. The founder Nina Beal has entrusted us with the care of all of her animals there. We feel very strongly about offering her animals the same quality of medicine and care that we do to all other pets that we see. We do everything we can to prevent disease in her facility and aid in the treatment of any illness. We do this all while trying to keep cost at a minimum for The ARK. There is a list of all procedures for The ARK at the end of this manual.

STANDARDS OF CARE

Setting Standards of Care is essential in both single and multi-doctor practices. These standards, once set, will enhance the consistency of care as well as provide for a more unified approach to patient care. This standard should be the standard of the Hospital – not the doctor.

WELLNESS PROTOCOLS

These protocols are used for healthy animals. They are the easiest protocols to standardize.

VACCINE POLICIES

A policy must be set and given to each staff member that has contact with the public so that there are not mixed messages from the hospital.

Vaccine Titer Testing

There is a concern among some clients that animals are being vaccinated too frequently. If we have a client that feels that way we can offer them an option. We can pull a blood sample for titers that will tell the level of protection that a pet has. Checking titers is more expensive than vaccinating but some clients feel it is worth it to know what their pet's levels are.

Types of Vaccines We Use

Rabies

An annual vaccination for Rabies is mandatory in Alabama. Procedures on how to answer questions about rabies vaccinations are addressed later in this section.

Distemper-Parvo-Canine

Our distemper-parvo vaccine actually has more in it than those two viruses. The vaccine for puppies contains distemper, adenovirus type 2(hepatitis), parainfluenza, and parvovirus. The vaccine for adult dogs and pups 12 weeks and older contains leptospirosis bacterin. This vaccine is given annually or titers checked annually.

Kennel Cough-Canine

The kennel cough vaccine we use is oral. This vaccine is also called Bordetella vaccine. This vaccine should be given at least every 6 months to be effective. This can be given to animals over 8 weeks of age.

FVRC-P-Feline

This vaccine is for feline distemper (Panleukopenia), rhinotracheitis, and calicivirus. This vaccine is given annually or titers checked annually. The initial series consists of at least 2 shots with one being given when the kitten is 12 weeks or older.

Feline Leukemia-Feline

This is to protect against the feline leukemia virus. This vaccine is given annually or titers checked annually. The initial series consists of 2 shots given 3 weeks apart. To start this vaccine requires a negative FeLV test.

FIV-Feline

This is a vaccine for feline immunodeficiency virus. This vaccine requires a negative FIV test. The shots initially are given in a series of 3 vaccinations given 3 weeks apart. After that it is an annual booster.

FVRC & FVRCP Intranasal- Feline

These vaccines are given to Ark cats on their first visit appropriately. These vaccines are faster acting than our traditional injectable FVRC-P. We feel that this is important since these cats will be going into highly populated area.

VACCINE POLICIES

Boarding, Grooming, Hospitalization Vaccination Requirements

For dogs
Requirements for boarding include rabies (if old enough), distemper-parvo, and Bordetella.

Requirements for hospitalization are rabies (if old enough) and a distemper-parvo.

Requirements grooming/bathing are rabies (if old enough) and a distemper-parvo.

Requirements for surgery are the same as for grooming. Day board cases are required to have a Bordetella.

For cats
Requirements for cats for any clinic stay include FVRC-P and rabies. (Feline leukemia and FIV are recommended, in certain cases, but not required.)

Vaccination records from another clinic must be confirmed in writing or by us over the phone. Owner administration of vaccines is not accepted, as there is no control of the handling or method of administration to insure vaccine effectiveness.

The following is a discussion regarding some of the questions you may be asked by clients regarding vaccinations.

Client Questions Regarding Vaccine Policies

1) I know vaccines don't cost that much, I can buy them in the feed store and give them myself.

There is little to do with the cost of the vaccine itself that you are paying for: We must train our staff as to which vaccine is effective for your pet. We must know the proper interval to give the vaccine (every week? month? six months). We must know the proper method of administration (sub-cutaneous, intramuscular, and orally) and to be sure it is not given intravenously or intradermally by mistake. We must be present if an allergic reaction happens so that emergency therapy can be administered. We must know that the manufacturer is reputable and maintains

good quality control and that the vaccine is correctly handled up to the time it is administered to insure effectiveness. Our professional reputation and knowledge is standing behind every vaccination given and that is what you are paying for!

2) I gave the vaccines myself and here are the labels that were on the vial.

We cannot accept this as a vaccination as there is no control of the way the vaccine was handled (perhaps it got hot and inactivated) or the way the vaccine was reconstituted (mixing a live vaccine with a killed vaccine). The method of administration may not have been correct. The time of administration (If the dog had a fever or was stressed by disease, poor nutrition or parasites a good immunity might not develop). The owner is not able to be responsible for inappropriate vaccination should a mishap occur. If a veterinarian administered the vaccine then his reputation stands behind it. The other animals in this boarding kennel cannot be put at the risk of infectious diseases due to improper vaccination.

3) If all the other pets in here are vaccinated why do I have to vaccinate my dog?

All the pets in are vaccinated but the vaccine may have just been given today. Except for Bordetella, a vaccine takes 10 to 14 days to be effective and a contagious disease may still be transmitted to or from your pet.

4) My pet does not go outside and isn't around other pets and I have not vaccinated him in several years and he is fine.

Vaccines are administered as a preventative measure and as such need to be given on a regular basis to be sure that it is effective. If your pet has not been vaccinated then he is surely open for a contagious disease. All it takes is a stressful period and the presence of a virus or bacteria and he may come down with a problem. Your pet is being placed in a room with a high concentration of pets that may transmit a disease. Therefore, vaccination is very important, as we cannot take responsibility for a problem if it should arise from lack of vaccination. We cannot also control the disease that your pet may have and pass to another pet. Your pet may be an immune carrier showing no clinical signs.

5) My dog is pregnant. Can I vaccinate her?

Pregnant animals are delicate. Vaccination should be avoided if possible. When not possible such as in interstate health certificates requirements for travel or in areas of high disease probability such as parvo or Bordetella then killed vaccines should be used. These vaccines will have little effect on the fetus. The bitch should ideally be vaccinated at the time of breeding to be sure she passes good immunity to her puppies. Worming is also necessary and may be done with some medications during pregnancy but again it is better to do it before breeding.

6) My cat is an inside cat and therefore does not need feline leukemia testing and vaccination.

While it is true that we do not recommend vaccinating totally isolated cats for FIV it is very important that all cats have a test done for both of these diseases. Once a cat has had a negative test, if it stays inside and does not have any contact with any outside cats, then it has no risk of contracting feline leukemia virus or FIV. If there is any possibility that your cat may have any contact with other cats then it should be vaccinated for FELV. We highly recommend vaccinating for feline leukemia since the virus can be spread more easily than FIV. It could be contracted from a hiss through an open window or you never know when your little one might slip through the door as you are coming or going from the house.

8) My doctor at another clinic says that he has a vaccine that he can give my puppies that is half the price of your vaccines.

The thing that is important is the immunization of the puppy to protect him against disease. Just because a puppy is given a shot does not mean that he is protected against parvo and distemper.

The vaccines we use at Countryside Veterinary Hospital have been shown to provide immunity to very young puppies. The puppies are given immunity to them from their mother's milk. This immunity will inactivate any common vaccine given. The first dose of parvovirus vaccines are given to by-pass the mother's immunity. These shots must be given separately and are more expensive and again your are buying immunization not just shots. You are buying our professional opinion and reputation.

10) My dog has not been vaccinated for the diseases that you require such as Bordetella.

The Bordetella vaccine that we give is an oral product and recent evidence shows that the oral vaccine is superior to the injection. We have seen dogs with the injection Bordetella vaccine current to catch kennel cough while boarding. We require the oral or vaccine type of vaccine to have been administered within the past 6 months.
The DHLP has parainfluenza virus vaccine in it which can cause kennel cough but it is not the only cause and it is probably not as effective given as an injection. If it were given orally as we do at Countryside Veterinary Hospital it would be effective.

Preventive Care Policies

The vaccinations, fecal examination, and heartworm and feline leukemia tests are considered preventative medical care. The steps in completing these are as follows.

The client file is checked for current vaccinations and other services.

Heartworm infections are very common in the south year round due to the mild winters. In the upper Midwest they are more of a seasonal problem because mosquitoes are active only a short time during the warm months. Heartworm infections may be lethal if left untreated.
In canines the initial symptoms may be a persistent cough and lethargy. The disease will then progress to a point where the patient will loose muscle mass and gain a pot belly (ascites) due to fluid build up in the abdomen. At this point heart damage has been done and the kidneys and liver are also involved, resulting in congestive heart failure.
Heartworm infections in cats many times go undetected or may manifest as feline dyspnea, vomiting, or asthma. In other cases spontaneous death may result.
Heartworms also infect sea lions and humans. In humans the infection terminates early and the signs may be a spot on a radiograph of the lung or ocular dirofilarasia. This is rare.
Heartworm disease is very preventable but it requires owner compliance, which requires the staff to be able to educate them. The clinics focus is to educate and promote preventative medicine. By requiring testing to be done every year, we are catching the potential cases that fall through the cracks. Treatments are expensive and not risk free. By not testing, treatment may be delayed and cause more heart damage. The guarantee is dependant on 2 negative tests and yearly testing. Yearly testing is essential since monthly preventatives may fail because of incorrect dosage or medication (owner gave wrong medication), vomiting, compliance issues if medication was not purchased from a reputable veterinarian office. On-line medication is not recognized due to the inability to guarantee product contents along with package and handling. Heartworm checks are required every year of our current clients that wish to purchase heartworm prevention.

Distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parainfluenza, are highly recommended but required if staying in our facility yearly for dogs and feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, panleukopenia, are highly recommended but required if staying in our facility yearly for cats.

The Bordetella oral vaccine is required every six months and should be given as soon as possible after admission for boarding.

The services performed are placed in "recall". This will allow the computer to send a reminder to the client at the appropriate time that the services are due again. This will prompt a visit to the animal hospital.

The Heartworm test is done with 3 drops of heparinized blood and a snap test. Test will be ready for reading after 8 minutes. It will show if the dog is negative, low positive, or high positive. Results will be recorded in the lab log book and in the Idexx machine which will transfer into Avimark.

The feline leuk/fiv/HW test is done with 3 drops of heparinized blood and a snap test. The results are to be recorded in the Idexx machine which will transfer into Avimark.

The fecal test is done on a minimum of one fecal loop full of feces. The feces is collected at the time a dog defecated in the cage or outside or via a fecal loop. The fecal test is done with a fecalyzer that allows for more accurate mixing of the feces with the flotation solution. The fecalyzer is allowed to sit for 20 minutes prior to reading the results. If suspected in puppies less than six months of age a direct fecal smear is done for giardia or other protozoal infectious diseases that the flotation solution may destroy. The result of the fecal test is recorded in the fecal lab book and in the computer.

Positive fecal tests are brought to the attention of the veterinarian or tech for appropriate medications and deworming dates and will allow them to converse with the owner about treatment.

A positive heartworm test is brought to the attention of the veterinarian or tech. If the owner is not there then an appointment is made for explanation of heartworm treatment with technical questions being answered by the veterinarian or tech.

Vaccines are administered according to the directions of the animal hospital and the policies contained herein.

1) Vaccines are drawn in an aseptic manner with a new sterile needle and syringe.

2) The needle is kept clean and is protected by the needle cap prior to administration.

3) If the needle touches anything but the pet's skin during administration, it is discarded and replaced.

4) Subcutaneous injections are given where indicated for the particular vaccine or medication. The skin is lifted up with one hand and the needle is inserted into the tent formed by raising the skin. The skin is pulled over the needle quickly.

5) With the needle in the subcutaneous space the plunger is pulled back to check for blood. If blood is noticed in the syringe another spot is selected and the procedure repeated. If no blood is present the injection is given.

6) Any difficulty is reported to the veterinarian immediately. If the pet struggles or is Improperly restrained the injection may be given intra-dermal or intramuscular or even into the bone or cartilage. The needle could also lacerate the tissues under the skin. Vaccine related nodules under the skin are a result of improper administration technique.

7) Vaccines are given to ill animals, animals under anesthesia or sedation or to Pregnant animals only with approval of a veterinarian.

Any vaccines done are charged out on the clients' computer medical history screen.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

The physical examination, when done properly and documented with a communication tool such as an "Examination Room Report Card" or Type Written Exam from a computer is very powerful. Veterinarians learned to give a vaccination in one day and how to do a complete examination in 4

years. Exceeding the clients' expectations by giving them a complete physical examination with all 12 body systems typewritten and read aloud to them at discharge is a perfect way to add value to a practice.
The "All Body Systems Exam" is a tool for education of the client of the current medical status of the pet. This form tells the client what is normal about the pet as well as what is abnormal. For example: if the pet's teeth are clean and shiny and free of tartar at this time then the client is taught about the way the teeth should be. If later on the next exam the teeth are covered with tartar then the client perceives the difference. This educated client is more likely to request a dental on this pet than the uneducated client that thinks the teeth are supposed to be covered with tartar. The format of the exam allows a complete review of all the body systems of the pet. No system is forgotten and the results are type written and graphically displayed on the form. A client may remember the picture on the exam form of the tumor on the dogs' skin more vividly than the verbal description.

The veterinarian performs the physical examination and the technician records the results. This allows the technician to relay those results to the client at the checkout time.

A certain vocabulary and knowledge of certain common maladies is necessary to perform this function properly. These maladies and terms are taught in the training lessons.

The client is given a copy of the physical examination to take home for future reference. This copy will serve to remind the owner of the pets needs and that it was your clinic that brought those needs to the attention of them.

The physical exam form must be filled out accurately as it is a part of the permanent medical record.

The physical exam is a time consuming, expensive act that must be used to its full potential. The full value of the physical exam may be appreciated in several ways:

It is foremost a service to the health of the pet, allowing the pets' needs to be communicated to the client.

It is a yardstick by which the client can compare our service to the service of other animal care facilities. Many times this is the first full physical exam the pet has had and also it is the first time the client actually gets written proof of the exam done for the pet.

The full appreciation of the exam is achieved when the information on the form is read to the owner as the owner reads along. The technician should answer questions to the best of their ability.

The abnormal findings on the physical exam form should be handled in a positive manner. The attitude should be that the client cares as much about the health needs as we do. It is our job to inform the client of the pets' needs and to take the next step in the process of solving the pets' problem.

An appointment is made for the pet to solve this problem. For the example of a pet with dental disease: "Mrs. Jones, Fluffy has tartar on his teeth and they need to be cleaned, when we can make an appointment for this to be done?"

Testing Recommendations/Requirements

ROUTINE BLOOD SCREEN

We recommend routine blood screens on every pet of middle age or older. We use health screens as a tool for recommending prescription diets and other preventative care. We recommend a CBC and chemistry panel on all qualifying pets. We also recommend a thyroid screen on overweight and slow healing individuals as well as all geriatrics.

HEARTWORM TESTING

We recommend an annual heartworm test even for animals on heartworm preventive. We require a heartworm test yearly for continuation of dispensing preventive. An animal that is over 6 months of age and has not been on preventive must be tested before starting preventive. We do a snap HW test.

FELINE LEUKEMIA/AIDS/HW TESTING

These tests for fatal diseases should be done on any sick cat regardless of previous testing or vaccination status. The vaccines for these diseases are not 100% effective. The FIV (aids virus) vaccine may cause a false positive FIV test. Any unvaccinated cat should be tested before starting vaccinations against these diseases.

FECAL TESTING

We recommend yearly testing for those on Trifexis, Iverhart, Proheart, Interceptor or Sentinel. It is required on any animal with a history of vomiting or diarrhea.

"Puppy Rap" / "Kitten Rap"

The beginning of the relationship with the pet is the most important time. Starting with behavior training to avoid the most common cause of euthanasia behavior problems – such as destruction, house soiling or aggression are avoided. Other care issues are also addressed. A standardized "Rap" is given by a staff member to discuss the care of their new pet. Information regarding the clinic services is also given.
Puppy health care kits
Behavioral
Grooming Care
Vaccinations
Preventative Maintenance
Geriatric Protocols

PUPPY VISITS

First Visit
Exam, Fecal, Vaccines, HWP, Flea control, Diet, Insurance

Second Visit
Exam, Vaccines, HWP, Flea control (if needed), Behavior, Insurance

Third Visit
Exam, Vaccines (add Lepto), HWP and Flea control (if needed), Behavior

ANESTHETIC PROTOCOLS

The most important animal in the hospital is the animal under anesthesia.
"No Safe Anesthetics. Only Safe Anesthetists"

Monitoring Protocols

Anesthetic monitoring by a trained animal hospital technician throughout the induction, maintenance and recovery phases is the highest standard of care.

Pulse Oximeters

These save more lives than any other monitoring device. The Oxygen concentration of the blood is measured by measuring color changes of the red blood cells as they pass through capillary beds in the tongue and or ear. This is the single most important parameter to monitor.

Induction Protocols

There is much controversy regarding protocols of anesthesia. The most effective from a client service perspective is the one, which leaves the pet with the least "hangover". If a pet does not recover to the pre-anesthesia alertness then the clients' perception is that that procedure was "sure hard on him". The client is much less likely to consent to another routine procedure under these circumstances. Therefore, we do not use ketamine in dogs which may cause this "hangover" effect. I want the client to feel that procedure had no untoward effect what so ever. As a matter of fact I want it to appear as if the pet had a good time while here

Maintenance Protocols

Anesthetic gas comes in three varieties. Halothane, Isoflurane and Methoxyflurane. There are no good reasons to use any other than Isoflurane. It is not metabolized by the body and therefore only requires respiration to be eliminated and for the pet to wake up.

Gas – What type and Why.

Isoflurane gas is used as the primary anesthesia given to help keep the pet sedated during the procedure. This is an inhalant type of sedation that does not have to be metabolized by the internal organs for the pet to wake up it is just breathed in and breathed off.

Most important thing about the procedure is that the pet wakes up and does not have complications not how much it costs.

SURGICAL PROTOCOLS

A technician – not receptionist, does each surgical check-in – recommendations are made regarding pre-operative blood tests as well as cauterization for the surgical procedure. Post-Operative pain medications and I.V. Fluid Therapy is included with all surgical procedures.

PRE-SURGICAL PROTOCOLS

Blood Screen Pre-anesthetic

We recommend a blood test to determine the internal function of the organs prior to the anesthetic period. This test will help us to identify risk factors for disease processes and to make adjustments in the anesthetic protocol accordingly. This test is also recommended to help assess internal organ function that cannot be determined based on physical examination alone. Indications of internal organ function such as the liver and kidney function as well as the presence of infection or anemia can be determined. Patients 8 years and older are required to have at least a small chemistry panel ran within a month prior to any anesthetic procedure.

ECG

ECG screening to determine if the electrical activity is normal. Anesthetics accentuate existing arrhythmias and prior detection will help prevent anesthetic complications.

IV Fluid Therapy

IV catheterization and fluid therapy aid in maintaining blood pressure during anesthesia. IV fluids will also be used to help maintain internal organ function while under anesthesia by increasing blood flow as well as perfusion. Having direct vascular access also allows prompt response should complications occur. All surgical patients receive an IV catheter prior to surgery and fluids are ran throughout the surgery.

Pre-Operative Antibiotics

Injection of antibiotics prior to a surgical procedure has been shown to reduce post operative complications due to infections. The antibiotic we use stays in the system for 48 hours.

Pain Management

Pain medication is recommended for surgical procedures that are considered to be painful upon awakening from surgery. An injection is given prior to the surgery and is followed up with additional injections if needed and four days of oral medication.

SURGICAL PROTOCOLS

Protocols should be explained so the staff can relay the effort that goes into providing an infection free environment for the pet to have surgery. We require all personnel to have hat and mask and the surgeon to be fully gloved and gowned as well.

Sterile Procedures

Cap, Gown, Gloves, and Masks
Swaged on Surgical Needles
These needles are sharper and cause less tissue drag and irritation when used.
Sterile Materials / Surgical Draping
Using disposable materials is quicker and more effective. Anything that shortens the surgical time lessens the risk to the patient.
Wound Closure Types
Closure of all wounds should be made by sub-cuticular pattern if possible. This prevents external sutures from being prematurely being removed as well as gives a very cosmetic looking appearance that is pleasing to the client. This type of surgical closure fosters attention to detail and neatness in all surgical skin closures.

Post-Surgical Protocols

Surgical scrub, blood and debris is removed after the surgery and again just prior to animal being discharged. If a wound is leaking for any reason it should be bandaged per doctor's discretion. Clients do not like to see their pet bleed or to see dried blood or an unclean wound.

DIAGNOSTIC PROTOCOLS

Education of the pet owner as to the proper health care for their pet is a primary concern of our hospital. Unless the pet owner understands the reasons behind the recommendations we make he/she may get the wrong impression of our motives. We are People Who Care About Pets serving People Who Care About Pets. Our primary objective is the proper care of a pet not making the most money from a client.

We truly believe that if the pet owner is properly educated in pet health matters then the pet will benefit from better health, the client will benefit from a longer happier relationship and we will benefit from the service we offer. This is a classical Win, Win, Win situation where all can be happy.

We also believe that there is no short-cuts in excellent pet health care. Just as in everything else you usually get what you pay for:

We do not believe that we can diagnose a disease based on physical examination alone.

We practice medicine based on the problem-oriented approach. Each problem may have many causes to be ruled in or out. The diagnostics that we use include blood tests, biopsy, radiology, ultrasound, endoscopy, and second opinions from experts in the field. Many other veterinary facilities have the attitude that the way a disease is diagnosed is by trying a treatment and if it works fine... if it doesn't work then try something else. We do not practice in this trial and error manner. We believe the best way to treat a disease is to be able to call it by name and use a proven therapy to achieve the most effective result.

Paramount to this approach is the education of the client to the fact that any problem can have many causes. Many diseases may look the same on physical examination. It is impossible to determine the exact cause in many cases with out some form of testing that can narrow the list to a few possible diagnoses which allows for more accurate therapy.

To educate a client in this manner requires study and understanding of the problems. A Healthcare team member should spend as much time as possible learning the common maladies affecting our companion pets.

Two of the major tools in educating the client to the problems of a pet and the proposed plans for diagnosis and treatment are the "Release Instructions Form" and the "Physical Examination Form". These tools can help educate you, the Healthcare team member as well as the Client.

Release Instructions are made for each problem identified for a pet so the client can see the plans that are recommended. The Technician is responsible for communicating the contents of these forms to the client.

Blood Profiles

Recommend simplification of diagnostic test to those to be done on a sick animal versus those to be done on healthy animals. Feline Panel and Sick Dog profiles are comprehensive tests to be done on animals in which any problem has been identified.

Feline Panel

This is an extensive laboratory analysis of the blood to determine internal organ function. Information regarding the status of infection, electrolyte balance and blood cell counts are needed to fully evaluate this severe case. We also perform a Thyroid T4. This blood test also involves testing for the major viral and infectious diseases of cats including FeLV, FIV, and FHW. The panel also includes a Urinalysis.

Sick Dog Profile

This is an extensive laboratory analysis of the blood to determine internal organ function. Information regarding the status of infection, electrolyte balance and blood cell counts are needed to fully evaluate this severe case.

Needle Biopsy Cytology

Microscopic examination in order to determine the type and severity of disease. A determination of infection, allergy, or neoplasm as well as parasitic disease can be evaluated by examination of the cells. An in house cytology will be done to help determine if this condition is secondary to bacteria or allergic response. This is done with special stains in house to help determine the need to do a culture of the samples.

Allergy Testing

Used on dogs with severe atopic dermatitis as a prelude to antigen development.
Cure rate is 75%

Endoscopy

Using fiberoptic tubes to look into the body.
Usually requires anesthesia
Patient preparation may take 24 hours for enemas etc.
Uses include diagnosis for the following problems:

- Chronic vomiting
- Chronic diarrhea
- Chronic coughing
- Foreign body removal
- Nasal discharge
- Bloody diarrhea

Charges include those for anesthesia, biopsies, histopathology and medications.

Ultrasound

Most commonly used in pregnancy diagnosis and management.
Patient preparation includes a full bladder. Do not let animal urinate for 6 hours prior to ultrasound.
Non-invasive, non-painful diagnostic imaging.
Used on soft tissues such as bladder, liver, spleen, heart, eye, and kidney.
Not used on bones, lungs or air filled organs.
Does not require anesthesia
May be used to direct biopsy needles into masses or into organs
May be the only way to diagnose certain heart diseases

X-Ray

Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (O.F.A. Certification)
Used to certify animals free of hip dysplasia.
Usually required prior to breeding of large breed dogs.
Requires anesthesia for patient positioning
Charges include anesthesia and well as fees for mailing and fees charged by the O.F.A.

PHARMACY PRODECURES

DOCTOR CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

In order to dispense, prescribe or sell any prescription medications such as antibiotics, a Doctor/client Relationship must have been established. That is to say that the Doctor must have seen the pet for an exam. If it is a refill and the Doctor is not present, then the Rx is to be brought to his attention. □

HEARTWORM PREVENTION

Heartworm Prevention is considered a prescription medication and requires all the precautions above. If however a new client comes to us to buy heartworm medication, we may dispense the prevention if we call their previous veterinarian for the OK. The client will not be charged for the telephone call.

LABELS

All prescribed medications shall be placed in a child proof container that will have a label on it that indicates:
client name
pet name
date
client phone number
medication name
concentration of medication
amount of medication
administration instructions
doctors name
clinic name
address of the clinic

Every effort should be used to employ the computer program to print these labels to avoid errors and omissions. These labels are placed on all products that are dispensed. For example: a tube of panalog is placed into an amber pill bottle and the label is placed on the outside of the pill bottle.

Written Prescriptions

Prescriptions that are written to pharmacies must be signed and approved by the attending veterinarian. It is important to include the drug name and specify brand name or generic. The drug concentration, the number of tablets and the instructions for use as well as the number of refills available should be indicated. Prescriptions that are requested for purchase from on-line pharmacies are given to a Receptionist or the Practice Manager. All requests should be noted in the computer for future reference. Our policy is to match the price and mail at no charge if at all

possible. If client insist they purchase from on-line we will give a written RX if they are up to date on required protocols and charge a prescription fee. These are commonly requested by clients trying to save money on vaccinations or heartworm preventative.

Refills

Refills for prescriptions dispensed through the clinic can be made with the doctor's permission within 12 months of the last physical exam of the pet. If more than 12 months has lapsed since the medication was prescribed, re-evaluation of the case is required prior to medications being given.

Re-Order

Items will automatically be placed on the reorder list as they are used out of inventory. However there will always be times where the inventory count in the computer is "off" by the quantity that is actually on the shelf. If you notice that we are extremely low on an item it is your duty to inform the Practice Manager of this.

CONTROLLED DRUG POLICY

When a controlled substance comes in a shipment the packing slip is to be initialed by two people that it has been received and put away in the locked drug box.

CONTROLLED DRUG LOG

All controlled medications are to be logged according to AAHA standards, State & Federal laws, and DEA regulations in one folder.

LABORATORY PROTOCOLS

Frozen cool packs

Are saved from vaccine shipments that come in.
Are included in the mailing of most lab samples to be tested.

Blood Screen Information

Explains to Client the components of CBC and chemistry tests done and the significance of abnormal values.
- Should be sent to Client with any Blood screen results that are mailed to them.

Allergy Testing

5cc of serum are separated from the blood and sent in special tubes that are provided along with detailed history form that must be completed by the client.
- No refrigeration is necessary during shipping.
- May be sent by regular mail in packaging provided.

Blood Collection Techniques

- Blood should be drawn from the jugular vein only with a 20-guage needle.
- Red top tubes should contain 2cc minimum.
- Purple top tubes 1cc minimum.
- Place blood into tubes after stopper is removed and not through stopper with a needle.

Culture and Sensitivity

Bacterial cultures are usually collected with sterile technique on a culturette.
- Request form should be completed to indicate aerobic culture and sensitivity
- Anaerobic cultures or cultures without sensitivities should be by Dr.'s orders only.

Referral Laboratory

-Special Requests Tests
- Must complete fully and mailed with Acct. No. (on front of Lab Form Book).
- Request that Dr. provide history to be sent with sample.
- Usually sent with frozen cool pack.

Histopathology

- All tissue removed from a pet should be saved until the Dr. is consulted regarding samples to be sent to the Lab.
- Tissues greater than 1cm in thickness should be cut to allow the formalin to penetrate it completely. Tissue that is collected for microscopic examination is sent to the Lab in special jars filled with formalin solution that is provided by the lab.
Histopathology of one tissue such as the skin, lung, liver, is charged as 1 histopathology - Multiple tissues will have additional charges; therefore bill "Histopath-Multilpe Tissues" to the Client.
- A separate charge for collection of sample listed as "Biopsy" is charged.

Laboratory Pick-Up

- Prior to giving lab samples to the courier all techs' should be asked if there are additional samples that should be taken at that time.

EUTHANASIA PROCEDURES

Prior to any pet being put to sleep the client must sign permission on the euthanasia form. This form has three major purposes:

1) Assures that the person signing the form owns the pet and has the permission to put the pet to sleep.

2) It signifies that the pet has not bitten anyone in the past ten days or is a threat to rabies transmission.

3) That it will not hold our clinic liable for performing the task. In a practical manner, the euthanasia form is also used as a means for allowing additional contact with the patient owner in order to offer counseling, instructions for disposition of the pet's body, and to arrange payment for the outstanding charges that may be owed.

Every effort should be made to resist faxing this form for signature because of the above mentioned reasons.

Services that are provided for pet disposition include:

The client may take the pet home

Disposal of the pet in which the pets are cremated (communally or privately) are by a service we employ

DECEASED PETS

Anytime a pet should become deceased while under our care, or a client informs us by phone, personal communication or by letter that a pet is deceased; it is paramount that all records are updated to prevent reminders from being mailed out. Two things must be done:

1. Computer File Updated : Place a D in the Status Section of the Pet Information Display to indicate Deceased - See AVIMark Instruction Booklet

2. A sympathy card written: The attending Doctor using our Sympathy Cards bought specifically for this purpose. The sympathy cards are filled out every week in the client service meetings.

MEDICAL RECORD

All healthcare team members who deal with pets and clients are responsible for maintaining all Medical Records in an accurate, thorough, and timely manner. Good record keeping can help prevent mistakes and can help enhance good client relations. All information must be recorded clearly so that another person unfamiliar with the pet could assume treatment or service and have the information readily available. By keeping accurate and thorough records, we can assure clients of continuity when more than one person is working with their pet. Records are maintained in the computer.

Physical Examination Form (REPORT CARD)

This form is the central focus in the pet visit. Off it spins the major medical problems and the release instructions for those problems. This form is now computer generated.
This form is what separates us from many other veterinary hospitals. It allows us to communicate to the client the health status of their pet in verbal and graphic form.

To use this form properly is to leave an image of the pet's problem in the mind of the client. Notations in graphic form to represent flea allergy, tartar etc. are seen by the client and remembered long after the verbal description has faded. Highlighted images are even more effective. These drawings should be on every examination form to personalize the form and take the "computer generated image" away from it.

Every effort should be made to insure correct spelling and grammar is present. One misspelled word can cause a client to loose confidence.

The problems noted on this form should be updated in the medical history file. The entire physical examination form is read to the client at the time of checkout by the attending technician or assistant. This is done so that the client has full appreciation of the normal areas on the pets that were examined. This educates the client of normal values for his pet so that abnormalities are recognized. For example tartar accumulation may develop on the teeth between examinations and the client will notice that this is a problem.

Ancillary forms pertaining to commonly encountered problems are provided and are completed when applicable. Heart Murmur, Ear Disease, and Dental Disease forms are available and are used to more completely inform the client of the disease at hand.

Additional treatment estimate forms are also available to explain the needed information for deciding on the therapeutic options for the pet.

Release Instructions Form

This form is usually created in the computer as a way of communicating the diagnosis and treatment for any problem discovered on the pet.

It is designed to answer most of the common questions regarding the care of the pet after hospitalization, surgery or during treatment. It is not a detailed description of the disease.

This form is used any time a diagnosis is made.

The additional information section is used to inform the client that additional tests, treatments, or procedures may be necessary if those listed on the form are not effective in a cure.

The form is provided in three parts like the Physical Examination Form and is used in the same manner. This process of reviewing the contents of this form with the client reading along educates the client and allows for questions to be answered. This process also educates the staff member.

Every effort should be made to insure correct spelling and grammar is present. One misspelled word can cause a client to loose confidence.

Surgery Release Form

This form has many functions. It is completed prior to any surgery. It is signed by the client and complete information on the pet and client are filled in.

The Medical/Surgery Authorization portion has the following parts.

Client Emergency telephone numbers or telephone numbers that they can be reached at during the time the pet is with us.

Information regarding the medical history of the pet and previous reactions to medications

Statements that the client owns the pet and has the authority to sign this form.

Statement that the client understands that there is no guarantee of cure.

Statement that the client agrees to pay for the services rendered

It gives them instructions on acquiring information regarding their pet without interrupting the normal flow of pet care.

All pets must be current on vaccinations prior to hospitalization or they will be vaccinated at the time of hospitalization if healthy enough.

This form also informs the client that they are responsible for bandages, casts, sutures or other appliances placed on their pet. That after the pet leaves the building that it is their responsibility to let us know if there is a problem.

Replacement of these items is at their expense if they were in charge of the pet.

CLIENT SERVICES

We offer many services to our clients that are not readily available at many other animal care facilities and these services need to be understood by all staff members in order to provide information that is accurate to inquiring clients.

CLIENT INFORMATION BROCHURES

We should never offer a brochure that we do not fully understand.
There may be information in brochures that are created by other companies that we do not recommend or ascribe to.
There may be questions raised that we may not know that answer to - thereby reducing client confidence.
The brochures should be only used to reinforce verbal information already given. They should never be given in the place of verbal communication with a client. It is best that the information be explained to the client prior to the client being handed the brochure.

TOXOPLASMOSIS AND PREGNANCY INFORMATION

This brochure explains the risks of a pregnant woman to contracting toxoplasmosis from their house cat. It explains safety measures and recommendations to prevent contact with infectious cat feces. Pregnant owners of house cats commonly ask for this information.

FLEA CONTROL

This information should only be given to the client after complete flea control has been explained. It should never substitute for client communication. This form should be updated as new products are added to our recommendations.

Heartworm Treatment (explained on form at back of manual)

This form briefly explains heartworm treatment. This is a very complex subject and this form should in no way be offered without complete verbal explanation or doctor consultation.

CLIENT INFORMATION SERVICES

Many questions that arise from clients are regarding how to contact agencies or organizations that deal with pet related matters.

Animal Control Agencies

List the agencies and phone numbers
Animal Welfare Organizations
List the agencies and phone numbers

Wildlife

List the agencies and phone numbers

Grooming

This service is available to all clients who have pets that are current on vaccinations. The following information pertains to policies of the grooming center.

All pets are groomed. This includes dogs and cats.

No pets are sedated without written permission from the client.

Grooming charges are paid by all clients. - There is no charging - even if the client is allowed to charge in the animal hospital.

No animals will be groomed that represent a threat to the groomer without sedation.

No animals will be groomed if grooming represents a health threat to the animal.

All clients using grooming will sign a drop-off form and will give us an emergency number for that day. Do not assume the number in the file is correct.

Boarding

All clients that have pets that are current on vaccinations and not harboring an obvious infectious disease will be boarded. Animals that are sick or contagious will be required to stay in the hospital isolation area (at hospitalization rates).

Boarding / Grooming form should be completed completely.

We make every effort to provide boarding for all pets within our physical limitations
It is very important to get an emergency number of the client or of a friend or relative that can make a decision regarding the care of the pet while the client is away.

Boarded animals will be checked for external parasites prior to boarding and the client will be responsible for the treatment of these problems.

Pet Identification

Microchip Implantation:
To help permanently identify animals. Dogs and Cats are commonly microchipped.

A fee is charged to the client for the chip and its implantation. The national registration fee is included in the cost of the microchip but this registration procedure is the responsibility of the client.

The microchip is injected under the skin of a dog or cat with a needle. No anesthesia is needed, similar to vaccination.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES

Pet Health Insurance

Available for any pet
No preconditions
Examination not required
Does not include routine care.
Trupanion offers 1 month free trial.

.

AVIMARK SOFTWARE

AVIMark is to be used for veterinary records. We are to use the Instruction Booklet of AVIMark for any procedures for use of this software. It is especially important that the Client Files and the Pet Files are kept current so to assure that our records are kept current and match the written files.

CLIENT INFORMATION DISPLAY (C.I.D.)

All information entered must be entered accurately and completely, along with any changes in names, titles, phone numbers, or addresses. Use the note section to put in cell phones and beeper numbers or any other pertinent information.

PET INFORMATION FILE

All information must be entered accurately and completely. Use the Breed choice menu provided. Give an estimate of age, if birth date is not known.

BACKING UP PROCEDURES

The Backing up procedures are automated. Everyone must be “logged off” the server for the back up to work correctly.

MICROSOFT WORD

Used for Word Processing, client Education information and Office Policies

HARDWARE WITH BATTERY BACK UP

Some workstations have a battery backup. This allows for a logical order to shutdown should the electrical system fail, or has sudden surges or drops in electrical service. Each workstation is to be left on at night, but “logged off” and the monitor turned off.

In case of electrical failure for an extended period (over 5 minutes) during office hours, turn all stations back to the ICONS. The battery back up will only last for 15 to 20 minutes so start shutting down the system if extended failure occurs and power down the work stations.

FINANCIAL STANDARDS

INVOICES OF MATERIALS, DRUGS AND ETC. DELIVERED

Healthcare team member accepting the materials ordered would check order and initial if order is correct. If only partial delivery and not marked appropriately on invoice please note on invoice.

Staff member checks in the shipment from UPS and signs for the shipment. The healthcare team member should check each box and put up all refrigerated items. If the item/items that you signed for must be refrigerated, you are to put them up, sign the invoice/packing slip and place it in the Drug Clerk's box. The Drug Clerk will check all items, enter them into the computer and put the items up. The Drug Clerk will place the initialed invoice/packing slip in the appropriate box in the Practice Manager's office.

DEPOSITS

Daily Deposits protocol:

A deposit of all the daily receipts for cash and checks will be made daily.
The protocol for making deposits is detailed in the Receptionist Policy & Procedure Manual.

RETURNED CHECKS

All returned checks are to be handled by the Office Manager. There will be an appropriate charge for all checks returned for NSF. Returned checks are added back to the clients account plus a returned check fee, which leaves the client with a balance on their account. The client is notified by the Office Manager. If the client is not reached by phone, then a certified letter is sent to the client. A returned check must be picked up and paid for in cash or money order. When the client picks up and clears the check and returned fee, they get back the original check. The payment is entered into the client's account in the computer. The Office Manager will put an alert in the client's file as to date of correspondence and the location of the check.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

Payment at the time of service is preferred by Cash, Check, Master Card, Visa, American Express, Discover or Care Credit!

CHARGING POLICY

Unless authorization has been given by the doctor, Practice Manager, lead receptionist no client is allowed to charge for services or product.

When any pet is admitted to the hospital for surgery or illness the doctor will provide the front desk with the necessary deposit required to continue treatment.

COLLECTIONS

0 - 30 Days	Send Statement
60 Days	Send Statement with Late Sticker
70 Days	Tel Call / get timetable for payment normally within two weeks
80 Days	Nice letter for collection in time
90 Days	Send statement with another sticker
100 Days	Certified Letter
120 Days	Collection Action Started

ADVERTISED DISCOUNTS

This is for INTERNAL and EXTERNAL Marketing AND CAN NOT BE ADDED TO OTHER DISCOUNTS.

PERSONAL / PROFESSIONAL DISCOUNTS

As directed by the Doctor and coded in the Computer.