

# METROPOLITAN VETERINARY ASSOCIATES NEWSLETTER

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## How Improving Efficiencies Can Make Work Easier and Clients Happier

**TERRY M. O'NEIL, CPA, CVA**

Katz, Sapper & Miller's Veterinary Services Group

When it comes to increasing a veterinary hospital's profitability, the focus is usually on three major factors: increasing revenue, decreasing expenses, and improving efficiencies. Hospitals tend to address the first two factors and avoid the last completely.

Why can improving efficiencies feel like such a daunting task? Simply put: change is scary. It takes guts to challenge the norm and accept that the current approach may not be the most efficient. But making even small changes in your internal and external policies, systems, and procedures can

have powerful results, including more empowered staff members, happier clients, and increased profits.

It's important to understand that improving efficiencies doesn't mean cutting corners, churning patients through your practice, or sacrificing relationships. Instead, this is about creating more efficient touch points to reduce redundancies, improve staff utilization, and provide a better overall client experience.

To improve efficiencies, we need to look at two key areas: the client experience and internal operations.



**Veterinary Practice Management CE**

with Terry M. O'Neil, CPA, CVA

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## Three Keys to Increased Profitability

Most veterinary hospitals focus on increasing revenue and decreasing expenses to improve profitability – a good first step, for sure. But a more challenging and uncomfortable step is the task of improving efficiencies.



**INCREASE REVENUE**



**DECREASE EXPENSES**



**IMPROVE EFFICIENCIES**

## CLIENT EXPERIENCE MAP

So, how do you identify areas that could be more efficient? Start by working as a team to map out the client experience from start to finish. Below are some key questions to ask yourselves:



### 1. SCHEDULING

- What triggers a client to make an appointment?
- What does the appointment making process entail? How long does it take? How complicated is it?
- If an appointment is scheduled by phone, how quickly does someone answer? Is the client put on hold?



### 2. WELCOME

- When a client walks in, is someone at the front desk already on a phone call?
- How are clients greeted upon entry?



### 3. INTAKE

- What is the intake process like? How long does it take?
- On average, how long does a client wait in the lobby before being taken to an exam room?



### 6. FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS

- What's the trigger for making follow-up appointments?



### 5. BILLING

- How and where does the client pay their bill? Is it a struggle with a pet in tow?



### 4. EXAM

- How quickly does a technician or doctor enter the exam room?
- What information does the technician or doctor ask the client for and share with them?
- How long does a typical appointment last?

## INTERNAL PROCESSES PERSPECTIVE

After mapping out your hospital's work flow, it's time to take a hard look at the internal processes supporting this work flow, asking critical questions like:



### 1. Are the right people doing the right jobs?

We know this question can be a sensitive one. The goal here is not necessarily to eliminate jobs but to make better use of existing staff capabilities. Identifying redundancies or opportunities for delegation or relocation can streamline efforts and ensure the right person is doing the right tasks. Additionally, you might see a need for additional training or professional development for staff.

### 2. What processes need standards to ensure a better client experience?

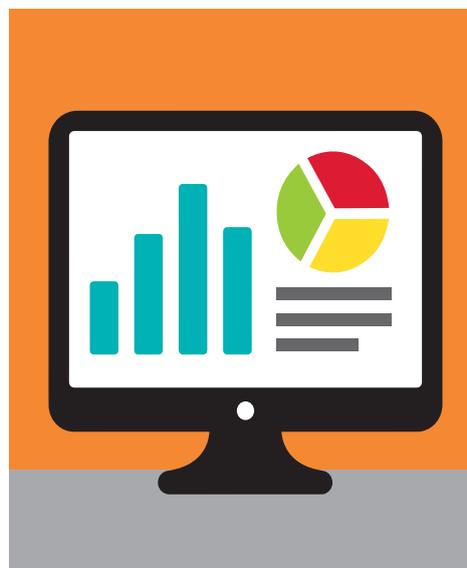
As you review your work flow, it's critical to examine how experiences might vary from one patient visit to the next. For example, you might discover inconsistencies around how clients are received at the front desk or upon checking out. In these instances, establishing standards or hospital protocols help ensure all clients receive the same care. Here are just a few examples:

- Developing a script for front desk employees to help them communicate clear, standardized information
- Establishing a process for forward-scheduling to reduce postage, prevent follow-up calls, and increase patient compliance

- Explaining expectations around client service (such as phone or email etiquette)

### 3. How can you better leverage technology?

In a day and age where everyone is on the go and relies heavily on the internet for communication, it's critical to examine how technology can make the client experience better and help your business run more smoothly. Going paperless, utilizing text messages, standardizing templates, implementing an intelligent inventory system, using online scheduling, and implementing telemedicine are just a few tech tools that can revolutionize the way you work and help improve your bottom line.



# SPECIALIZED SERVICES

## BEHAVIOR

Jacqueline Wilhelmy, MS, VMD, DACVB, CCBC-KA

## CARDIOLOGY

Marc Kraus, DVM, DACVIM (Cardiology)  
Michael Miller, MS, VMD, ABVP  
Megan Poad, VMD  
Risa Roland, DVM, DACVIM (Cardiology)

## DENTISTRY

Corinne Durand, DVM

## DERMATOLOGY

Katherine Backel, DVM  
Karen B. Farver, DVM, DACVD

## EMERGENCY AND CRITICAL CARE

James Buckman, PhD, VMD  
Allison Buysse, VMD  
Jason Chamberlin, VMD  
Kathleen Crossman, DVM  
Cierra French, DVM  
Robert Gaunt, VMD  
Jill Kalman, VMD  
Jennifer McGough, VMD  
Rachel Morgan, DVM  
*(Practice limited to Emergency & Critical Care)*  
Marisa Suvannavejh, VMD  
Katrina Tumielewicz, DVM  
*(Practice limited to Emergency & Critical Care)*

## INTERNAL MEDICINE

John V. DeBiasio, DVM, DACVIM  
James F. Dougherty, MS, VMD  
Tabitha A. Hutton, DVM, MTR, DACVIM (SAIM)  
Leslie A. Kuczynski, VMD, DACVIM

## NEUROLOGY

Lisa Lipitz, VMD, DACVIM (Neurology)  
Daniella Vansteenkiste, BVetMed

## ONCOLOGY

Lillie Davis, DVM, DACVIM (Oncology)  
Corinne Durand, DVM  
Kendra Hearon, VMD, DACVS-SA  
*ACVS Fellow, Surgical Oncology*  
Jacqui Niles, BVETMED, SAS, DACVS  
Suzanne Rau, DVM, DACVIM (Oncology)

## OPHTHALMOLOGY

Amanda Corr, VMD, DACVO  
Chloe Spertus, DVM

## RADIOLOGY

Robert McLearn, VMD, DACVR  
Lisa Suslak, VMD, DACVR

## SURGERY

Kendra Hearon, VMD, DACVS-SA  
A. Jon Nannos, DVM  
Jacqui Niles, BVETMED, SAS, DACVS  
Catherine Popovitch, DVM, DACVS, DECVS  
Timothy M. Schwab, VMD, DACVS-SA  
Rebecca Wolf, VMD, DACVS-SA

## PET LOSS SUPPORT GROUP



At MVA we understand the depth of loss one experiences when a beloved four-legged family member has passed. For that reason, we provide a Pet Loss Support Group to help grieving owners in need. Our group is designed to provide grieving pet parents with a safe, confidential environment to share their feelings with others who have experienced pet loss.

The group is operated by professionals who have experience with pet loss. A board certified psychiatrist consults with us regarding the implementation of the group, however, our group leaders are not mental health care professionals. Clients experiencing difficulty coping are urged to seek help from a mental healthcare professional. We can provide you with the names of health care professionals if needed.

Our Pet Loss Support Group meets on a varying schedule.

For dates please call the hospital at **610.666.1050** or visit [metro-vet.com/petloss](http://metro-vet.com/petloss)

## UPCOMING CONTINUING EDUCATION

### Veterinary Practice Management

Open to Practice Owners, Veterinarians, and Practice Managers

The seminar focuses on issues key to a hospital's success such as compensation models, working with key performance indicators, trends, and more! Speaker Terry O'Neil is a sought-after subject matter expert in business, financial, and tax advice for veterinary practices. An authority in veterinary practice management and optimizing growth strategies, Terry often speaks at conferences on a variety of emerging business topics, financial benchmarks, and succession planning.

**Location:** Columbia Station | 4 Bridge St, Phoenixville

**Date:** Thursday, September 19, 2019

**Lunch and Registration:** 11:30am      **Lecture:** 12:30pm

**Speaker:** Terry M. O'Neil, CPA, CVA, Katz, Sapper & Miller's Veterinary Services Group

**Credits:** Approved for 3.5 CE credits through CVPM      **Sponsored by CareCredit**

### Acute Spinal Cord Disease: A Practical Approach to the "Down Dog"

Open to Veterinarians and Technicians

**Location:** Seasons 52 | 160 N Gulph Rd #101, King of Prussia

**Date:** Wednesday, October 9, 2019

**Registration:** 6:00pm      **Lecture:** 7:00pm - 9:00pm

**Speakers:** Lisa Lipitz, VMD, DACVIM (Neurology)  
Daniella Vansteenkiste, BVetMed

## UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Compassionate Companion Care

Open to the Community

Support of our canine and feline family members as they age.

**Location:** Metropolitan Veterinary Associates | 2626 Van Buren Ave, Norristown

**Date:** Saturday, September 21, 2019

**Time:** 2:00pm - 3:00pm

**Speaker:** Alyssa Mages, BS, CVT | Education and Development Coordinator

[LEARN MORE AT: METRO-VET.COM/UPCOMING-EVENTS/](http://metro-vet.com/upcoming-events/)

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