

Making curbside care efficient

USING TOOLS OF TELEHEALTH

Some practices have decided curbside care is working so well for them that they plan to continue offering it as a regular service moving past COVID-19. Here are tips from practices that are using telehealth to make curbside care more efficient.

- **Think beyond the phone call.** The average curbside appointment involves four to five phone calls. Many can be eliminated by integrating other telehealth tools into your workflow.
- **Explore a range of options.** Text, email, free video services like Zoom® or Facetime®, and veterinary telehealth platforms that integrate with your practice management system can all help create a more seamless experience.
- **Send patient information and history forms to your clients before their appointment.** These can be completed at home, freeing up team members' time during the appointment. Use forms already available to you through your practice management system, veterinary telehealth platform, or create your own using Google Forms or JotForm.
- **Check in clients digitally.** Put a sign in your parking lot or on your door that reads, "Text us your space number, name, and appointment time, and we'll be right with you." Your team will be able to handle more text messages than phone calls in the same amount of time. Many telehealth platforms offer digital curbside check in features.
- **Set up a computer, tablet, or smartphone in each of your exam rooms so you can include clients in the visit.** Using a telehealth platform or a simple video app, like Facetime®, GoogleMeet®, Zoom®, or Skype®, can allow your client to watch their pet being examined and still feel like they're engaged with the visit.
- **Once you have the client on video for the exam, use the opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns.** This will improve the client experience and help avoid multiple phone calls or miscommunication afterward. During this time, your veterinary technician can help develop an estimate and obtain authorization to proceed, collect any needed laboratory samples, perform treatments, gather needed medications, and work with the customer service representative to create an invoice. During that time, the doctor can discuss any questions or concerns with the client, improving the experience for the client and avoiding multiple phone calls and misconnections. Some general video call apps and many veterinary telehealth platforms allow you to share estimates, laboratory results, handouts, and other documents while you are in the midst of a video call or chat, allowing you and other members of your team to actively communicate with your client.
- **Offer contactless payment.** Whether by phone, app, or an online portal, there are multiple ways to obtain payment securely from clients with no contact and fewer phone calls





CURBSIDE CARE WORKFLOW

Every practice is different and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Create your own workflow to determine how telehealth tools can help you improve your client's experience, patient outcomes, and enhance efficiency.

1

The owner contacts the practice about a health concern through email, text, chat, or a veterinary telehealth platform. Non-emergency appointment requests can be handled asynchronously by non-DVM team members to increase operational efficiency.



2

A veterinary technician considers the owner's concerns, consults with the veterinarian as needed, and schedules an in-person appointment for an examination using curbside drop-off. Before the appointment, a team member can share instructions and any forms to be filled out, so the client is well prepared for their visit.



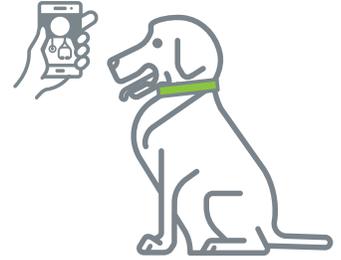
3

The client enters the parking lot for their appointment and waits in the car after notifying the practice of their arrival. The client can send a text message using a general app or your practice's telehealth platform. Signage can be posted in the parking lot and/or on the clinic door letting clients know how to get in touch. A team member messages back to gather any additional information and lets the client know when someone is coming to pick up their pet.

"I'm here."

4

A veterinary assistant picks up the pet from the car. While the assistant is getting the pet, a veterinary technician starts the video call with the client, gathering additional history, making notes in the medical record, and answering questions (as appropriate) until the veterinarian arrives.



5

The pet is brought to the exam room. The veterinarian enters and begins the examination while the video call continues. The client is able to watch and ask questions. The veterinarian discusses the results of the examination and their recommendations with the client, while a veterinary technician prepares an estimate and authorization for next steps is obtained. The veterinary technician then collects samples for any laboratory work and gathers any needed medications.



6

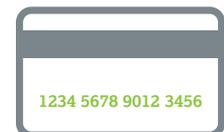
The veterinary technician takes over the video call while the veterinarian moves to their next appointment.

The veterinary technician goes over discharge instructions, shares information about when diagnostic results will be available, and explains the invoice. Photos, instructions, handouts, and the invoice can be emailed to the client or shared during the video call. Most telehealth platforms and some general video apps support sharing photos and documents. Be sure you are using a platform or other application that allows confidentiality to be maintained.



7

A customer service representative sends the client a link to an online payment portal, charges a card on file, or uses another contactless payment method.



8

The veterinary assistant returns the pet to the client.



Telehealth tools such as text, chat, and video services make client communication more efficient and provide better documentation. Forms and other paperwork are handled electronically, phone calls are reduced, clients are able to watch exams in real time, and overall efficiency is improved. **The result? Happy teams, satisfied clients, and healthier patients.**

