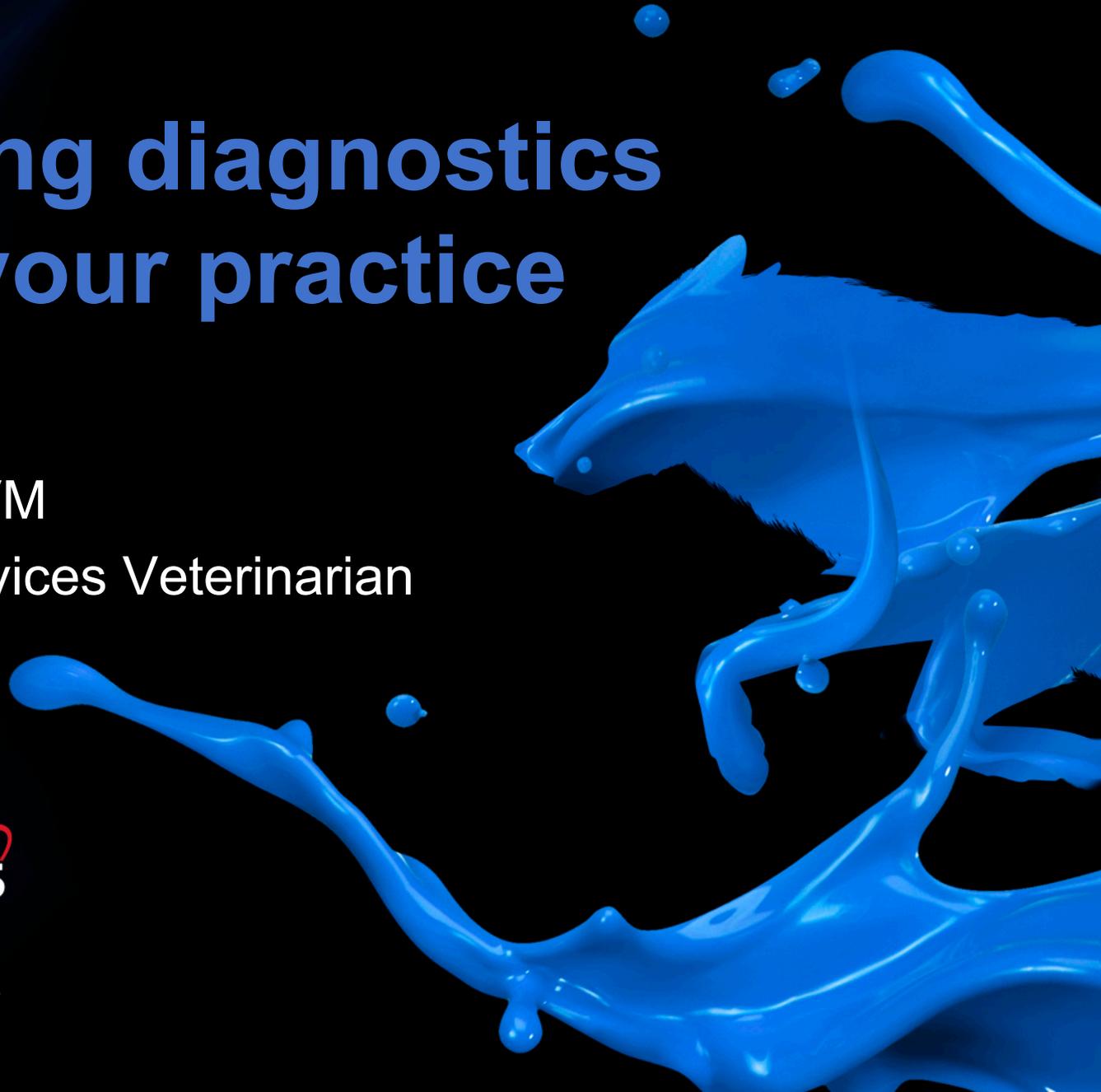


# Leveraging diagnostics to grow your practice

Paul H. Jaffe, DVM  
Professional Services Veterinarian



Better + Better



# Outline



- Benefits of increasing compliance for blood testing
- Challenges hospitals are facing
- Strategies to overcome these challenges
  - Preventive healthcare program including blood testing
  - Address price sensitivity
  - Develop a marketing / advertising strategy



# Why Test?

- 5% young “healthy” pets with normal PE have underlying disease
- 7% dogs < 8 yrs old are hypothyroid



# What About Seniors?



- Only 14% have regular screens
- Normal PE with underlying disease in pets
  - 18% cats (>7 yr)
  - 23% dogs (>7 yr)
- 20% cats over age 12 will be hyperthyroid



# What are the benefits of blood testing?

# Benefits of Testing for Patients



- Confirmation of health
  - Adds quantitative data to the qualitative data (history, PE)
- ↑ life expectancy & quality of life
- ↑ safety for medication use
- Minimize anesthetic risk



# Benefits of Testing for Clients



- Piece of mind regarding pet health
- Reduced treatment costs
- Improve human-animal bond



# Benefits of Testing for Hospitals



- ↑ quality of medicine
  - Shift from vaccine/OTC revenue → diagnostics/treatments
- ↑ revenue

**\$1 spent on preventive testing → \$3 additional diagnostics & treatments**



# Weekly transactions & client visits are dropping

# Pet Owner Perspective



1. Economy
2. Fragmentation of services
3. Perception that regular visits were unnecessary
4. Feline resistance
5. Internet
6. Cost

Dr. Google™  
e-Diagnosis

I'm Feeling Icky

Second Opinions

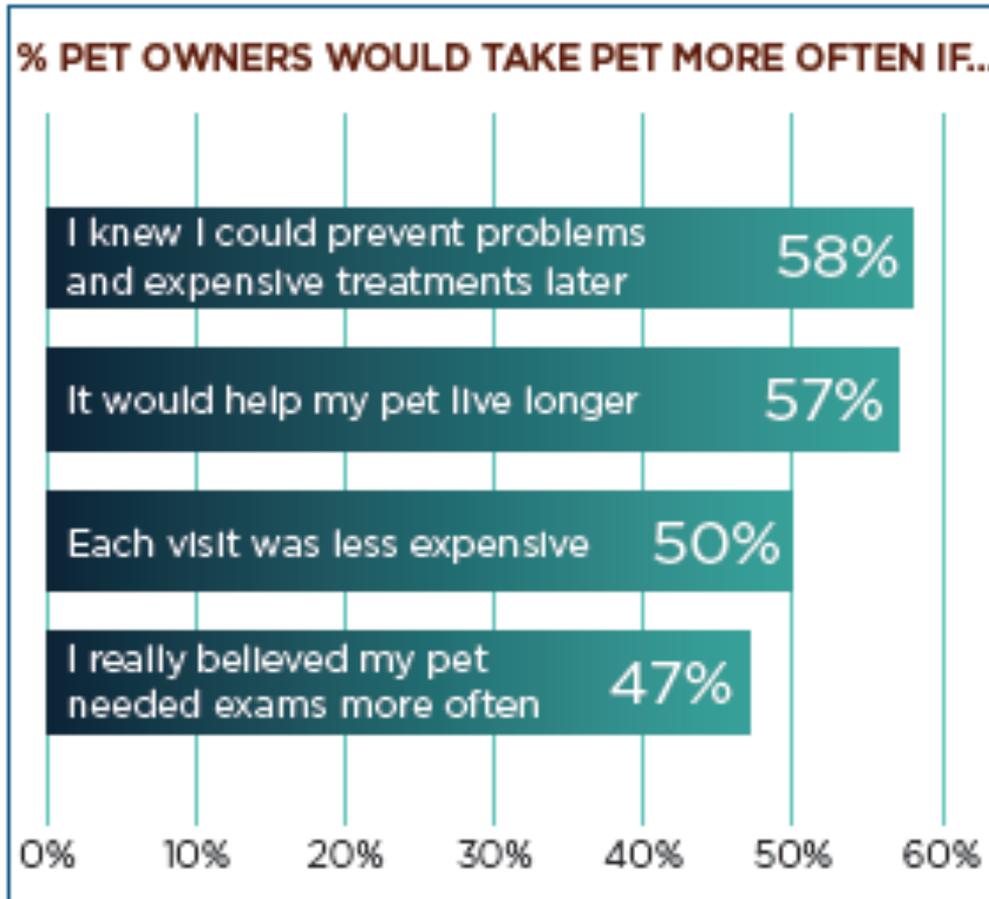
H1N1 FFFFlu vaccines available. [Find a Location](#)

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**Bayer- Brakke Veterinary Care  
Usage Study (2011)**

# Pet Owner Perspective



# 34% hospitals growing- why?

- 1) Wellness (preventive) exams- one of the most valuable services
- 2) Continuity of care (same vet each visit)
- 3) Marketing & advertising- key components of business strategy
- 4) Social media



# How to Make an Immediate Difference

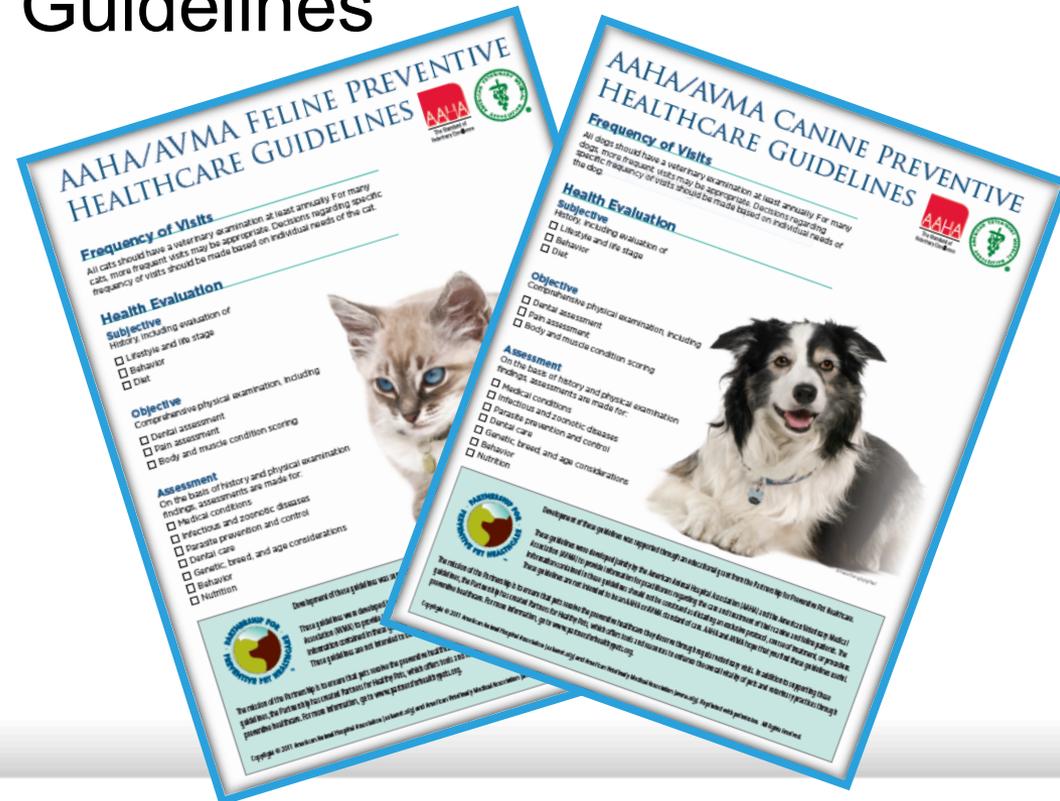


- ✓ Implement a preventive healthcare program
  - Include blood testing! (Focus of discussion today)
- ✓ Address price sensitivity
- ✓ Initiate a marketing/advertising strategy



# Preventive healthcare program

- AAHA/AVMA Canine & Feline Preventive Healthcare Guidelines
  - Frequency of visits
  - Health care evaluation
    - (S.O.A.P)



# Guidelines include diagnostic plan



## Plan

Client communication and education plan to include:

### Diagnostic plan:

• Every dog should have:

- Annual heartworm testing in accordance with existing guidelines
- At least annual internal parasite testing

• Customized plan based on assessment:

- Other diagnostic tests (including dental radiographs)
- Early disease screening tests
- Genetic screening tests

How do you increase blood testing compliance as part of your preventive healthcare program?



# Team Effort- keep the momentum going!



- Implementing changes must be a team effort
  - Input from all
  - Create team's core values
  - ID what is working & improvements needed



# The Team is the Key to Success



## Staff Motto:

- Recommend & perform what is in the best interest of the pet.
- Recommend what you would provide for your own pet.

# Important Points to Remember



- ✓ Simple steps- gradual changes!
  - Implementation doesn't occur overnight
  - It takes time to educate both clients & staff



# Provide Exceptional Service



- Clients extrapolate clinical quality from:
  - Service quality
  - Physical cues
- Client expectations regarding cost often unrealistic
  - Lowest ratings among surveys

**\*\*CLIENT SERVICE IS KEY\*\***

# Why Do Blood Testing In-House?



Obtain immediate chemistry & hematology results

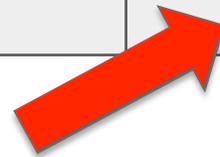
1. Improve patient care
2. Improve customer service & expectations
3. Improve client communication & education
4. Improve client compliance
5. Grow practice revenue



# **Sending out may seem easier... but what is your time worth?**



<b>Examination Fee</b>	<b>\$55.00</b>
<b>Three Exams Per Hour (Medical)</b>	<b>\$165.00 /hr</b>
<b>Surgical Billing Rate Per Hour (3.5X Medical)</b>	<b>\$577.50/hr</b>
<b>Daily Time Allotment</b>	<b>2 Surgery 7 Medical</b>
<b>Value Per Hour</b> (\$165.00 X 7) + (\$577.50 X 2)	<b>\$256.67</b>
<b>Veterinary Cost</b> (10 min. follow-up phone call)	<b>\$42.78</b>

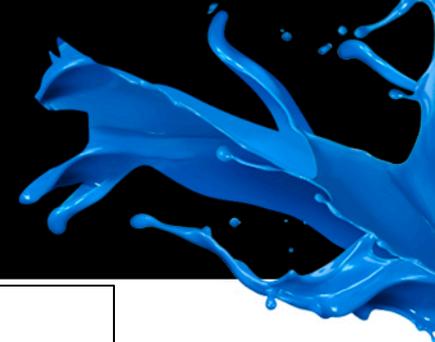


**Are you passing this cost to your client?**

# Incorporating Bloodwork into the Client Experience



# Reminder Card/ E-mail



New York Vet Care Centre  
12345 New York Street  
New York, NY  
43210

Dear Scooter,

Next month you are due for the treatments or products listed below. Please have your family call our office at (416)123-1234 to schedule an appointment. Remember that a yearly physical exam is just as important as vaccines! Visit our website at [vetcare.com](http://vetcare.com)

- 06-06-xx Annual complete physical exam
- 06-06-xx Preventive blood test
- 06-06-xx Heartworm test
- 06-06-xx Heartworm Preventive
- 06-06-xx Rabies vaccine



# Phone Communication



- ✓ Try to book with the same veterinarian
- ✓ Give brief description of reason for visit, including preventive testing
- ✓ Remind to withhold food before appointment
- ✓ Reminder calls



# Complete Service in One Visit



- Tech exam (blood testing recommendation)
- Blood draw & testing



***Exceptional service motivates staff and retains clients***

# Recommendation from the Technician



*“The doctor recommends that we perform a preventive health screen on your pet every year. We watch for changes in organ systems such as the kidney & liver. We also monitor important blood cell levels, among many other things.*

*Should we find abnormalities, we can often treat the illness with better results & often at a lower cost.*

*If everything is normal, you will have piece of mind that all is well, & we will have normal baseline values to monitor your pets' health in the future.”*

# Complete Service in One Visit



- Vet exam & discuss results
- Additional diagnostics
- Treatment
- Address questions
- Schedule follow-ups



# Recommendation From The Vet



If client declines testing, the veterinarian SHOULD repeat the recommendation:

*“Mrs. Smith, while all of Fluffy’s physical examination findings appear to be normal, I would still recommend we perform an preventive blood test.”*

*This helps to ensure that all of her internal organ functions that I cannot evaluate through the examination are normal.”*

**By this stage, preventive testing should have been discussed three times.**



# Meet Rocket



Pre-anesthetic blood testing:  
OPTIONAL  
or  
RECOMMENDED?



# The Role of the Whole Team



## Puppy & Kitten Visits

Sensitize owners to recommended procedures

- OVH/Neuter with blood testing, IV fluids etc
- Annual exam & early disease detection panels
- Pet insurance
- Breed predilections
  - Dental disease
  - Otitis



# A Special Word for our Feline Friends...



- Education is key
  - 83% kittens examined in first year
    - Discuss future recommendations
- Reduce stress before & during the visit
  - 58% of cat owners: “My cat hates the vet”.
    - Certified cat friendly practice (*AAFP*)
- Economical preventive care



# Improve Compliance with Awareness



## Preventive Testing

Diagnostic testing at least once a year can help detect many illnesses or diseases in the early stages and provide peace of mind.

- Establish healthy baseline values.
- Identify unseen disease at an early stage.
- Often treat disease more effectively and with a lower cost when identified early.
- Serves as a pre-anesthetic health screen for upcoming surgical or dental procedures.

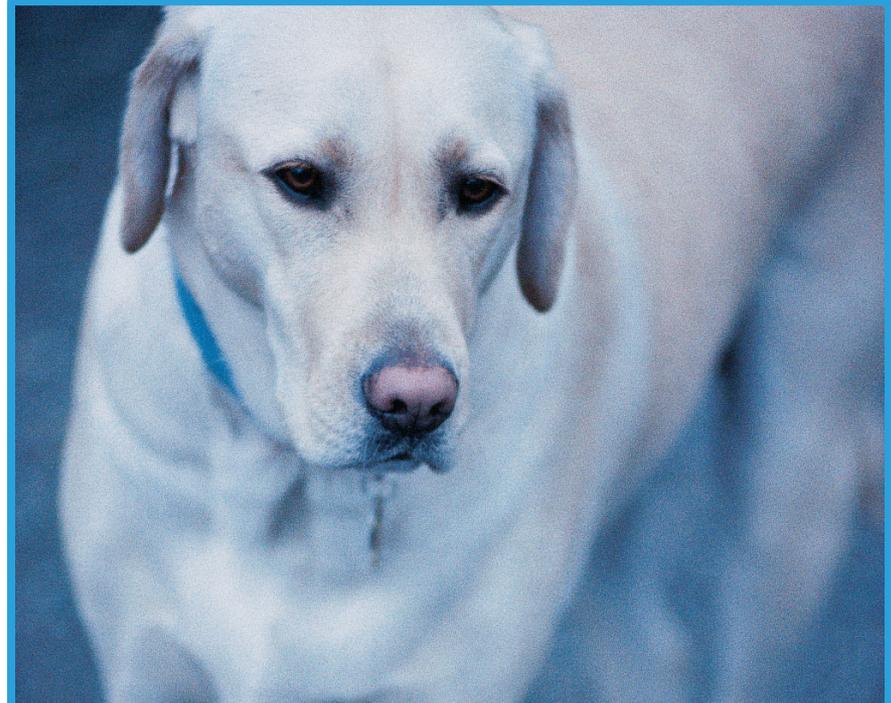


BETTER. ACTUALLY.

800-822-2947

[www.abaxis.com/veterinary](http://www.abaxis.com/veterinary)

888-9670 Rev. A



## Senior Wellness Testing

Senior pets age quickly and often have special needs. Diagnostic testing and physical examinations should be performed at least twice a year.

- Compare current baseline values to values established earlier in your pet's life to help identify disease at an early stage.
- Blood profiles help determine the safety of many medications.
- Blood testing is vital part of Senior Wellness exams.



BETTER. ACTUALLY.

800-822-2947

[www.abaxis.com/veterinary](http://www.abaxis.com/veterinary)

888-9672 Rev. A

# Improve Compliance



Abaxis has modifiable forms for your practice to use

## 1) Pet owners checklist

- List of scheduled due dates/ appointments
- Also serves as an advertisement

## 2) Preventive care questionnaire

- History form to be filled out prior to or upon arrival of visit



# Improve Compliance



3) Physical exam forms

4) Decline forms

5) Client education sheets

- Preventive blood testing
- Pre-anesthetic blood testing
- Anesthesia



# Improve Compliance



# Human Age Equivalent Charts



## CATS



Current Age	Physiological Age
6 months	10 years
8 months	13 years
10 months	14 years
1 year	15 years
18 months	20 years
2 years	24 years
4 years	32 years
6 years	40 years
8 years	48 years
10 years	56 years
12 years	64 years
14 years	72 years
16 years	80 years
18 years	88 years
20 years	96 years
21 years	100 years

■ adult  
 ■ senior  
 ■ geriatric

## DOGS



Current Age	0-20 lbs	21-50 lbs	51-90 lbs	Over 90 lbs
8 Months	13-16	13-16	13-16	13-16
2	24	24	24	24
3	28	28	29	32
4	32	33	34	38
5	36	37	39	42
6	40	42	45	49
7	44	47	50	56
8	48	51	55	64
9	52	56	61	71
10	56	60	66	78
11	60	65	72	86
12	64	69	77	93
13	68	74	82	101
14	72	78	88	108
15	76	83	93	115
16	80	87	99	123
17	84	92	104	
18	88	96	109	
19	92	101	115	
20	96	105	120	

# You Tube: An Education Tool



- ✓ *It's important to show, not tell*
- ✓ Create a personalized playlist from trusted resources (i.e. AAHA, AVMA) & use as a visual education tool in the exam room



# Bloodwork in Preventive Programs



1. Teamwork - be consistent
2. Prioritize, set goals & track
3. Discuss progress- staff meetings
4. Improve compliance with awareness
5. Communicate & deliver great service
6. Team bonus plan



# Strategies to Make an Immediate Difference



- Implement a preventive healthcare program ✓
- **Address price sensitivity**
- Initiate a marketing/advertising



# Tiered Pricing Example



	Ill Patient	Annual/Pre-anesthetic	Recheck
CDP	\$60	\$50	\$40
Include a CBC	\$70	\$60	\$50

## Benefits:

- Improve perception of value → increased compliance
- Boost revenue with additional testing, treatments & medications

 **Psychological barrier to fees exceeding \$100 for preventive & pre-op screens**

# Preventive Healthcare Packages



## Key Point for the Most Successful Hospitals

- ✓ Post basic programs/packages in professional frames in both the lobby & exam rooms
- ✓ Ensure program has package price visible
- ✓ Always have human age equivalent chart visible

# Preventive Healthcare Payment Plans



Pet owners would take their pet to the vet more often

- Monthly billing program offered (45%)
- Full-year health program outlined clearly for them (40%)
- Consider offering equalized monthly billing to established, approved clients



[Partnersforhealthypets.org](http://Partnersforhealthypets.org)

**Bayer- Brakke Study, 2012**

ABAXIS



# Strategies to Make an Immediate Difference



- Implement a preventive healthcare program ✓
- Address price sensitivity ✓
- **Initiate a marketing/advertising strategy**



# Marketing Your Practice



## Educate & communicate with your clients!

- Dedicate a communications person
- Don't under-estimate word of mouth

## On-hold message services

## Website

- Keep it current & constantly evolving
- Describe your services & what sets your practice apart
- High quality photos of people & pets

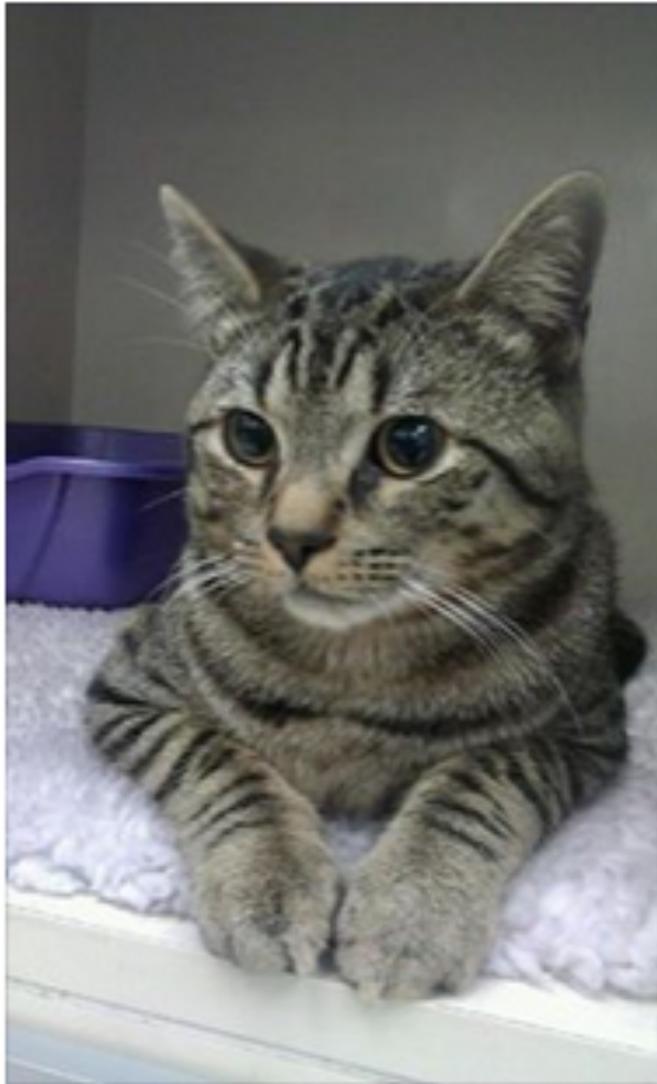
# Marketing Your Practice



- Facebook & other social media outlets
  - Don't discuss cases or in-depth advice
  - Strict moderator settings
  - Promote helpful content that gets your fans on your email list
  - Pictures with every post
  - Consider boosting valuable ads (\$)



Our clients who have pets staying in the hospital now have the option of having a picture of their pet texted to them. We want you to have the reassurance of knowing your furbaby is as comfortable as possible when staying with us.



## Douglas Animal Hospital's Facebook Page

**61 Likes!**

Like · Comment · Share ·  61  12  1

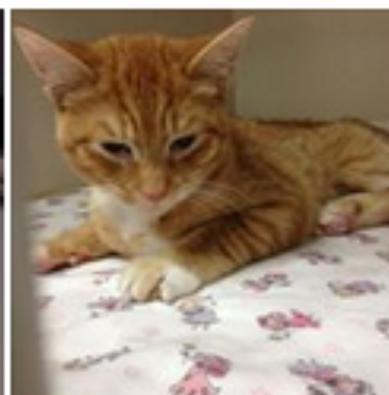


Douglas Animal Hospital added 12 new photos to the album:

What to Expect on a Surgery Morning.

March 2 at 1:10pm · 🌐

The step by step process of preparing a pet for surgery and recovery at Douglas Animal Hospital.



# Set Your Practice Apart

Offer rapid, point of care testing!

- Complete service in one visit with great service & education
- Affordable pricing to enhance compliance
- Take advantage of the Abaxis full line of testing



# References



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# Questions?

