



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Veterinary Virtual Care Association (VVCA)?

The Veterinary Virtual Care Association is a global, nonprofit association dedicated to developing best practices for delivering virtual care for animals, defining quality standards and protocols for practicing virtual care, sharing experiences among practice teams, engaging with virtual care providers and advocating for policies in support of quality virtual care.

Why was the VVCA created?

The profession has witnessed the adoption of telemedicine in human medicine over the past 30 years, and much of the credit goes to the American Telemedicine Association (ATA). The ATA started for many of the reasons the VVCA is now needed. Veterinarians, veterinary technicians, telemedicine providers, animal health businesses and organizations need a place to learn, grow, share experiences and develop high-quality standards. The VVCA is committed to facilitating just that.

Why doesn't the VVCA include telemedicine in the name?

The Veterinary Virtual Care Association was given this name for a very simple reason: Virtual Care is the umbrella for a broad scope of services including Telehealth, Telemedicine, Telemonitoring and Telerriage, as well as the use of many digital or remote tools to diagnose and treat animals. As the breadth of technology and tools continues to expand, it is imperative the association be forward thinking and not limit the realm of care.

What are the goals of the association?

The goal of the VVCA is to make virtual care part of the standard of care in veterinary medicine by advocating best practices, providing educational resources developed by thought leaders, and creating a space for a wide alliance of professionals to congregate and accelerate the adoption of all of the virtual care tools.

Who can be a member?

The VVCA is easy to join and open to individuals, businesses and organizations who want to share best practices, network with providers, learn, establish standards and protocols for everyone's benefit, and promote public policies that make it possible to use virtual care for pet healthcare.

What is the cost for membership?

Beginning January 1, 2021, there will be a fee associated with joining the VVCA. Early adopters can sign up now through December 31, 2020, to join for an entire year for free.

What is telemedicine?

Telemedicine is the practice of providing clinical care to patients at a distance using telecommunications technology. In other words, it is a method of treating patients using the internet and telephone. This can take the form of real-time video visits, secure email, or remotely monitoring a patient's vital signs.

How typical is telemedicine?

Telemedicine is a significant and rapidly growing component of health care in the United States. Around the world, millions of human patients use telemedicine to monitor their vital signs, remain healthy and out of hospitals and emergency rooms.

Is telemedicine safe?

Guided by technical standards and clinical practice guidelines, telemedicine is a safe and cost-effective way to extend the delivery of pet care. VVCA will be producing a series of standards, guidelines and best practices for veterinary providers to ensure that they are using telemedicine responsibly.

Where can clients get access to virtual care services?

Clients should ask their veterinarians about virtual care services that are already available. In many cases, the providers will already have existing telemedicine services. There are also numerous private companies that have basic telehealth services, including 24/7 access to health professionals, online wellness apps and insurance partnerships.

Who benefits from virtual care?

Clients: Telemedicine gives patients the opportunity to receive care without a trip to the veterinarian's office. They don't have to take time away from work or family responsibilities. They don't waste time traveling, or money on parking or public transportation. They don't risk exposure to other animals with communicable illnesses. More engaged and personal visits could be a possible outcome.

Providers: Virtual visits reduce the time of each encounter, allowing providers to see more patients, more efficiently. This boosts revenue and minimizes overhead expenses. Telemedicine reduces no-shows and cancellations. It also helps secure client loyalty.