

Telemedicine: Connected Care and the Veterinary Technician

Presented by: Jennifer Quammen, DVM, MPH

Sponsor: TeleVet

Telemedicine is used to facilitate diagnosis, treatment and/or prescribing of medication for a patient with an established VCPR. VCPR is the Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship. Each state has a different definition of VCPR in their Practice Act. Most states require VCPR to be established in-person, but that has changed in several states.

The benefits of telemedicine within an equine practice are numerous.

- Conversation documentation. Owners can send pictures, text and/or video all in one secure location and these can be easily added into the electronic medical record (EMR).
- Veterinarian Technicians and Veterinarians can connect with horse owners anywhere and those communications are easily shared among the medical team, as well as with horse trainers and owners.
- Allows for monetizing your time. Follow up calls, consultations, and conversations with owners can all be captured and charged for. Horse owners can contact the hospital regarding a medical or general concern and the healthcare team can assist without always having to drive back to the farm.

Veterinary Technicians and Veterinarians are sometimes unsure what scenarios are a fit when deciding on the value of integrating Telemedicine. Here are some suggested use cases:

- Basic Triage. You can help your clients understand whether their issues are urgent and need emergency care, require a farm trip, or can be handled remotely.
- Emergency Triage. A veterinarian or veterinary technician can review the presenting complaint via a telemedicine consult and determine if immediate emergency care is needed.
- Postoperative Care. Veterinarians and Veterinary Technicians are able to monitor any post op abnormalities and modify treatment plans if needed without making another trip to the horse, or having the horse hauled into you.
- Dermatologic cases. Handling dermatologic concerns is one of the most common cases for telemedicine. Some issues currently treated virtually include: itching, hair loss, mass/tumor evaluation, and evaluation of wounds/lacerations.

A final component of Telemedicine is to consider the revenue. Veterinary Technicians and Veterinarians can offer this service as part of their overall equine clinic/hospital. Not all cases will lend themselves to telemedicine but many will. Those managed or initially triaged with telemedicine are a source of revenue with little overhead, less time spent traveling, less wear and tear on vehicles, and offering schedule and work from home possibilities for the entire veterinary healthcare team.