



---

# *The* Veterinary Clinic *of the* **FUTURE**

New models and mindsets can position practices for modern,  
client-centric care that builds lifelong relationships

---

Consumer approaches to veterinary care are changing. Veterinary practice clients expect all aspects of their visit, such as payment types and waiting times, to match the ease and efficiency of other services. Expectations have been set.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) has accelerated the shift toward new models by creating an urgent need for consumer-friendly services, including curbside care and touchless payment options. Although some pandemic-driven adaptations may not have long-term feasibility for practices and clients, many could be here to stay. It is now up to practices to springboard the short-term solutions of the pandemic into permanent, relationship-building features.

As the trajectories of evolving consumer expectations and pandemic-era solutions intersect, veterinary clinics are in a unique position to bring their practices into a new era of care. They can meet consumers where they are, no longer putting the clinic's workflow preferences above the client's. Ultimately, they can seek to cultivate and implement the tools, efficiencies and mindset that place the client at the heart of the care experience.

This can happen through new workflows, an increased emphasis on financial care, adoption of consumer-friendly technologies and development of lifelong relationships.



## NEW WORKFLOWS: Creating the waiting room of the future

Dr. Peter Weinstein, executive director of the Southern California Veterinary Medical Association, has a vision: The veterinary care waiting room of the future is not a waiting room at all, and pet owners will be offered a la carte care choices.

“I think we’re going to see the ‘labradoodle’ of practices emerge — a hybrid of in-clinic care and curbside care, which would include pet drop-offs and in-exam-room payments or virtual payment options,” Weinstein says.

Veterinary clients previously were not accustomed to this type of care. They were used to long waits in sometimes-crowded waiting rooms — often a stressful experience for both animals and their owners.

Traditional workflows created other headaches and frustrations for clients, too. For instance: inflexible appointment scheduling that frequently leads to missed or delayed appointments, or owners being separated from their pets during most exams and procedures.

On the other hand, modernized workflows inspired by the adaptations of 2020 could flip the traditional client experience, and go a long way toward long-term relationships between clinics and clients.

Veterinarians and clinic staff have also felt the strain of traditional, linear workflows, and veterinarians, in particular, are often overextended. Weinstein works with veterinarians to help them set up systems to optimize their work with pets while creating workflows that increase effectiveness, efficiency, predictability and consistency — all with the client experience in mind.

Here is where clinics can draw on lessons learned during the pandemic. The workflow adjustments that occurred amidst the public health emergency led to rapid changes in how clients wait on — and with — their pets during an appointment, and the shifts imposed a demand for workflow agility on veterinary staff members.

“I think we’re going to see the ‘labradoodle’ of practices emerge — a hybrid of in-clinic care and curbside care, which would include pet drop-offs and in-exam-room payments or virtual payment options.”

Dr. Peter Weinstein,  
executive director of the  
Southern California Veterinary  
Medical Association



Moving forward, clinics should give attention to what worked during the pandemic and focus on ways to evolve those successes into a long-term model. In assessing new workflows, veterinarians and practice managers should consider the key successes of pandemic-era care at their clinics. For many practices, check-in apps and touchless payment options emerged as standards with favorable long-term potential.

Similarly, veterinary practices need to look at what didn't work. Some examples of processes that were temporarily essential but not beneficial for the future include extended separation of pets and their owners during visits, long wait times in parking lots, and reduced face-to-face communication between the veterinarian and the client.

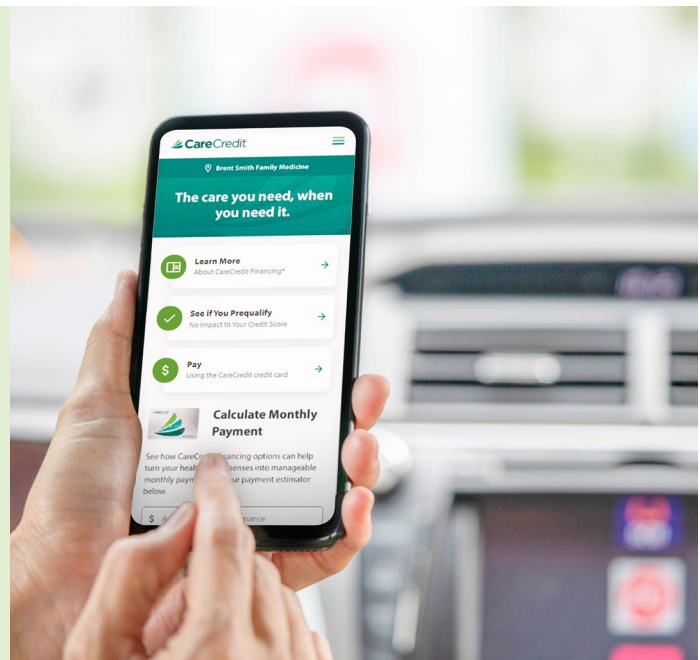
As workflows evolve through changing consumer expectations, pandemic protocols and post-pandemic analysis, the care models of the future come into clearer focus. They will eventually lead to Weinstein's goal: the end of veterinary clinic waiting rooms as we know them.

## FINANCIAL CARE: Empowering clients through proactive education

Historically, communication about cost and payment (i.e., “the money talk”) has been a pain point for the veterinary care industry.

### Challenges many clinics face include:

- Lack of consumer education resources related to veterinary costs
- Lack of upfront client expectations related to payment
- Lack of client awareness regarding payment options, including insurance and financing options
- Lack of consistent preventive care before major pet health events
- The increased emotional component of critical pet care



Many of these hurdles can be overcome by shifting to a strategy of proactive financial care for clients, as well as moving beyond creating financial policies to building healthy financial relationships. This can move the culture from a transactional, appointment-based approach to a relationship-driven, long-term approach.

When practice teams proactively communicate, educate and substantiate the value of being financially prepared to their clients, it can increase compliance, build loyalty, improve outcomes and result in financial success for the practice. Clients want and appreciate being empowered to pay for care throughout their pet's lifetime.

**In the veterinary practice of the future, the financial experience will be an integral component of a healthy client-centric experience.**

**Weinstein says veterinary practices can start the shift to proactive financial care by taking these steps:**

**1**

Start the conversation with clients early in the relationship when pets are young and costs are typically lower, as well as with every new client

**2**

Create educational and user-friendly resources to support healthy financial conversations and relationships readily available and easily accessible at every touchpoint — in the practice, on the website, and via appointment reminders and client communications

**3**

Provide solutions that simplify payment such as contactless technology, mobile payment apps and online payment portals

**4**

Leverage tools that streamline the payment process including showing which financing options are available.



“Get out in front of the client to help them understand that being prepared for a *lifetime of care* for any pet of any age allows them to have financial solutions ready.”

Boo Larsen,  
general manager and  
vice president of Veterinary  
Industry at CareCredit



Boo Larsen, general manager and vice president of Veterinary Industry at CareCredit, says proactivity — especially during earlier, preventive stages — is crucial to making financial care successful.

“Don’t leave these conversations to the last minute,” Larsen advises. “Get out in front of the client to help them understand that being prepared for a *lifetime of care* for any pet of any age allows them to have financial solutions ready — because those events are going to come.”

## TECHNOLOGY: Adopting tools that meet consumers where they are

Streamlined, adaptive workflows, including frictionless payment, do not happen on their own. Without intuitive technology, veterinary practices will find it a challenge to meet the demands and expectations of the modern consumer. Therefore, clinics must actively look for solutions to provide convenient, uncomplicated, real-time options that consumers want.

Within clinics, veterinary practices can adopt technologies that harmonize workflows and assist with everything from scheduling to check-in to payment to follow-up. Tools that are used internally within a practice are important in achieving these goals, but so are tools that clients can employ on their own devices, such as scheduling apps, scannable QR codes for insurance sign-up and payment, patient portals and more. Veterinary practices can also promote third-party technology tools that create a friendly client experience.

An example of these types of solutions is CareCredit’s custom link technology. It provides clients with a touchless, digital experience where they can learn about veterinary care financing, apply for the CareCredit credit card and pay from their mobile device and, if approved, use their account to pay for their pet’s visit immediately. The technology also provides an interactive payment calculator for consumers to help them budget for veterinary care.

The custom link experience also empowers clinics to give one-click access to flexible financing through:

- Direct communication via emails, texts, statements and estimates
- A QR code that clients can scan with their mobile device
- Website banners and buttons that allow remote application and payment



## CLIENT-CENTRIC EXPERIENCES: *Developing a lifetime-of-care mindset*

The competition for the hearts, minds and wallets of today's pet owners continues to grow and expand. Pet parents may be inundated with marketing from online and local sources that provides supplementary, partial or indirect options for veterinary care and advice.

While the marketplace often offers quick or cheap options, there is no replacement for the expertise and passion a veterinarian can provide through every stage of their pet's life. Putting a *lifetime-of-care* prism on your decision-making can make all the difference.

The mindset is comprehensive and can touch every interaction and connection, including payment. Proactive financial care is an ideal fit for a *lifetime of care*. Cost and payment will no longer be a colder, more detached element of veterinary care. "Moving from a transactional approach to a more relational, long-term approach is the solution," Larsen says.

The *lifetime-of-care* mentality is comprehensive and touches every interaction between the clinic and client. By reimagining veterinary care workflows, making visits easier on the pet and the owner, and integrating technology that supports communication, education and connection with clients, the practice of the future can be centered on building lifelong, loyal relationship, with clients — and, ultimately, empowering everyone to provide the best care for the pet.



To support all the ways you provide care, CareCredit offers an all-in-one digital financing experience personalized for your practice. This custom link gives clients an easy, contactless way to learn about, apply and pay with the CareCredit credit card from their mobile device. If approved, clients can choose from the special financing options available and make budget-friendly payments for everything from preventative care and diagnostics to specialty care. And they can use CareCredit again and again.

**Want to enroll your practice?**  
Call 800-300-3046 or visit [www.carecredit.com/vetenroll](http://www.carecredit.com/vetenroll).

**Already one of the 24,000+ veterinary hospital locations that accept CareCredit?**  
Visit [carecredit.com/mycustomlink](http://carecredit.com/mycustomlink).

This content is subject to change without notice and offered for informational use only. You are urged to consult with your individual business, financial, legal, tax, and/or other advisors with respect to any information presented. Synchrony and any of its affiliates, including CareCredit, (collectively, "Synchrony") makes no representations or warranties regarding this content and accept no liability for any loss or harm arising from the use of the information provided. Your receipt of this material constitutes your acceptance of these terms and conditions.

 **CareCredit**<sup>®</sup>  
Making care possible...today.