Advancing telehealth to enhance and expand patient care

They’re always inventing something fine,  
Which is fully automatic, and it saves you time.  
You push a little button and it’s all done for you,  
Easier than saying ABC.  
—Ninette, “Push a Little Button”

OMG! Can you believe the song “Push a Little Button” is from 1966? And it is still so relevant today! You can push a button or click a link to do just about anything these days. New technologies offer to make our lives easier and more efficient, and to free up time to do more enjoyable things with those we love. Telehealth is one such technology that—when utilized appropriately—can help make practicing veterinary medicine easier and more efficient. This is why the AVMA, along with Merck Animal Health and Veterinary Study Groups, founded the Coalition for Connected Veterinary Care, which has the support of almost 50 leading professional and industry organizations.

The goals of the coalition are to enhance and expand access to veterinary care by leveraging technology while safeguarding the health and welfare of animals and providing excellent service to the people who care for them. Many veterinary practices adopted the use of telehealth during COVID-19, but, like our counterparts in human medicine, its utilization has dropped with the resumption of in-person visits. Connected Care incorporates the best of in-person and virtual visits to build upon the trusting relationship between veterinarians and their clients, enhance the human-animal bond, improve compliance with medical recommendations, provide for remote monitoring, and allow for earlier intervention when problems develop.

The coalition is raising awareness about the benefits of telehealth as a part of veterinary practice, helping veterinary teams assess how they can better take advantage of telehealth technologies, refining current resources and developing new ones as needs arise, and determining the impacts of telehealth on quality of patient care, access to care, and practice efficiencies, among other things.

The coalition will be providing multiple CE opportunities on telehealth, including at the upcoming Viticus Group—WVC Annual Conference. We will review the current regulatory environment and share examples of the effective implementation of telehealth in companion animal and food animal practices.

To learn more about the coalition and its efforts to better serve patients, clients, veterinary teams, and practices, please scan the QR code or visit avma.org/connectedcare.

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I want to hear from you. Please reach out to me with your comments, questions and concerns at presidentscolumn@avma.org.