Survey data

1--Are you in some form of small animal practice in the US or Canada?
Yes, general small animal or mixed
Yes, small animal emergency practice
Yes, shelter medicine
Yes, relief work
Yes, small animal specialty or referral practice
Yes, feline only practice
Yes, mobile practice
No (Do not complete survey)

2-Graduation year

3-Are you a practice owner or an associate or contracted employee (includes relief vets)?

4-Male/Female

Survey questions

5-Do you routinely discuss general health care issues such as vaccinations, neutering or costs of health care and payment options with your clients? (If no, skip questions 6-17)

6-With what percentage of clients do you discuss vaccinations (not including rabies) at least once?
(Choices: None, <10%, 11-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-95%, over 95%):

7-Why do you discuss vaccinations with only some or select clients? (Select all that apply)
   -I do not think it is my responsibility
   -I do not feel knowledgeable enough
   -I do not want clients to feel I am pressuring them to vaccinate
   -I think most clients already know about the need for vaccinations
   -It is just too awkward of a conversation
   -Lack of time
   -I am concerned about vaccination reactions/adverse effects
   -I do not believe this is a good investment for my clients
   -I feel it detracts from my role as a veterinarian
   -Other

8-What is the PRIMARY reason you do not discuss vaccinations more frequently?
(Select one option)
   -I do not think it is my responsibility
   -I do not feel knowledgeable enough
   -I do not want clients to feel I am pressuring them to vaccinate
   -I think most clients already know about the need for vaccinations
   -It is just too awkward of a conversation

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9- With what percentage of clients do you discuss spaying or neutering (for intact non-breeding pets) at least once? (Choices: None, <10%, 11-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-95%, over 95%): 

10- Why do you discuss spaying and neutering with only some or select clients? (Select all that apply) 
- I do not think it is my responsibility 
- I do not feel knowledgeable enough 
- I do not want clients to feel I am pressuring them to do surgery 
- I think most clients already know about the merits of spaying or neutering 
- It is just too awkward of a conversation 
- Lack of time 
- I am concerned about anesthetic risks 
- I am concerned about negative consequences of spaying or neutering 
- Cultural norms in my client population regarding spaying or neutering 
- I do not believe this is a good investment for my clients 
- I feel it detracts from my role as veterinarian 
- Other 

11- What is the PRIMARY reason you do not discuss spaying or neutering more frequently? (Select one option) 
- I do not think it is my responsibility 
- I do not feel knowledgeable enough 
- I do not want clients to feel I am pressuring them to do surgery 
- I think most clients already know about the merits of spaying or neutering 
- It is just too awkward of a conversation 
- Lack of time 
- I am concerned about anesthetic risks 
- I am concerned about negative consequences of spaying or neutering 
- Cultural norms in my client population regarding spaying or neutering 
- I do not believe this is a good investment for my clients 
- I feel it detracts from my role as veterinarian 
- Other 

12- With what percentage of clients do you discuss the costs of care for sick pets before an illness occurs? That is, how often do you provide clients with an approximate measure of costs that might be incurred for diagnostic testing, hospitalization for an illness, a major surgery, etc. prior to an illness or trauma. Choices: None, <10%, 11-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-95%, over 95% (If answer is >95% skip questions 13 and 14)
13-Why do you discuss costs of care for sick pets before an illness occurs, with only some or select clients? (Select all that apply)
- I do not think it is my responsibility
- I am concerned it will have a negative impact on my relationship with client
- I am concerned the client may decide to go elsewhere for veterinary care
- I think most clients already know about costs of care
- It is just too awkward
- Lack of time
- I feel it would not change client behavior/financial preparation
- Other (please state):

14-What is the PRIMARY reason you do not discuss costs of care for sick pets before an illness occurs more frequently? (Select one)
- I do not think it is my responsibility
- I am concerned it will have a negative impact on my relationship with client
- I am concerned the client may decide to go elsewhere for veterinary care
- I think most clients already know about costs of care
- It is just too awkward
- Lack of time
- I feel it would not change client behavior/financial preparation
- Other (please state):

15-With what percentage of clients do you discuss pet health insurance at least once? (Choices: None, <10%, 11-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-95%, over 95%): (If answer is >95%, skip questions 9 and 10)

16-Why do you discuss pet health insurance with only some or select clients? (Select all that apply)
- I do not think it is my responsibility
- I do not feel knowledgeable enough
- I do not want clients to feel I am pressuring them to buy health insurance
- I think most clients already know about health insurance
- It is just too awkward of a conversation
- Lack of time
- I do not wish to be associated with insurance company policies
- I do not believe this is a good investment for my clients
- I think health insurance policies are too complex for most people to understand
- I feel it detracts from my role as veterinarian
- Other (please state):

17-What is the PRIMARY reason you do not discuss pet health insurance more frequently? (Select one option)
- I do not think it is my responsibility
- I do not feel knowledgeable enough
- I do not want clients to feel I am pressuring them to buy health insurance

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-I think most clients already know about health insurance
-It is just too awkward of a conversation
-Lack of time
-I do not wish to be associated with insurance company policies
-I do not believe this is a good investment for my clients
-I think health insurance policies are too complex for most people to understand
-I feel it detracts from my role as veterinarian
-Other (please state):

18-How often do divulged owner financial limitations (whether by choice or necessity) affect your ability to provide the quality of care you would like for patients in your practice?
- Multiple times daily
- Once daily
- A few times/week
- Once/week
- Once/month
- Never

19-Do you offer the “ideal” (everything you feel is necessary or warranted for the best likely patient outcome) diagnostic and therapeutic option to clients as one of several options?
- Yes to all clients
- Yes to most clients
- Yes to some clients
- Yes to few clients
- No

20-Why do you offer the ideal diagnostic and therapeutic option as one of a list of options to only some or select clients? (Select all that apply)
- Prior experience with other clients’ refusals for certain options
- Prior experience with the particular client’s previously expressed refusals or limitations
- Perception or intuitive judgment of a particular client’s willingness to accept an “ideal option”
- Personally struggle to justify the value of the “ideal” option
- “Ideal” option is not always available (e.g. too far away to access)
- Feel it would negatively impact my relationship with the client (e.g. might conclude I am trying to make more money)

21-“Professional burnout” is a term used to describe an emotional state experienced by some veterinarians. It includes: Disillusionment with one’s career, depression, a diminishment of original professional motivation, an increase in resentment towards clients, or a decrease in veterinary related interests and activities. How prevalent do you feel “professional burnout” is among private practice small animal veterinarians:
- None

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22-Please indicate your current level of “professional burnout”:
- None – skip next question
- Minimal
- Moderate
- Substantial
- No answer

23-How do clients’ financial limitations (by choice or necessity) impact your level of “professional burnout”? (Select one)
- No impact at all
- Minimal contribution; many other things impact burnout more
- Moderate contribution, but several other things impact burnout more
- One of many equal potential causes of professional burnout
- Possibly one of the leading causes of professional burnout
- Probably the leading cause of professional burnout

The following questions examine financing of veterinary care, including pet health insurance. This survey is independent and is not affiliated with or influenced by any financial or insurance company, nor does it imply any failure on your part if you do not offer, advise or recommend any particular financing option.

24-Does your hospital have any policy/policies to deal with owner financial limitations? Yes/No (If no, skip to question 29)

25-If yes to question 24, what are the options/policies the hospital offers? (Select all that apply)
- Credit services separate from hospital
- Hospital financing/payment plans
- Pro bono or discounted services
- Post-dated checks
- Other-please state

26-If yes to question 24, please cite the option/policy most commonly used (Select one):
- Credit services separate from hospital
- Hospital financing/payment plans
- Pro bono or discounted services
- Post-dated checks
- Other-please state

27-What percentage of clients offered such financial assistance options would you estimate elect to accept them? 0-10% 11-25, 26-50% 51-75% 76-95%, >95%
28-How do these options or policies impact your ability to provide the care you desire for your patients?
- Significantly decrease
- Decrease
- No change
- Increase
- Significantly increase
- Don’t know

29-Do you believe that increased pet owner awareness of costs of care before such costs are incurred, would impact the frequency of ‘economic euthanasia’? (defined as any of the following):
   a. A circumstance in which euthanasia is elected, either at the time of, or shortly after the examination, based primarily on the cost of veterinary medical care.
   b. A circumstance in which palliative veterinary care is elected based on the costs of care, resulting in euthanasia at a later time.

   Yes, it would likely decrease it
   Yes, it would likely increase it
   It would probably not have any impact
   Don’t know

30-Please indicate to what degree (if any) you feel increased client awareness of potential future costs of veterinary care would impact the following areas:
   Extremely positive impact, moderately positive impact, minimally positive impact, no impact, negative impact, no opinion
   - Preventative health care for your patients
   - Overall medical care (excluding preventative) for your patients
   - Financial stress of your clients
   - Clients’ money saving behaviors
   - Your ability to provide the medical care you feel is in the best interest of patients
   - Your relationships with clients
   - Your overall job stress level
   - Your overall job satisfaction

31-Please indicate your support level for the following options to increase pet owners’ knowledge regarding costs of veterinary care:
   Strongly support, support, neutral, oppose, strongly oppose
   - Modifications in veterinary school curricula to include more specific training for students on how to educate clients regarding costs of veterinary care
   - Development of general guidelines for veterinarians on how to discuss costs of veterinary care during initial wellness visits

32-Do you think there are other options for increasing pet owners’ knowledge about costs of veterinary care? Yes/No/Specify
33-What percentage of your clients would you estimate have pet health insurance?
None, 1-2%, 3-5%, 6-10%, >10%, don't know

34-Please indicate to what degree (if any) you believe increased adoption of pet health insurance by your clients would impact the following areas:
Extremely positive impact, moderately positive impact, minimally positive impact, no impact, negative impact, no opinion

Preventative health care for your patients
Medical care (excluding preventative) for your patients
Financial stress of your clients
Economic euthanasia
Your ability to provide the medical care you feel is in the best interest of patients
Your relationships with clients
Your overall job stress level
Your overall job satisfaction

35-Do you believe that client awareness or adoption of pet health insurance should be increased, decreased, or remain unchanged?
Increased-Proceed to next 2 questions
Decreased-Skip next 2 questions
Remain unchanged-Skip next 2 questions

36-Please indicate your support level for the following options to increase pet health insurance coverage:
(Strongly support, support, neutral, oppose, strongly oppose)

- Modifications in veterinary curricula to include specific training for students on how to educate clients regarding pet health insurance coverage
- Legislation mandating acquisition of pet health insurance for pet owners
- Legislation mandating either acquisition of pet health insurance or the financial means to provide veterinary care as a necessary condition for pet ownership
- Professional organizational promotion or endorsement of pet health insurance

37-Do you have other ideas about increasing pet health insurance coverage? (please state):

38-Do you have any other comments about the costs of pet health care?

Additional comments:
Thank you for completing the survey on costs of veterinary care.