

## Inspiring Ideas on How You Can Improve Compliance

By Wendy S. Myers

As a speaker, I get more satisfaction from hearing success stories from seminar attendees than the applause of a crowd. Cheers from 221 practice teams who attended our Compliance Summits in nine cities was thunderous, but even more impressive were actions they took back at their practices.

Participants shared successes that could inspire your team, too. Try these ideas from star participants:

### Compliance Success: Intestinal Parasite Screens



After attending our Compliance Summit in St. Louis, the team at Northgate Pet Clinic in Decatur, Ill., returned with a passion for zoonotic disease education and strategies to improve diagnostic testing.

During the first week, the team saw immediate results. They performed three to five more intestinal parasite screens each day and doubled the number of pre-paid intestinal parasite tests. Practice Manager Melissa Thornton, CVT, says her team implemented these steps:

- Reminds clients to bring stool samples when confirming appointments
- Trained staff on zoonosis and created scripts for phone and exam-room conversations
- Has clients look into the microscope when they find intestinal parasites
- Set up a callback for parasite medications dispensed
- Gives Companion Animal Parasite Council brochures to clients with overdue parasite screens
- Changed term from “fecal” to “intestinal parasite screen” in practice-management software
- Collects stool samples during exams if clients forget to bring samples

- Makes follow-up calls to clients with pre-paid intestinal parasite collection cups to remind them to return samples
- Tracks compliance compared to same month of the previous year
- Created staff incentives to improve compliance

If the team at Northgate Pet Clinic increases compliance for intestinal parasite testing by 20%, they will generate an additional \$16,598 over 12 months. As winner of our success stories contest, Northgate Pet Clinic will receive a one-hour webinar valued at \$250 from Communication Solutions for Veterinarians. But the real winners are clients who are better educated on zoonotic disease and patients with better diagnostics.

### **Compliance Success: Senior Screens**



At Compliance Summits, I taught attendees to screen records for missed opportunities (see “Use a Checklist to Be a Compliance Super Hero” in the June issue). After attending our summit in Oakdale, Minn., staff at Westfield Veterinary Hospital in Johnston, Iowa, began searching for missed reminders. A 14-year-old Cocker Spaniel named Pepsi didn’t have a senior wellness exam reminder. After correcting it, staff sent a postcard and Pepsi’s family made an appointment. Dr. Caryn Paulin uncovered health problems that led to a professional dental cleaning and splenectomy. Catching the overlooked senior exam led to \$1,884.51 in services.

“Pepsi is feeling much better, and the clients are very pleased with the results,” says Practice Manager Jessi Collins. “The doctors and staff feel great knowing that Pepsi received the best care plan. Without the Compliance Summit, we wouldn’t have looked into this patient’s file. Pepsi would still be uncomfortable and have a dirty mouth.”

### **Compliance Success: Preventative Sales**

After participating in our Compliance Summit in Livonia, Mich., Gull Lake Animal Hospital in Richland, Mich., created a price reference sheet for six and 12 months of parasite preventatives. Laminated sheets are in exam rooms and at reception stations.

“Everyone can flip through the chart and give quick, accurate information to our clients about preventatives,” says Practice Manager Cari Richmond.

Greater savings on 12 packs are encouraging year-round compliance and improving sales. It’s a win-win strategy for the practice and patients.

### **Compliance Success: Overdue Reminder Calls**



Staff at Town & Country Veterinary Services in Hastings, Minn., learned reminder strategies at our Compliance Summit in Oakdale, Minn. Team members reviewed April reminders and then called clients who didn’t respond for wellness services and preventative refills. “Many were thankful for the call,” says Dr. Julie Woodman.

Of 32 non-compliant clients, 12 made appointments. That’s a 38% response rate! Staff created a check-in sheet for technicians to use when taking histories. The checklist helps staff consistently explain wellness services. Next, the team will create senior wellness and weight-management packets to educate clients.

### **Compliance Success: Dentistry**

At our Compliance Summit in Columbus, Ohio, participants learned how to use body language and visual aids when presenting dental treatment plans. I also gave tips on setting dental fees by grade and presenting CareCredit as a financing alternative. Kathy O’Brien, clinic coordinator at North Royalton Animal Hospital in North Royalton, Ohio, says technicians and assistants now use pictures of Grade 1 to 4 dental disease when presenting treatment plans. If owners can’t afford professional dental cleanings, team members present CareCredit and break down monthly payments. As a result, more clients are saying yes to dental care.

### **Compliance Success: Stronger Reminders**

At every staff meeting, employees are working on compliance improvements, reports Practice Manager Amy Adamek at Burlington Longview Animal Hospital in Burlington, Wis. Her team attended our Compliance Summit in Chicago and learned client-friendly medical terms,

pricing strategies to encourage year-round preventative compliance, and communication techniques.

The first week after the summit, staff began using Purina's fecal scoring system to help clients' identify the stage of their pets' stool for better diagnosis. They started using the term "intestinal parasite screen" instead of "fecal." When receptionists make appointment confirmation calls, they remind clients to bring stool samples. Adjustments to the reminder system also are improving response rates.

Ongoing staff meetings will help the team stay focused on compliance and implement strategies. Next on the agenda is addressing internet pharmacy requests from clients, converting phone shoppers into new clients, and revising dental prices by grade.

As you'll see from these success stories, involving the entire team gets powerful results. Join us for our upcoming Compliance Summits that offer seven hours of continuing-education credit as well as exciting opportunities to impact your patients and practice.

### **About the Author:**



Wendy S. Myers owns Communication Solutions for Veterinarians in Denver. Her consulting firm helps teams improve compliance, client service and practice management. Communication Solutions for Veterinarians has provided mystery phone shopper training to more than 2,600 receptionists nationwide. Wendy is a partner in Animal Hospital Specialty Center, a 13-doctor AAHA-accredited referral practice offering internal medicine, surgery, neurology, oncology, specialty dentistry, and emergency care in Highlands Ranch, Colorado. She is the author of four books and five videos. Subscribe to Communication Solutions for Veterinarians' e-newsletter on our website at: [www.csvets.com](http://www.csvets.com). E-mail Wendy at: [wmyers@csvets.com](mailto:wmyers@csvets.com).