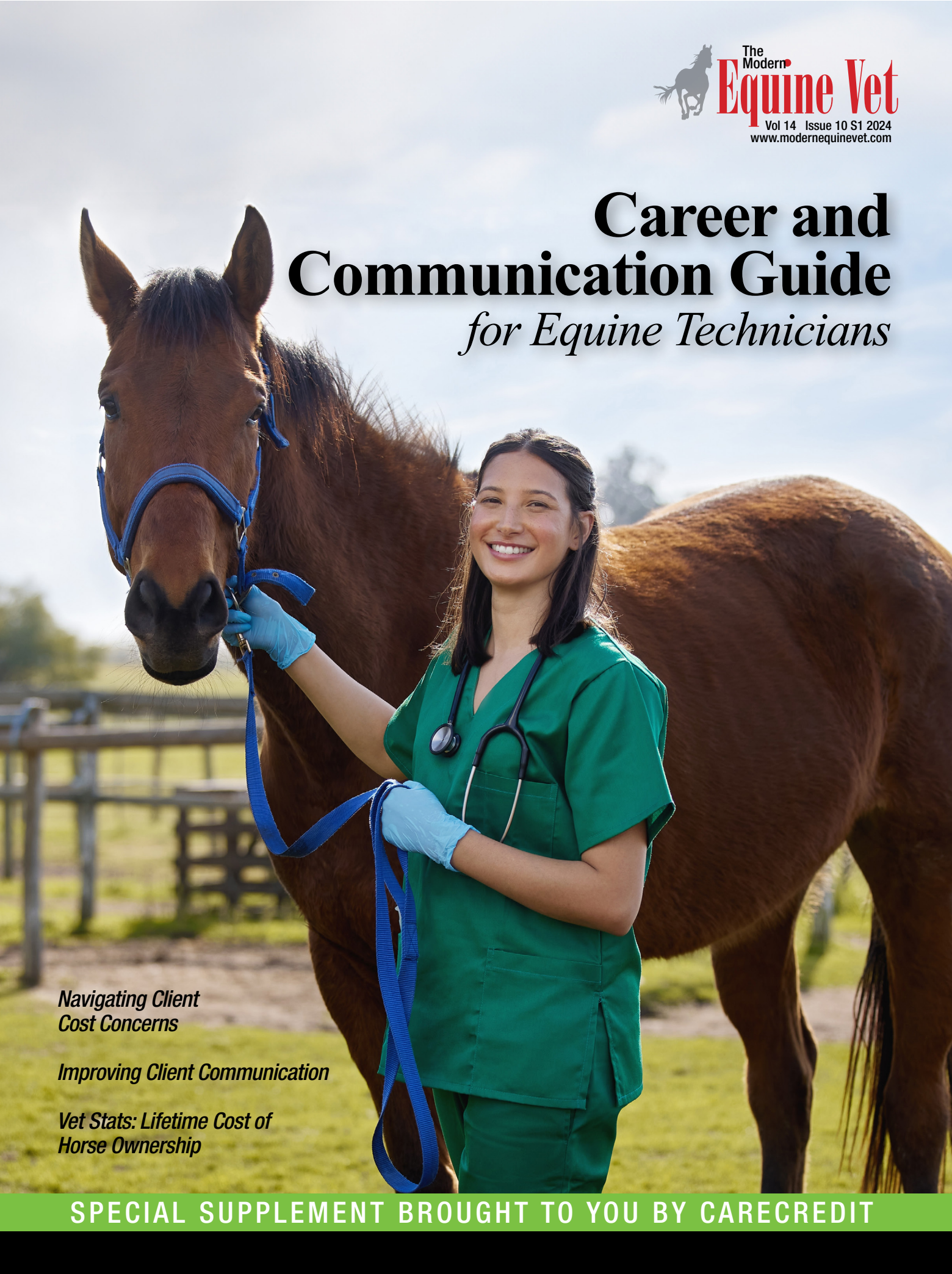


Career and Communication Guide *for Equine Technicians*



*Navigating Client
Cost Concerns*

Improving Client Communication

*Vet Stats: Lifetime Cost of
Horse Ownership*

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT BROUGHT TO YOU BY CARECREDIT

Career and Communication Guide for Equine Technicians

Equine medicine is a different “animal,” Travis Otremba, CrVT, told me while we were shooting the video featured at right. So are veterinary technicians. They are the bridge between the client and the veterinarian, providing highly skilled care, acting as a communication hub, ensuring patients are treated properly—and much more! They’ve come a long way from being the person who held the horse while the veterinarian provided all the care.

Equine technicians today are valued and valuable team members and the need for them will increase, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as the number of equine veterinarians decreases.

This special supplement, brought to you by CareCredit, is a curated collection of resources and insights that, while not all originally written for equine technicians, are deeply relevant to your daily work. These pieces have been selected because they align with the skills, challenges and responsibilities you face as a technician. They also highlight growth opportunities to help you advance in your career. We hope this content not only inspires but equips you with the knowledge and tools to continue excelling as a valued—and valuable—member of the equine team.



An interview with Travis Otremba, CrVT
Increasing Your Value in Equine Practice

Watch the video with Travis Otremba, CrVT



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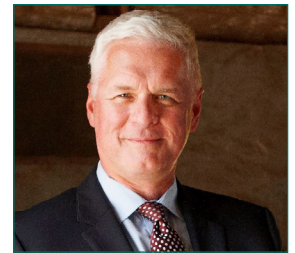
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How Can Mentorship Help Equine Technicians Grow Their Confidence and Competence?

BY MARIEL HENDRICKS, MVED, RVTG, FVTE,
& ADDIE REINHARD, DVM, MS

AT MENTORVET, WE KNOW THAT MENTORSHIP CAN BE TRANSFORMATIVE for early-career veterinary technicians. The burnout and compassion fatigue that come with the stresses of being an equine technician are too often overlooked. But having someone to guide them both professionally and emotionally can make all the difference. The right mentor can offer a blend of skill development, career advancement opportunities, and personal support that is essential for their long-term success and well-being.

ENHANCED DEVELOPMENT

It's always beneficial to learn from an experienced professional, especially when it comes to taking care of the unique needs of equine clients and patients. When technicians have a mentor they can gain knowledge from, whether by working together on a skill in-clinic or asking a question over the phone, they can grow their skill set more quickly. Taking the opportunity to enhance their abilities leads to higher competence, confidence and efficiency. Which can make equine technicians highly valuable—and valued—team members.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Mentors can help technicians identify their career goals and provide guidance to enable them to follow their ambitions. For instance, if a technician aspires to attain a Veterinary Technician Specialty (VTS) in equine nursing, a mentor can provide advice on the necessary steps and offer support throughout the process. Mentors can also help technicians build a network of advisors, leaders and advocates,

which can lead to new learning and job opportunities, collaborations or speaking engagements.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The ability to communicate confidently and effectively is essential for technicians—whether it's with a client, a team member or a veterinarian. Mentors can be trusted coaches in this journey. For example, a mentor could help the technician role-play challenging conversations about cost of care and payment, providing a safe space to practice and refine these types of crucial skills.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

We can't say enough about how important it is to have someone to call at the end of the day who can empathize with our experiences. A support system is essential to healthy growth as a technician. We all need someone who understands the pressures of the job and can offer advice on managing stress. A mentor can be that guide in setting boundaries, gaining emotional intelligence and practicing self-care.

INVESTING IN TECHNICIANS IS INVESTING IN EQUINE MEDICINE

Technicians are very important to the functionality and sustainability of our practices. Investing in their well-being is investing in the future of the equine veterinary industry. At the end of the day, strong and healthy team members can help lead to a strong and financially healthy practice.

CareCredit is passionate about empowering technicians in their financial, emotional and professional growth. You can discover resources to help technicians grow in all three areas of their job in our [Equine Care Resource Center](#). And you can sign up for a new Financial Care course sponsored by CareCredit, where you'll earn 8 hours of RACE-approved CE upon completion.

[CLICK HERE FOR COURSE INFORMATION](#)



Mariel Hendricks, MVED, RVTg, is the director of learning and development at MentorVet. Since receiving her bachelor's degree in Veterinary Technology from Purdue in 2010, she has served on the Indiana Veterinary Technology Association Board, the NAVTA Executive Board and the Central Indiana Veterinary Medical Association Board.



Addie Reinhard, DVM, MS, is a veterinary well-being researcher as well as founder and CEO of MentorVet. She received her master's degree in Community and Leadership Development and a graduate certificate in College Teaching and Learning from the University of Kentucky. She also has a certificate in Veterinary Human Support.

Celebrate technicians—the heart of equine care.

Empower them to thrive in their many roles.

Technicians play an incredibly important role in equine practices. Along with the myriad of patient care responsibilities they take on, they also play an integral part in building healthy relationships with horse owners. CareCredit has developed resources to help support the growth and empowerment of technicians in all their patient care responsibilities including the sponsorship of the [2023 AAHA Tech Utilization Guidelines](#). Together, we can help equine technicians in their pursuit to perform at their highest ability.



Compassionate Caregiver

Provides empathetic care to horses while also offering reassurance and comfort to clients.

EMPOWER +

BOUNDARY PROTECTION

Self-compassion is just as important as client compassion. [Dr. Amy Grice's article "Resilience and Boundaries"](#) offers tips for finding the balance.



Trust Builder

Establishes a bond with both horses and their owners through consistent, compassionate interactions, making clients feel confident in the care being provided.

EMPOWER +

FINANCIALLY PREPARED CLIENTS

Enhance trust by letting clients know friendly payment options like the [CareCredit health and animal care credit card](#) are available. It shows you understand cost can be a concern.





Client Educator

Is always ready to answer any questions clients have about their horse's care plan.

EMPOWER +

BONUS KNOWLEDGE

The **Equine Lifetime of Care Study** reveals the emotional and financial factors of horse ownership, offering a deeper understanding of clients.



Cost Communicator

Builds transparent financial relationships with clients to ease stress about cost and payment.

EMPOWER +

COST CONVERSATION TIPS

Considerate communication about cost is important. CareCredit's **Financial Care Tip Sheet** offers insights to help you feel comfortable talking about cost and financing options with horse owners.



Get access to these resources and more to empower and energize your technicians and team on our [equine resource site](#).

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Community, Empowerment and Tenacity—

Executive Board Involvement Can Grow it All!

BY ELI OLIND, LVT

AS I WAS GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL, I had no idea where I wanted to go with my future. I loved rodeo, but I knew I wasn't talented enough to make a living at it.

After touring Eastern Wyoming College (EWC), reviewing the different degree programs and speaking with teachers, the only program that sparked my interest was the Veterinary Technology Program. Patti Sue Peterson and Dr. Susan Walker, who were teachers in the program at the time, were very straight to the point and told it like it was, which made me feel like that was a program I would like. A few weeks before graduating high school I decided to attend EWC, get an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Veterinary Technology and compete on EWC's rodeo team.

Graduating from EWC in December 2010, I was set to take the Veterinary Technician National Exam and join the workforce as a credentialed veterinary technician. In 2011 I joined the Big Sky Veterinary Technician Association (BSVTA) and became a certified veterinary technician in Montana. When I joined the BSVTA, I knew I would attend continuing education (CE) meetings, but I had no way of knowing just how much that association would impact my career as a veterinary technician and lead me to becoming a part of the American



Association of Equine Veterinary Technicians and Assistants (AAEVT). I had zero aspirations about being in a leadership position of an association, but all of that changed in 2013 while attending a CE event hosted by the BSVTA.

The BSVTA was on the verge of fully dissolving, which would mean there would be no credentialing of veterinary technicians in Montana. Some of us put our hands in the air and volunteered to create a new executive board and rebuild the association. By sticking my hand in the air and saying yes to a challenge with the association, my career in veterinary technology has taken many pathways and opened networking opportunities I had never dreamed would be available to me. Saying yes to these challenges has helped build my resume in additional ways as well as my technician skill sets, be part of a larger community in the veterinary world, feel a higher level of empowerment in my career, and find a level of tenacity that I never knew was in me for facing difficult conversations regarding veterinary technology's future.

Since 2013, I have played a large role in rebuilding the BSVTA into a strong association that works closely with the Montana Veterinary Medical Association. We have been able to pass legislation for the licensure of veterinary technicians under the Montana State Veterinary Board, build a "scope of practice" for LVTs to be used to a higher level in Montana, and add an additional seat to Montana's veterinary board to be held by an LVT.

In January 2020, the BSVTA invited Deb Reeder, RVT, VTS-EVN, the executive director for the AAEVT from 2002-2022, to speak at 1 of our CE events about building your career as a veterinary technician. Deb was also lined up to speak at the MVMA CE meeting that was happening at the same time on technician utilization. It was at that BSVTA CE event that I was introduced to the AAEVT and became a member. A whole new world of networking with another group of amazing technicians, assistants and support staff took off.

Since 2020 I have been attending AAEVT events and getting to meet people who have become great friends. That is one of my most favorite things about the AAEVT. I became instant friends with just about every person I met in this organization because we share the same passion for doing the best for our equine patients.

In the fall of 2022, I was approached by the regional director to see if I would be interested in becoming a regional contact for the AAEVT. After spending the last 10 years in leadership of the BSVTA and reaching some amazing goals, I was ready for a new challenge so I said yes. As a regional contact, I oversaw communications with the members in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Indiana and Illinois. This was fantastic networking and brought some firsts to my career, like

being on an episode of "Kendra the Vet Tech" podcast. It is so wonderful to get to meet the members in your region in person when you attend an AAEVT event. In the fall of 2023 I was contacted by Wiss Costanza, the executive director of the AAEVT, as I had been voted on by the executive board to become the 2024 president-elect.

Even though I had been in leadership of an association for several years I was still quite nervous about saying yes to accepting a leadership position with a national organization. I had fallen into a comfort zone of dealing with veterinary technician advancement at the state level. Falling into a comfort zone is what can make your career stagnant though so I needed to tap into the community, the empowerment and the tenacity that I had developed over my years of leading the BSVTA and bring that to the AAEVT.

Falling into a comfort zone is what can make your career stagnant, so I needed to tap into the community, the empowerment and the tenacity that I had developed.

In my president-elect year for the AAEVT I will be helping the AAEVT's executive board accomplish goals to advance the equine veterinary team, work with equine veterinary industry partners, set up case studies and wet labs for the AAEVT's national conference to be held in conjunction with the AAEP's conference in Orlando, Fla., in December, and assist wherever the executive board needs me.

Saying yes to becoming an executive board member of the AAEVT has introduced me to a larger community within the veterinary world, allowed me to grow my network, and made me feel more empowered in my leadership abilities to help improve an industry that is so close to our hearts. Joining your local and national technician organizations has many advantages personally and professionally, and I urge everyone to get involved in the betterment of their profession.



Eli Olind, LVT, who was born and raised in Montana, is the President-Elect of the AAEVT. He grew up in the ranching and mining community of Whitehall, and attended Eastern Wyoming College, where he received an AAS in Veterinary Technology and competed on the rodeo team. He has competed in rodeo since the age of 5, and has a background in showing horses and pigs, livestock judging, and working for professional rodeo stock contractors. He has 3 horses, 2 dogs and 3 cats, and still competes in rodeo as a tie-down roper.

Let's talk effective communication with horse owners

Three tips inspired by the AVMA's language strategy study.¹

TIP 1

Be transparent

Horse owners often underestimate equine care expenses,² so they appreciate when veterinarians clearly communicate how much their veterinary care will be up front. What they don't want is to be surprised by the final bill when it's time to pay.

So, take the time to walk them through the treatment plan you recommend and its associated costs. That way you move forward with their horse's care knowing you're both on the same page.

“ Try Saying —————

Based on my findings from the initial exam, these are my recommendations for treatment. Let me walk you through what that entails and the associated costs.

”

This showcases your thoughtful approach to care and leaves the door open for further conversations about cost.



TIP 2

Be a trusted partner

Show clients, through your words and actions, that you are a partner in their horse's health. Let them know you care about their opinions and have empathy for their unique situations. Many horse owners feel stress about horse expenditures,² so if they bring up an issue with cost, approach the discussion as a team and try to find a treatment solution that works for everyone.

“ Try Saying —————

My recommendation starts with what I believe is the ideal treatment plan for your horse. I can also share a range of other options if you have concerns about cost. Together we can make an informed decision that works for both you and your horse.

”

Emphasizing the partnership between you and your client shows you support them in whatever choice they make. It also lets them know they're not alone in making decisions about their horse's health.



TIP 3

Share a friendly way to pay

It's important for clients to know they have an option to help them get their horse's veterinary care when they need it. After all, 90% of horse owners will keep their horse for a lifetime.²

When you offer a financing solution like the CareCredit health and animal care credit card, you help prepare horse owners for lifelong veterinary care.

“ Try Saying

There are payment options that can help you finance your horse's veterinary care. The CareCredit health and animal care credit card allows you to pay over time for equine expenses, helping you fit care into your monthly budget.

Proactively bringing up a financing option can help horse owners be better prepared for future expenses. They can feel at ease knowing there's a flexible way to pay for veterinary care.



When you offer flexible financing, clients hear “I care about you and your horse.”

Engage with horse owners about veterinary costs to show them you care about their horse's health as well as their budget. Listening to their concerns is just as important as talking about solutions. Foster better communication by being attentive to their unique situation. This helps them trust you, as their veterinarian, on their journey to lifelong horse care.

A payment option you can feel confident talking to horse owners about is the CareCredit health and animal care credit card. It can be used to help your clients manage costs so their horse can get the care they need.



Not yet enrolled? Get started for free.

Reach out to Autumn Miller, your Equine Account Specialist, at **904-815-1524** or **autumn.miller@carecredit.com** to apply or learn more. Mention code MEV0624VA.

Or visit carecredit.com/equineinsights.

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¹The Cost of Veterinary Care: Language Strategy, American Veterinary Medical Association, September 2022. We have adapted the findings of this companion animal study for relevance to equine practitioners.

²CareCredit Equine Lifetime of Care Study, 2023. CareCredit is a Synchrony solution.

How can I help my clients be **Financially Prepared for Equine Care?**

BY MIKE POWNALL, DVM, MBA

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU FOUND YOURSELF IN THE FOLLOWING SCENARIO? A horse needs emergency care, but the owner balks at the cost. They ask if your practice can extend credit. While you discuss options, the horse is suffering and your frustration grows. Why don't they have insurance or an emergency fund? Why are they so unprepared? Don't they know horses are accidents waiting to happen?

As equine practitioners we deal with clients' financial challenges on a regular basis. And these challenges aren't limited to emergencies: horse owners are often just as unprepared to pay for routine care or chronic issues such as ongoing lameness. The solution is to offer clients financial care just as you provide patient care. Here are four strategies that can help you do this.

1 BUILD A HEALTHY FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIP FROM DAY ONE.

Be proactive about establishing a financial relationship with your clients early on. This means helping them figure out a way to pay before the crisis moment. Be open and transparent about the cost of equine care, and discuss the payment options you offer to help them be ready for the unexpected (and the expected) throughout their horse's lifetime.

2 BE AWARE OF THE FINANCIAL REALITIES HORSE OWNERS FACE.

Depending on the type of horse they own (competitive, recreational or backyard), your clients may spend anywhere from nearly \$300,000 to \$900,000-plus taking care of their horse over its life.¹ What's more, owners tend to vastly underestimate these costs, spending three or four times more on their horses than they realize—no wonder 85% of them feel some kind of stress about horse-

related expenditures.¹ Your understanding of these realities can lead to empathy and a foundation of trust between you and your clients.

3 HAVE A CLEAR FINANCIAL POLICY THAT SETS THE STAGE FOR LIFELONG CARE.

An ideal veterinary service agreement establishes your expectation that payment will be rendered at the time of service, lists the types of payment you accept, and highlights the value of your expertise in keeping horses healthy. In addition to sharing your policy at the first client visit, make sure to post it on your website and include it in brochures, treatment plans, invoices, client newsletters and so on.

4 OFFER PAYMENT OPTIONS THAT GIVE CLIENTS A WAY TO MANAGE COSTS.

Insurance, wellness plans and financing solutions such as the CareCredit health and animal care credit card are all excellent ways to help clients manage lifelong costs. Everyone on your team—CSRs, technicians, practice managers, billing coordinators and veterinarians—should be comfortable talking about these options. Consider staff training focused on cost-of-care discussions (CareCredit offers a number of resources at carecredit.com/equine insights), and note that financing is not just for emergencies—many horse owners use it for preventive care too. To make it easy for them to pay, provide convenient online and mobile payment options accessible through their phones or computers.

In my experience, the biggest benefit of these financial strategies is healthier horses getting the care they need. Whether you're dealing with an emergency colic or routine vaccination series, wouldn't you prefer to get right to providing care? Clients who are prepared with an established way to pay are much more likely to help you do just that.

1. CareCredit Equine Lifetime of Care Study, 2023, equinelifetimeofcare.com. CareCredit is a Synchrony solution.



To discover more about how veterinary financing can help you, your patients, your clients and your practice, visit [CareCredit's Equine Insights page](https://carecredit.com/mycustomlink). Learn how you can provide the contactless digital financing clients want at carecredit.com/mycustomlink.

Dr. Mike Pownall, co-owner of McKee-Pownall Equine Services near Toronto, is a practicing veterinarian and veterinary business management consultant. He writes and speaks frequently on business topics for the equine veterinary profession.

VET STATS

LIFETIME COST OF HORSE OWNERSHIP

\$300,000 TO > \$900,000.

Basic costs, not including event participation or operating expenses:

Competitive: \$575,000

Recreational: \$295,000

Backyard/pasture: \$215,000

With those costs:

Competitive: \$924,270+

Recreational: \$412,001+

Backyard/pasture: \$288,992+

90%

of horse owners will keep their horses for life, which could be at least

25 YEARS.



Hey vet techs, here's why
WE LOVE YA!

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You're a
vet-assisting ,
specimen- ,
collecting, med-
administering  ,
member of
the team. 

And here's how
WE SUPPORT YA!


WELL-BEING
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TO RALLY
YOUR SPIRITS

