



GAVet



All Creatures Great & Small

GVMA President Dr. Mike Zager

See page 6
for details!

www.gvma.net





BUSH VETERINARY
NEUROLOGY SERVICE

The ABCs of BVNS



Advanced Diagnostics

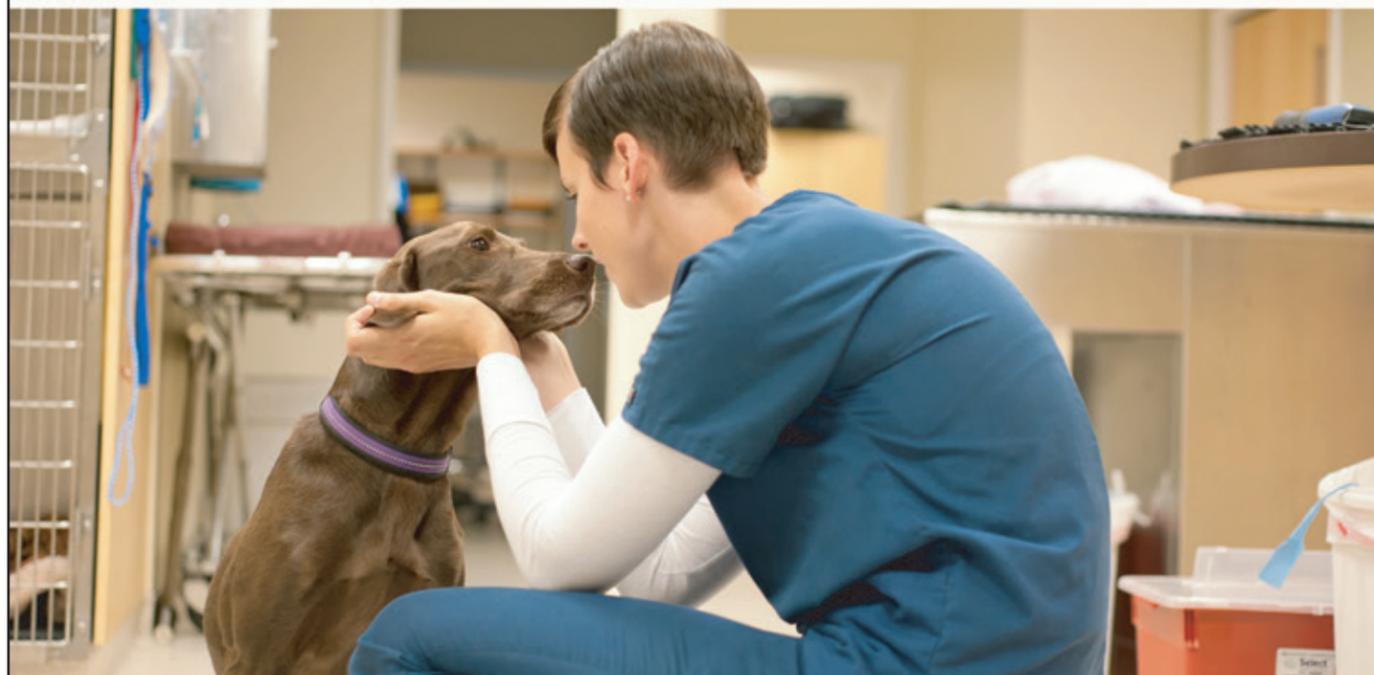
Our on-site MRI, the gold standard in imaging, allows us to provide same-day diagnostics and surgery six days a week.

Board-Certified Neurologists

Our team of Board-Certified Neurologists works at the cutting edge of veterinary neurology allowing your patients and clients to benefit from the latest research and innovation.

Compassionate Care

At BVNS, we are committed to providing you, your clients and your patients the best service and compassionate care.



For more information on services offered, please visit us at www.bvns.net.

Appointments available. Call now to schedule.

P 678.400.0042 | 7800 Highway 92 • Woodstock, GA 30189

**LEADERS IN
PATIENT
CARE
SINCE 1950**

**A unique team of professionals and students
here to support you and your patients.**



At the UGA Veterinary Teaching Hospital, you'll find the latest technology, advanced treatment options, and a team of doctors, nurses and students who care about your clients and patients. So the next time you need to make a referral, look no further than UGA!



**Veterinary
Teaching Hospital
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

vet.uga.edu/hospital 706.542.3221

contents



Q & A with our new president, Dr. Mike Zager.

- 15 DVMs Wanted: 9 Ways to Recruit Top Talent**
By: Katz, Sapper and Miller
- 18 Are You a Firefighter or a Veterinarian?**
By: Wendy Myers
- 22 Veterinary Nurse Initiative**
- 24 New GVMA Membership Benefit: Employee Assistance Program**
- 26 Renew Your Membership Online!**
- 27 GVMA 2018 Award Winners**
- 28 What's Going On With My Health Insurance?**
By: Philip Ladner
- 30 Georgia Grown: Baby Barn**

- 5 President's Message**
By: Dr. Mike Zager
- 6 All Creatures Great and Small**
By: Lindsay Corley
- 10 Member Profile: Dr. West Hamryka**
- 12 The Nuances of Corporate Consolidation**
By: Dr. Doyle Watson
- 14 GVMA Foundation Awarded Spay/Neuter Grant**
By: Dr. Wendy Cuevas



President's Message

A Rose by Any Other Name...

I personally support the name change from Veterinary Technician to Veterinary Nurse, but there is much more to this issue than just a name change. We will need standardization of nomenclature, educational levels, and state licensing issues—all of which can be dealt with by strong leadership and commitment. But it seems to me the more important issue that we are trying to promote is a career opportunity within the veterinary profession.

Studies have been done showing that a well-trained Veterinary Technician/Nurse can increase productivity, improve patient care, and increase profits. I have to ask—can we produce enough Veterinary Nurses/Technicians to meet the potential need? Will this population of trained nurses/technicians be available to all levels of practices or just the big practices in big cities?

If the Veterinary Nurse/Technician is going to be a career, are we as the veterinary profession prepared to support this monetarily? How will the different levels of education/training be handled since we have some that were retrained in-house, some that were retrained on-line, some have a 2 year degree and others have a 4 year degree? So, if this is to become a career, we will need to make this career worthy: we need to support our own while providing quality care, decreasing animal suffering, and promoting the human-animal bond.

Dr. Mike Zager,
President, GVMA



Dr. Mike Zager



Georgia Veterinary Medical Association
2200 Century Parkway, Suite 725
Atlanta, GA 30345
678.309.9800 • 800.853.1625
Fax: 678.309.3361 • e-mail: GVMA@gvma.net

GVMA Officers
Dr. Mike Zager..... President
(706) 632-7387 • cmzager30540@gmail.com
Dr. Jill Lancaster..... President Elect
(478) 474-3616 • plantationcentre@bellsouth.net
Dr. Keri Riddick..... Immediate Past President
(706) 689-6240 • driddick@benninganimalhospital.com
Dr. Duffy Jones..... Treasurer
(404) 812-9880 • djones@peachtreehillsvet.com

GVMA Directors
Dr. Jackie Luckstone..... District I
(912) 638-2583 • jluckstone@nvanet.com
Dr. Bo Curles..... District II
(229) 377-1803 • bocurles@gmail.com
Dr. Caitrona Matthews..... District III
(706) 202-1966 • cmatthews3719@gmail.com
Dr. Hiro Iwamoto..... District IV
(404) 550-2546 • iwamotohiro@hotmail.com
Dr. Jennifer Pittman..... District V
(404) 459-0903 • Jennifer.pittman@bluepearl.com
Dr. Sherri Ray..... District VI
(770) 461-4211 • ronrayjr@comcast.net
Dr. John Tarabula..... District VII
(770) 479-0111 • jtarabula@windstream.net
Dr. Brandon Pinson..... District VIII
(478) 994-4986 • brandonpinson@gmail.com
Dr. Rachel Eddleman..... District IX
(706) 499-1676 • eddlemandvm@gmail.com
Dr. Beth Yash..... District X
(706) 549-7387 • bethyashdvm@gmail.com
Dr. Justin Toth..... District XI
(770) 419-8086 • drtoth@dhah.org
Dr. Keith Curcio..... District XII
(678) 835-3300 • info@ngvetspecialists.com
Dr. Seyedmehdi Mobini..... AVMA Delegate
(478) 825-6424 • mobinis@fvsu.edu
Dr. Justin Toth..... AVMA Alternate Delegate
(770) 419-8086 • drtoth@dhah.org

Ex Officio
Dr. Lisa Nolan..... UGA CVM..... Dean
Dr. Robert Cobb..... State Veterinarian
Dr. John Sundstrom..... President, State Board
Dr. Christopher Young..... USDA Veterinarian in Charge
Dr. Julie Gabel..... State Public Health Veterinarian-GA Div. of Public Health
Cook English..... DVM Candidate-UGA CVM SAVMA President
Dr. Ali Daniel..... GVMA Foundation Chair

GVMA Staff
Susan Blevins..... Executive Director
Susan@gvma.net
Lindsay Corley..... Membership Manager
Lindsay@gvma.net
Billie Scroggs..... Meetings / Memb. Coordinator
Billie@gvma.net
Dr. Wendy Cuevas..... Director of Veterinary Services
Wendy@gvma.net

The Georgia Veterinarian is an official publication of the Georgia Veterinary Medical Association and editorial content and opinion expressed here in do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the GVMA. Advertisement and promotion in this publication does not constitute an endorsement by the GVMA.



All Creatures Great & Small

Mike Zager knew he wanted to be a veterinarian at the age of 14. He was working as a kennel tech at a clinic in Griffin where he developed a passion for caring for animals and says that with a little “divine intervention” was able to attend the University of Georgia’s College of Veterinary Medicine. He was drawn to mixed animal practice when he realized he would rather be outside than work within the confines of a clinic. During his senior year, he interviewed for a position in Statesboro when a professor suggested he visit a veterinarian in Ellijay who was in need of large animal help. Zager took the position thinking he would stay 3-4 years, yet, over 40 years later, he still calls Ellijay and Ocoee Animal Hospital his home.

The make-up of the North Georgia Mountains has changed, Zager says, since the addition of Highway 515 which connects the once small rural towns of Blue Ridge, Ellijay, and Cherry Log, to suburban Atlanta. The area has become a weekend get-away filled with rental cabins and apple orchards. Mixed in are small family farms passed down from generation to generation. The farms are still vital to the local economy and are where “Dr. Mike” focuses most of this work. After driving 20 minutes from the main road to a place where the windy mountain roads turn from pavement to dirt is where you will find Davis Farm. Dr. Zager has spent years caring for the family’s prized Angus heifers. These animals know the truck of their owner, Mitchell Davis, and take a break from lounging under the picturesque mountain view after he signals, “come on girls.” His wife has named one of the cows, Lucy, who nudges the back of his leg in hopes of receiving some grain. Dr. Zager stands in the middle, petting the animals, unafraid of their size and strength. He says his favorite part of the job, other than caring for animals, is the relationships with clients like Mitchell and his family. These heifers are the family’s livelihood and they have partnered for several years with Dr. Zager to make sure they not only receive the best medical care, but also one day fetch top dollar at a sale barn.

When asked to describe his life as a mixed animal veterinarian, Dr. Mike Zager refers to the books written by the famed British veterinarian, James Herriot. Like Herriot, the years of unpredictability that comes with practicing mixed animal medicine have left him with plenty of good stories. “One dark and stormy night, I got called to a farm on the top of a mountain to help a laboring cow in distress. These people are not serious cattle people, they see these cows more as pets, and this poor little heifer was working so hard trying to have her baby but this calf just didn’t want to come out. She was also, obviously, not in the best mood! I go into the barn and over to her stall to give her a light tranquilizer so I can perform an exam. At which time she looks at me, snorts, and charges through the electric fence and out into the woods. Now remember, I started this story with saying it’s a dark and stormy night! So I now have an anxious cow, in the middle of the woods, on a dark and stormy night. I am looking around and thinking, “How are we going to find this girl?” I eventually found her by spotting the green reflection in the back of her eyes. Because she was a little sedated at this point we were able to get a rope around her, tie her up, and help to deliver her calf out in the middle of the rain!”

A typical day for Dr. Zager consists of hours spent driving in his specially equipped truck making farm calls to administer vaccines, carry out routine blood work, and perform castrations. However, his life is rarely 9:00-5:00 and he must adjust, accommodate, and improvise to practice medicine out in the field. “One time when it was snowing a cow broke her confines and came charging towards me. Even though I am no “Roy Rogers”, I somehow managed to get my lasso around her neck. She had just given birth and was still really upset and not able to feed her baby. Her poor little calf was just lying in the snow and we knew it was not a good situation. Somehow we were able to secure the cow, milk her, and give the calf the colostrum to survive.”

In resemblance to the connections in James Herriot’s books, Dr. Zager has formed strong bonds not only with the animals, but the people that he regularly visits. One such woman is Tracy Pearson who walked into Dr. Zager’s practice 27 years ago and asked if he knew anything about llamas. Zager replied that even though he didn’t have experience with llamas, he was willing

“Dr. Zager has formed strong bonds not only with the animals, but the people that he regularly visits.”



Dr. Zager with Tracy Pearson. Dr. Zager has cared for Ms. Pearson’s beloved llama’s for over 27 years.



Dr. Zager at Davis Farms in the North Georgia mountains.

to learn and give it a try. At one point, Ms. Tracy owned over 400 llamas, which she knows individually by name, lineage, and personality. Dr. Zager has been involved in the care of her beloved llamas from birth to grave, comparing their medical needs to those found in equine medicine. He has delivered hundreds of babies at Pearson Pond Llamas and says with a smile that he prefers llama births since they tend to have their babies in the morning versus the middle of the night. Mrs. Pearson warns to not stare directly at the llamas, as they may spit if they feel threatened. Llamas are not generally known to be friendly, but after generations of selective breeding and handling, Ms. Tracey's llamas are much more affectionate. She treasures her relationship with her "Llama Doctor", a sentiment shared by her llamas as they huddle around Dr. Zager and try to give a hello "kiss".

Not uncommon in the life of a mixed or large animal veterinarian, Dr. Zager recently injured his leg after being kicked by a horse during an exam. Ms. Tracey was one of the first people to stop by his home with a pot of chicken noodle soup to wish him well. To Dr. Zager, the backbone of veterinary medicine is relationships—to care for all creatures, human and animals, great and small.



Mitchell Davis, a client of Dr. Zager, with his Angus heifers.

Q&A with GVMA President Dr. Mike Zager

How did you first become involved with the GVMA?

Dr. Jim McClaren invited me to participate as an assistant director for my district. As a result, I got exposed to everything that the GVMA does. I was able to see the scope and impact of the GVMA's efforts, even though it's not always immediately felt, on behalf of veterinarians each day. I wanted to participate in that.

What is the biggest change that you have seen in veterinary medicine since you began practicing?

Technology is the biggest change I have seen. What was available diagnostically when I started in 1979 is very different from today. If I needed a CBC, I would have to send it off to a lab and it could take between 5-7 days. The animal was either better or dead by then! However, technology cannot take the place of the personal relationship that you need to have to take care of the animal and the client.

to learn and give it a try. At one point, Ms. Tracy owned over 400 llamas, which she knows individually by name, lineage, and personality. Dr. Zager has been involved in the care of her beloved llamas from birth to grave, comparing their medical needs to those found in equine medicine. He has delivered hundreds of babies at Pearson Pond Llamas and says with a smile that he prefers llama

To Dr. Zager, the backbone of veterinary medicine is relationships—to care for all creatures, human and animals, great and small.

What do you hope to accomplish as the new GVMA President?

I have no personal agenda and just hope to "keep the train from running off the tracks." For example, a past President of the GVMA was involved in state lobbying efforts to ensure that veterinarians continue to be the sole provider of rabies injections. I think it is important for our organization to respond to the current needs of veterinarians which includes the veterinary nurse initiative, telemedicine, and modernizing the Practice Act.

The GVMA is our professional organization. There is no one out there that is promoting and advocating for the veterinarian in the way that the GVMA does. The GVMA plays an extremely important role and by being a member, we are supporting all veterinarians in the state of Georgia.

Veterinary medicine is experiencing a shortage of mixed animal practitioners. Can you speak to the challenges of practicing mixed animal medicine?

I feel very blessed that I love what I do. So much of it is personal lifestyle. You can't make someone who is not interested in mixed animal want to do this work. On the other hand, in this day and age where you have student debt at all time high levels you can't ask new grads to come out of vet school and take a \$15,000 to \$20,000 pay decrease to work in a rural practice. So, a good part of the challenge for mixed and large animal veterinarians is economics which is a challenge for veterinarians in general. How do we charge fairly so we can be compensated accordingly, while still providing good care of the animals? Finding large animal practitioners has been a challenge since I started as a vet.

Mental health issues have come to the forefront of veterinary medicine. How have you managed work/life balance over your veterinary career?

I would be remiss and a fool to say that, for me, work/life balance comes by having the right life partner. My wife is very understanding and that has made life a whole lot easier, even when we were faced with difficult circumstances. At one point, we were raising two children and my father-in-law lived with us. A lot of the responsibility ended up on my wife and she handled it with grace, professionalism, and poise. You have to work together as a team and try to do your part and not assume the other one is going to do things.



Dr. Zager roping cows.



Dr. Michael J. Zager is one of the veterinarians and co-owners of Ocoee Animal Hospital. He began practicing veterinary medicine 1979 and his professional interests include large animal medicine and surgery, including dentistry and reproduction.

Dr. Zager received his undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. He also completed his pre-vet in food and animal science. He completed veterinary school at the University of Georgia of Veterinary Medicine in 1979 focusing on veterinary care.

Dr. Zager and his wife Cindy enjoy hiking, traveling, and going to the theater. They have two grown daughters and a labrador retriever.

Dr. West Hamryka

Chair of the GVMA Student Relations Committee

What roles have you held in the past as a member of the GVMA?

I served as GVMA President 2003-2004. Prior to 2003, I was the Public Relations Chair and after 2004 I was the Membership Chair.

What are the biggest changes you have seen in the GVMA and the overall veterinary industry during your time as a practitioner?

Two of the biggest changes that I have experienced are the digital age and the gender shift. Interestingly, 15 years ago, we predicted that GVMA conventions and in-clinic pharmacies would become extinct due to these two changes. However, they have simply evolved into our current models.

Why did you decide to become active again in GVMA leadership?

After serving on a panel discussion, I was flattered to be asked to chair the program. I currently mentor a number of pre-vet and vet students and I enjoy being able to tailor a program that students truly want and need.

What does your role entail as Student Relations Chair?

As Student Relations Chair, I host a committee meeting (party!) where we brainstorm topics, speakers, and, of course, the food for the students! The GVMA office (thank you Lindsay!) confirms all of the details with our student representative.

Describe what a typical GVMA meeting is like for veterinary students.

Our monthly dinner meeting starts with great food (no pizza or sandwiches!) Then we have “cheesy” talk-show intro music before I introduce our panel. Our topics range from “First Year Survival” to “Practicing on a Budget.” All of our programs encourage student participation, fill up in advance, and offer practical information from non-academic veterinarians.



Dr. Hamryka with Dr. Mike Younker. Dr. Hamryka was president of the GVMA in 2003 and has continued to be active in the GVMA in several different roles.

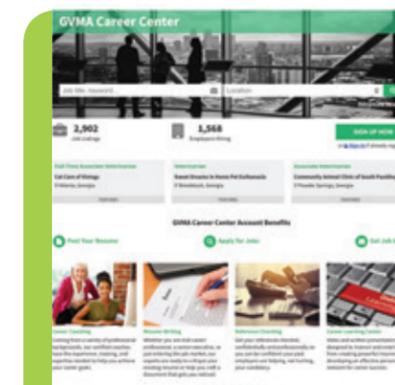
What is your vision for the GVMA's relationship with UGA CVM students?

My goals for the GVMA Student Program are simple:

- 1) Show how the GVMA is an incredible resource during and after vet school.
- 2) Plant the seed for becoming a GVMA member for life!

Anything else you would like GVMA members to know about the Student Relations Committee?

We have brought back the GVMA-UGACVM Job Fair – with a huge response from both students and employers. Stay tuned for information about signing-up to participate!



Looking for an extern or new associate?

Checkout the GVMA Career Center! GVMA members can create job/externship for free! Simply go to www.gvma.net/career-center/ and in the application process under the option for Relocation Costs, select, “No Relocation” (instead of Paid or Negotiable). If you do not select No Relocation you will not be given the option of a free local posting during checkout.



Dr. Hamryka with former Georgia Governor, Sonny Perdue in 2006.

After graduating from the University of Georgia in 1990, Dr. Hamryka started his career with a referral practice in Miami, Florida. He later practiced as an emergency veterinarian in Brandon, Florida. In 1993, upon opening the Sugar Hill Animal Hospital, Dr. Hamryka fulfilled his dream of owning a state-of-the-art veterinary facility. A Gwinnett County native, he is past president of the Georgia Veterinary Medical Association, the Gwinnett County Veterinary Medical Association, and currently serves as a director for a local animal emergency clinic. Featured in many pet news articles, Dr. Hamryka also served as a veterinary editor for WebMD Pets and spoke professionally on pet anesthetics. His professional interests include geriatrics, internal medicine, orthopedic surgery, and teaching future veterinarians. In his spare time, Dr. Hamryka enjoys being a “soccer dad” and horseback riding with his wife and two sons on their farm.

paws & whiskers & wags
YOUR PET CREMATORY

The Last Decision You Make for Your Pet is Just as Important as the First.

- ❖ **Same day service.** No waiting. You can take your pet's ashes home tonight.
- ❖ **Each pet is cremated ALONE,** guaranteed by our PetTracker360SM system, which ensures that you receive your pet's ashes.
- ❖ **State-of-the-Art** facility where families can plan, grieve, and commemorate their pets.

MAIN LOCATION:
2800 E. Ponce de Leon Ave.
Decatur, GA 30030
404.370.6000

Faithful Friends Campus
1591 Access Road
Covington, GA 30016
770.385.0222

“Family” Owned & Operated
www.PawsWhiskersandWags.com

The Nuances of Corporate Consolidation

From the Owner, Associate and Staff Perspective

By: Doyle Watson, DVM, President & Owner and Carly Tobler, Executive Director, Simmons & Associates Southeast, Inc.

In today's world of practice ownership, the prevailing topic is corporate acquisition. Over the past five years, there has been rampant growth in the number of corporations who are consolidating large practice revenues under their respective umbrellas. Today there are over two dozen national and regional consolidators. Of course there is concern amongst our profession as to the long-term upshot of this as it relates to the current personality of private ownership of the veterinary profession versus the conversion to corporate personality as displayed in the pharmaceutical profession. It's not just the image projected to the public, but the effect on professional and lay staff as well that is a concern to most veterinarians we talk with. The good news is that the corporations are aware of the problems of major change and are touting maintenance of internal culture and public image.

What these companies are looking for

Although a few will purchase specialty and emergency service practices, most are focusing on multi-doctor, general, small animal practices grossing in excess of \$1.3 million.

The remainder of this article contains GVMA Member content and has been removed. Please join our membership to gain access to these essential benefits!

GVMA members keep reading...



Doyle Watson, DVM
President & Owner
Simmons & Associates
Southeast, Inc.

"Although a few will purchase specialty and emergency service practices, most are focusing on multi-doctor, general, small animal practices grossing in excess of \$1.3 million. The majority of corporate investment groups want a minimum of three doctors, though sometimes two will suffice."

is a buyer contract contingency to close. The primary change is generally only in computer software to conform to that of the corporate headquarters for management purposes. Occasionally there will be minor changes in supply vendors. Benefits, retirement and vacation packages are typically equal to or greater than those in place under private ownership.

Nevertheless, it is most often the **associates** who express the greatest fear of medical and surgical protocol conformity under the corporate mold. However we have not seen this develop in our involvement in these transactions. Contrary to initial reaction, there are several ways the associates can benefit from the transaction. Quite often there is a salary increase since corporate doctors are typically paid at 20% to 22% of their production. Additionally, a buyer contingency is an employment agreement with the associates, which will include a non-compete provision. Occasionally an incentivizing signing bonus is offered by the corporation or the selling owner. Often the lead associate will be offered the chief of staff position along with additional wage and benefits. There are a few corporations who will offer share ownership in the respective practice and/or in the company at large.

All said, it appears that these consolidators are here to stay and will become even more prevalent as time passes. These transactions are very convoluted with many major moving parts. Without the assistance of a professional advocate for the seller, there is likely a huge difference in what is offered and what is sold.

As an associate aspiring to be an owner, what does this mean for your future of ownership? This will be the subject of our next article in *The GA Veterinarian*. Stay tuned!

Join us for the GVMA/UGA One Health Symposium

January 30-February 1, 2019
at the UGA Conference Center in Athens, GA

Among the Topics to Be Covered:

The Opioid Crisis and Veterinarians
Rabies Exposure
Environmental/Occupational Health and Zoonoses
Food Borne Illness and Zoonoses
AMR Bacteria in Veterinary Samples
One Health & Marine Life

Make Your Plans to Join Us Now!



Mark Murrach, Ga. Dept. of Agriculture;
 Dr. Mike Zager, GVMA President;
 Gary Black, Commissioner of
 Agriculture; Sen. Fran Millar.

GVMA Foundation Awarded Spay/Neuter Grant

By: Dr. Wendy Cuevas, BS, BVSc, MPH, DACVPM
 GVMA Director of Veterinary Services

The GVMA Foundation was awarded \$140,000 by the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Dog and Cat Sterilization Program on October 24, 2018.

Due to an overwhelming response from our member veterinarians wanting to participate, we are unable to award each hospital with what was indicated in your initial correspondence. In fairness to all those who applied, the Foundation Board decided to manage the program on a first-come, first-serve, basis.

As each hospital completes their procedures, **we request that a reimbursement application be submitted to the GVMA office on a weekly basis.** This can be done by fax, email or online. We will be updating you when the monies are getting low so you will know not to schedule further procedures.

Dogs and cats residing outside the State of Georgia, feral cats and TNR programs are not eligible per the Georgia Department of Agriculture Rule 40-13-14-.03.

If you have any questions, please contact wendy@gvma.net.

As a reminder, the following amounts are to be used as a discount to your clients and you will be reimbursed the specified sum:

- Feline neuter\$45
- Feline spay\$55
- Canine neuter\$65
- Canine spay \$75

DVMs Wanted: 9 Ways to Recruit Top Talent

By: Katz, Sapper and Miller

The remainder of this article contains GVMA Member content and has been removed. Please join our membership to gain access to these essential benefits!

GVMA members keep reading

Are You a Firefighter or a Veterinarian?

By: Wendy S. Myers, CVJ

Where will your practice grow next year? Yes, I said grow, not go. Too often, veterinarians practice firefighter medicine, scurrying from one patient to the next. You go home exhausted, hoping you were productive and profitable.

As you begin the New Year, climb the fire truck's ladder and look down on your business. How is your hospital's health? What is your vision for growing it this year? Take actions that will move your business forward in 2019:

Set aside one day of the year for future thinking. Dr. Toby Carmichael and his partners at Acworth, Lake City and Bartow Animal Hospitals in Acworth and Cartersville, Ga. schedule an annual doctors' retreat. They focus on the business side of practicing veterinary medicine. The partners choose a boutique hotel where doctors and their spouses check in on Friday night. They enjoy a casual dinner and friendly conversations with colleagues and the families who support them.

The remainder of this article contains GVMA Member content and has been removed. Please join our membership to gain access to these essential benefits!

GVMA members keep reading.



Wendy S. Myers owns Communication Solutions for Veterinarians in Castle Pines, Colo. She helps teams improve client service, communication skills and compliance through consulting, seminars and monthly CE credit webinars. Wendy is a certified veterinary journalist and author of 101 Communication Skills for Veterinary Teams. She offers training packages for receptionists and entire teams. You can reach her at wmyers@csvets.com or www.csvets.com.



Reference
 Lesonsky R. Can a Vision Board Help Your Business? *SmallBizDaily.com*. Published Jan. 26, 2016. Accessed Oct 10, 2018 at www.smallbizdaily.com/can-a-vision-board-help-your-business/.



Meet Your Consultant

Wendy S. Myers, CVJ, has been training veterinary teams for more than 20 years as owner of Communication Solutions for Veterinarians. She shares her expertise in communication and receptionist skills.

\$89 PER COURSE PER HOSPITAL
WITH PROMO CODE **GVMA**

TRAINING PACKAGES FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Each package is available to all employees and includes ongoing access year-to-year. Get results and extra savings!

- JUMP-START YOUR NEW RECEPTIONIST:**
6 Courses
- ESSENTIAL PHONE SKILLS:**
6 Courses
- CORE SKILLS FOR RECEPTIONIST:**
12 Courses
- COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR YOUR ENTIRE TEAM:**
12 Courses
- PICK YOUR OWN!**
Choose 12 courses and use promo code **MYTRAINING** to enjoy a buy 10, get 2 free savings.

720-344-2347 www.csvets.com

Courses approved for



GVMA MEMBERS SAVE \$10 PER COURSE WITH PROMO CODE **GVMA**



CE Credit Courses

Enrollment includes your entire healthcare team. Each course features unlimited playback of the recorded webinar, handout, online test and CE certificate.

New courses in 2019

Live broadcasts on the third Thursday of each month, 12 and 3 p.m. ET. Each new course is recorded and available the following day for ongoing access.

JANUARY 17 How to Master Forward Booking	JULY 18 How to Succeed with Demanding Clients
FEBRUARY 21 Get Clients to Accept Dental Treatments	AUGUST 15 How to Engage Callers
MARCH 21 How to Triage Phone Calls	SEPTEMBER 19 Capture Compliance in the Exam Room
APRIL 18 Book Now: Get New Clients to Schedule	OCTOBER 17 It's How Much? Show Value for Fees
MAY 16 How to Improve Appointment Scheduling	NOVEMBER 21 60 Client Service Ideas in 60 minutes
JUNE 20 Get Your Pharmacy Back	DECEMBER 19 How to Handle Challenging Callers



3rd Thursday Each Month

12 & 3 pm
Eastern Time

Upcoming Continuing Education



January 30, 2019
Veterinarians' Day at the Capitol
The Georgia Freight Depot – Atlanta, GA

January 31, 2019-February 1, 2019
One Health Symposium
University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education & Hotel – Athens, GA

March 29-31, 2019
Georgia Food Animal Conference
Callaway Gardens – Pine Mountain, GA

May 3-5, 2019
Practice Management Conference
Great Wolf Lodge – LaGrange, GA

Sessions covering "How to Improve Business Outcomes Through Workplace Well-being", "Basics of Practice Management" & "Advanced Concepts of Practice Management" with Josh Vaisman and Marianne Mallonee, CVPM.

June 26-30, 2019

Emerald Coast Veterinary Conference
Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort – Destin, FL
Sessions covering Infectious Disease, Neurology, Gastroenterology, Soft Tissue Surgery, Cardiology, Feline Med, Nutrition, Rehab/Pain Mgmt., Oncology, Ophthalmology, Hematology, Anesthesiology, Internal Med, Practice Management, Poultry, and Veterinary Technicians.

August 23-25, 2019
Recent Grads & Practice Owners Conference
Great Wolf Lodge – LaGrange, GA

Round Table discussions, hands-on activities and labs + Jeopardy and game show styled sessions covering subjects such as "Practice Ownership Exit Strategies", "Veterinary Medicine on a Budget", "Effective Communications", "HR" & "Financial KPIs"



Deceased Pet Care[®]

Funeral Homes, Crematories and Cemeteries

Committed to the integrity your clients care about

- Preferred by Veterinarians for more than 45 years
- **Georgia's Only State Certified and Accredited Crematory Operator**
- PetSecure Tracking – Online Pet Portal
- Customized Veterinary Programs
- Pet Loss Training Seminars for your Staff
- Same Day Witness Cremation Services
- Free Monthly Pet Loss Support Group for your Clients
- 24-Hour Phone Support



4991 Peachtree Road, Chamblee, GA 30341
770-457-7659 • www.deceasedpetcare.com





Veterinary Nurse Initiative

In an effort to raise the profile and support our veterinary technicians, the GVMA Board of Directors formed a Task Force to study the Veterinary Nurse Initiative (VNI) and make a recommendation at its October meeting. The Task Force was chaired by Dr. Sarah Wheat, Banfield Pet Hospital. The GVMA Board would like to thank the following members for their participation: Marti Brick, UGA CVM; Rachael Davis, RVT; Dr. Rachel Eddleman; Dr. Seyedmehdi Mobini, Fort Valley State University; Dr. Katherine Parks; Jamie Rauscher, RVT; Anna Santos, RVT; Dr. Shannon Wylie. Below is a Question and Answer with Task Force Chair Dr. Sarah Wheat.

So what exactly is the VNI and why is it important to technicians and the veterinarians in Georgia?

The remainder of this article contains GVMA Member content and has been removed. Please join our membership to gain access to these essential benefits!

GVMA members keep reading.

We buy great practices. We hire great people.

20 YEARS
VetCor
www.VetCor.com

It's been a great 20 years. Want to join the celebration?
Over 250 practices in 26 states and growing.

acquisitions: acq@vetcor.com • jobs: careers@vetcor.com



New GVMA Membership Benefit: Employee Assistance Program

GVMA is proud to provide an Member Assistance Program (MAP) that offers support and resources you need to address personal or work-related challenges and concerns.

This service is confidential & FREE for:
GVMA veterinarians and their household family members

How Your MAP Can Help You...

How to Access:

1. Call 800-633-3353

2. Visit www.mygroup.com; Click on 'My Portal Login'; Click on 'Work-Life'

Username: gvma

Password: guest

Please be aware that these resources and services are available and free to GVMA veterinarian members, only. Your membership will be verified. ("Employee" = GVMA member; the EAP does not extend to any other employees in your practice, unless they are a GVMA member.)

Assistance
is available
24/7
365

This program is for veterinarians, as veterinary student members are encouraged to utilize the many services and resources provided by their institution.

Designed to help with:

- Marital difficulties
- Family problems
- Parenting
- Stress
- Balancing work and family
- Relationship issues
- Work-related concerns
- Depression
- Alcohol & drug use/abuse
- Grief and loss
- Elder care
- Healthy living
- Crisis events
- Online Services
- English & Spanish sites available
- 7 content divisions: Parenting, Aging, Balancing, Thriving, Living, Working and International

Legal Services

- Free telephonic legal advice
- Free 30-minute appointment for legal consultation with a local attorney
- In most cases, 25% discount on ongoing legal services
- Legal forms available to download (such as wills, power of attorney, etc)
- Only legal encyclopedia
- Does not cover disputes or actions involved employer, AP or business issues

Financial Services

- Free financial counseling appointments
- Issues addressed include bankruptcy, budgeting, buying a home, college savings, retirement planning
- Educational materials and financial worksheets provided prior to appointments
- 40 financial calculators available online
- ID theft recovery through credit monitoring
- Discounted credit reports

Savings Center: discount shopping program offering up to 25% discounts on name-brand items

Over 100 streaming audio files and 100 video files covering range of health topics

Searchable databases and resources, attorneys, certified financial planners, pet sitting, private and public high schools and colleges, and volunteer opportunities

Relocation Center: an interactive program that allows users to preview communities across the US



For more information go to www.gvma.net

Renew Your Membership Online!

Renew your GVMA membership online! **You are supporting one of the most compassionate professions there is, furthering the quality of the medicine that you provide your patients, and strengthening the relationships with your clients. We are here to help you do exactly those things.**

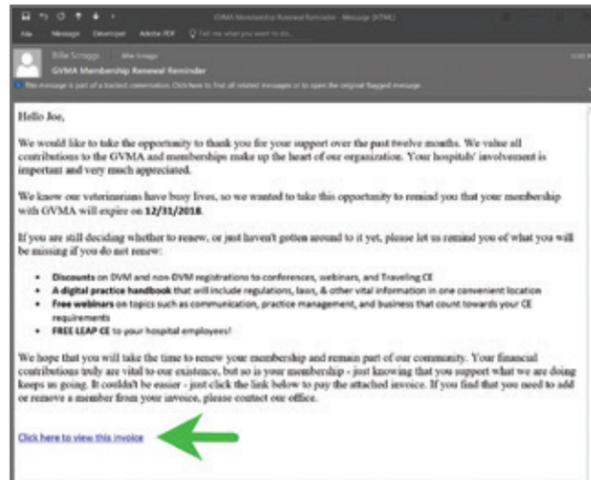
In furthering our attempt to reduce our paper waste, below is a short tutorial on renewing your membership online via your electronic invoice. You should have received this as a link at the bottom of your emailed reminder to renew. If you did not receive an reminder, please contact our office.

Step #1

Open the email message entitled, "GVMA Membership Renewal Reminder".

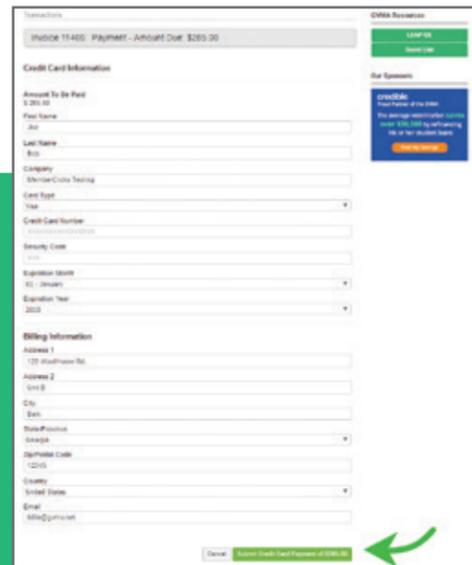
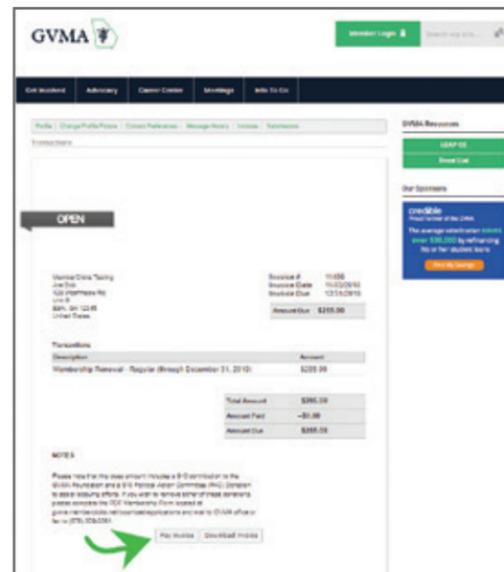
Step #2

Scroll to the bottom of this email message and click on the link entitled, "Click here to view this invoice" (Indicated by the green arrow below).



Step #3

Scroll to the bottom of the web page. You will see a button entitled, "Pay Invoice" (Indicated by the green arrow below). Click on this button to pay your invoice via debit or credit card.



Step #4

On the payment page, type in your card information and the billing address associated with your card. Please note that we accept VISA, Master Card, American Express & Discover cards. Once your information is typed in, scroll down and click of the green button entitled, "Submit Credit Card Payment of \$..." (Indicated by the green arrow above). Do not move from this page until your payment has submitted, as this may cause an error with your payment. Do not click the submit payment button multiple times; allow time for your payment to be processed. Should you experience any issues during payment, contact our office. Once your payment has processed, you will see a confirmation page and receive an email with your paid invoice attached.

GVMA 2018 Award Winners

A strong association consists of many members willingly giving their time and energy to the many activities of the organization. At Fall Convention the following members were recognized who have gone way above and beyond the call of duty to the Georgia Veterinary Medical Association. Congratulations!



J. T. Mercer Lifetime Achievement Award:

Dr. Edsel Davis



Clare B. Reagan Recent Graduate Award:

Dr. Melissa Roberts



President's Recognition Award:

Dr. Vince Obsitnik



Extra Mile Award:

Headen Embry



Veterinarian of the Year:

Dr. Laura Smallwood



Dobbins-Mahaffey Advocacy Award:

Dr. Gary Bullard

What's Going On With My Health Insurance?

Evaluating Health Insurance
Evaluate the types of health-care coverage available and compare features as well as premiums.
copies of this worksheet? You

By: Philip Ladner, American Veterinarians' Insurance Services Inc.

There are very few people unaware of the turbulence in the health insurance market for the past five years. If you are one of those people who have managed to escape this whirlwind we call healthcare, you don't know how lucky you are, and you probably have fewer gray hairs than the rest of us. Everyone else is asking the same question, "What is going on with my health insurance?" Is there a light at the end of the tunnel or is it a train coming toward us? Well, before we can talk about where healthcare is going, let's recap where we have been.

Affordable Care Act

The remainder of this article contains GVMA member content and has been removed. Please join our membership to gain access to these essential benefits!

GVMA members keep reading...



Moving Forward

Two pieces of legislation that have been passed recently will influence the insurance market in 2019.

- First, there is no longer a tax penalty for individuals who choose not to have qualified coverage in 2019.
- Second, we can now form association plans.

Association Healthcare Plans

The Affordable Care Act frowned upon association plans because they took people out of the pool and defeated the purpose of the legislation. However, this new amendment allowing association plans is not without conflict. Many state insurance commissioners and governors have chosen to not allow this in their states because they know this will further damage the already fragile Affordable Care Act.

Georgia does appear to be a state that will allow associations plans but it is important to note that these plans will not be like the plans most veterinarian knew in the past. The plans are group based so clinics would have to be members and allow the coverage to everyone at the clinic as a group.

The future of healthcare is certainly unknown and more political than ever. The best advice I can give to anyone navigating these waters is to find someone they can trust and if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.



Hospital Membership: All-In-One Group Membership That Saves You \$\$\$

Premium Benefits - Extreme Discounts - No Limitations

GVMA Hospital Membership gives your entire staff GVMA benefits and discounts. Even better, it costs absolutely nothing to add your technicians, assistants and office staff to the membership, with no limitations.

Hospital Membership includes:

- The best prices available on GVMA Fall Convention & Traveling CE
- \$140 discount per veterinary assistant on the Certified Veterinary Assistant Program
- Free attendance to Technician CE for your staff

If you are looking to cut down on CE costs while providing benefits to your staff, then Hospital Membership is perfect for you! A peek at what you could be saving:

Hospital A:

**1 doctor, 2 technicians
= \$550 Membership Fee**

- \$300 savings for Fall Convention
- \$130 savings on Traveling CE
- \$30 savings on Technician CE
- \$89 for Regulatory Handbook

= \$549 in savings

**Compared to individual membership*

Hospital B:

**3 doctors, 4 technicians,
10 veterinary assistants
= \$1,050 Membership Fee**

- \$1,600 in savings on Certified Veterinary Assistance Program
- \$1,150 savings on Fall Convention
- \$60 savings on Technician CE

= \$2,810 in savings

**Compared to individual membership*

Additional Hospital Member benefits include:

- *NEW* Free access to Employee Assistance Program - Coming Jan. 2019 (not available to individual members!)
- Free LEAP CE for all staff
- Free OSHA Handbook
- Free 20 minute session with veterinary attorney

If you are interested in upgrading to Hospital Membership, contact us!

Georgia Grown: Baby Barn



The GVMA partnered with the Georgia Department of Agriculture and the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine at the newly-expanded Georgia Grown building.

The Baby Barn featured a live birthing center and nursery area for farm animals, giving fair-goers the opportunity to be up close during the birth of a calf. GVMA veterinarians as well as UGA CVM faculty and staff were on-site for the duration of the fair. The goal of the new exhibit was to strengthen the connection to, and awareness of, the state's important agricultural sector. Overall, it was a success—there were 30 births over the course of the 11-day fair and plenty of time for visitors to observe the babies and their mamas up close!



Simmons & Associates Southeast, Inc.

Doyle Watson, DVM

(800) 333-1984 southeast@simmonsinc.com

Please visit www.Simmonsinc.com to submit a confidentiality agreement to learn more about each of the Simmons Southeast listings below:

Georgia

South Central GA: \$818K+ gross, up 15% in 2017, 1.5 dr. prx. (GA14F)

Florida

South Central FL: \$624K+ gross, solo dr. No emergencies, 5 day work week. (FL28A)

Miami: Gross \$778K, solo dr small animal. Immaculate leased facility. (FL60M)

NEW! The Villages Area: 4.5 day work week. \$1.1M+ gross. Growth opportunities. (FL52S)

NEW! North of Jacksonville: \$790K gross. 4.5 day work week. Area development. (FL65Y)

NEW! Central FL: 2 dr prx + satellite clinic. \$1.3M gross. No after-hour emergencies. (FL11S)

NEW! North of Orlando: \$924K+ gross. 2 dr. SA prx. No after-hour emergencies. (FL10S)

North Carolina

Northeast near VA: \$1M+ gross, 2 dr. 2017 YTD revenues up 6%. (NC66G)

North of Durham: \$1M+ gross, attractive facility, \$210K personal income. (NC65R)

NEW! Sandhills: 1 dr., small animal. Gross \$728K, Monday through Friday. (NC91T)

PRACTICE OWNERS...now is the time to sell! Whether you're pondering an associate sale, open market listing, or corporate sale, Simmons will help! The current practice sales market is dynamic with buyers, and commercial financing is readily available. Contact Dr. Doyle Watson at Simmons & Associates Southeast today, for a complimentary, non-obligatory consultation. The dialogue will be informative and time well spent. As the original pioneer of veterinary practice brokerage, we have been at this since 1977, so we have seen a lot. Let our knowledge, experience, and common-sense business judgment work for you. **800-333-1984 | Email: southeast@simmonsinc.com | Website: www.simmonsinc.com**



GVMA 2019 Career Fair

The 2019 GVMA Career will be from 5:00-7:00pm at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at the UGA Teaching Hospital on Tuesday, January 15th. The address is 2200 College Station Rd, Athens, GA 30602.

Last year, we had over 20 clinics representing from all around the state including as far as Brunswick. We also had over 100 students in attendance. Third years and fourth years will be interested in externships (and internships/associate positions), while first and second years will be looking for summer job opportunities. GVMA member clinics who are interested in attending can sign-up at GVMA.net!

Leadership Academy

Please check www.gvma.net for our online application beginning in January. Our Leadership Academy will be open to anyone (any stage or age!) interested in leadership in the GVMA.

The GVMA Leadership Academy is a initiative designed to help develop foundational skills in leadership, communication, and business. Participants should anticipate a combination of in-person, teleconference, and webinar format. Participants will decide on meeting dates and times at the initial meeting to reduce or eliminate time off for program participation.

Key Benefits

- Develop fundamental understanding of leadership skills and emotional intelligence
- Deepen comprehension of communication styles and skills
- Acquire critical skills to intensify business acumen
- Gain the competency to utilize these skills within your life, practice, and community
- Heighten awareness of yourself and better understand how to optimize interactions with those around you
- Develop a vision of the leader you can be and what it takes to become that leader
- Experience a supportive environment that fosters meaningful interpersonal relationships and collaborative, lifelong interactions
- Build a strong network within the Georgia veterinary community

Your Practice is your Legacy.

Should you sell to corporate, an individual or an associate? Contact Rebecca Robinson, CBI today for a complimentary consultation. **Are you ready for ownership?** 20+ Veterinary Practices for Sale at www.PracticeSalesAdvisors.com 912-268-2701 or 844.4.PSA.HELP Rebecca@Practicesalesadvisors.com

GEORGIA

Practice Sales Advisors 912-268-2701
Rebecca@Practicesalesadvisors.com

NEW! ATHENS The Cat & Dog Clinic. Call for Details

ROME 100% Small Animal. RE Only \$300K

PRICE REDUCED! DUBLIN call for details

SOLD! PEACHTREE CITY Commercial Location, Grossing \$800K

More GA Practices Coming Soon!
Call 912-268-2701 to List Yours

FLORIDA

Practice Sales Advisors 912-268-2701
Rebecca@Practicesalesadvisors.com

NEW! SOUTH FLORIDA- Located between Miami & The Keys! Grossing \$1mil+, owner willing to stay on.

SOLD! 30A Dream Location! Grossing \$750K

NORTH CAROLINA

Practice Sales Advisors 912-268-2701
Rebecca@Practicesalesadvisors.com

NEW! HIGHPOINT Area- Grossing \$800K, \$154ATC, Approx. \$200K Dr. Salary, Owner Willing to Stay On

SOUTH CHARLOTTE- Well-Established practice in prime location

CLINTON- Tram Road Animal Hospital for sale. Seller Motivated. Turn-Key Facility

SOLD! ASHEVILLE- One of America's Best Cities! Grossing \$700K, no website practice is ready to grow

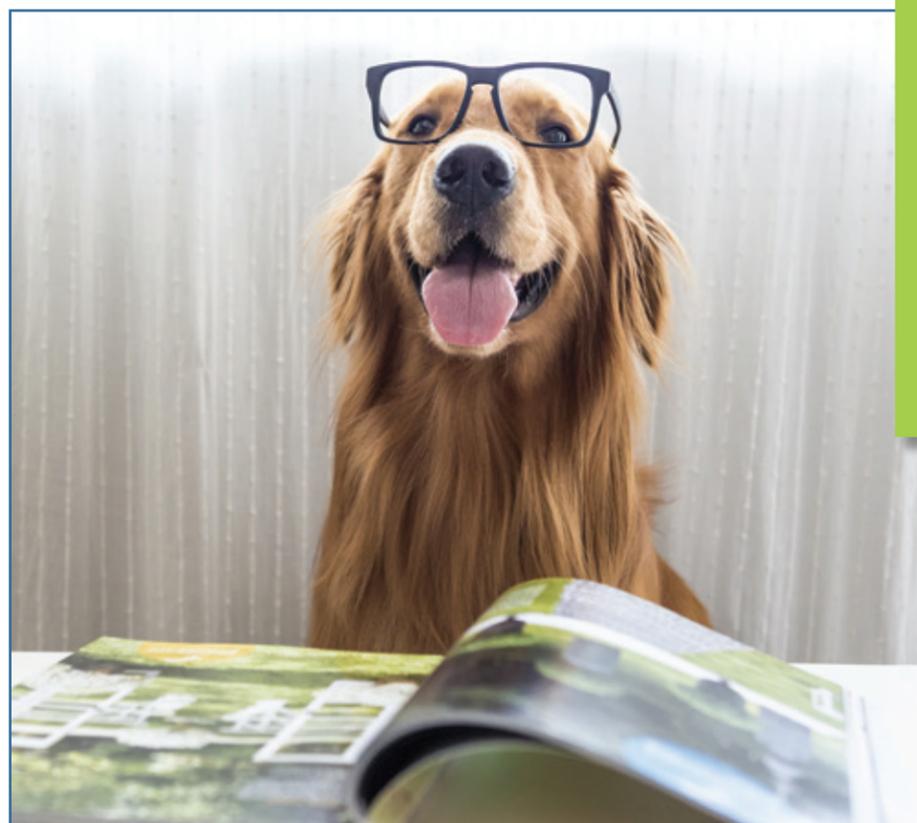
TEXAS

Practice Sales Advisors 912-268-2701
Rebecca@Practicesalesadvisors.com

SOLD! NACOGDOCHES- Connolly Animal Clinic. Only \$495K

TX WOODLANDS Area- Corporate Sale, multiple practices.

TX NORTH OF HOUSTON- Associate Buy In, grossing \$2mil



Check out the latest news and events at GVMA.net including:

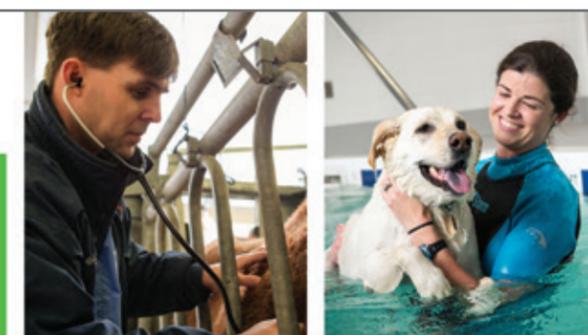
- Sign-up for CE
- GVMA Blog
- Career Center
- Online Directories:
 - “Find A Vet”
 - “Find A Specialist”
 - “Find a Relief Vet”

Protect your livelihood with all the right coverage through AVMA PLIT. We are the most trusted source of professional, business and personal coverage for every stage of your career.

our expertise is your strength

Workers' Compensation • Business Property & Liability • Employment Practices Liability • Umbrella Liability • Commercial Auto • Flood • Data Breach • Professional Liability • Veterinary License Defense • Professional Extension (Animal Bailee) • Embryo & Semen Storage Coverage • Safety & Risk Management Resources • Personal Auto • Homeowners • Renters • Personal Excess (Umbrella) Liability

AVMA | PLIT
Protecting you through it all



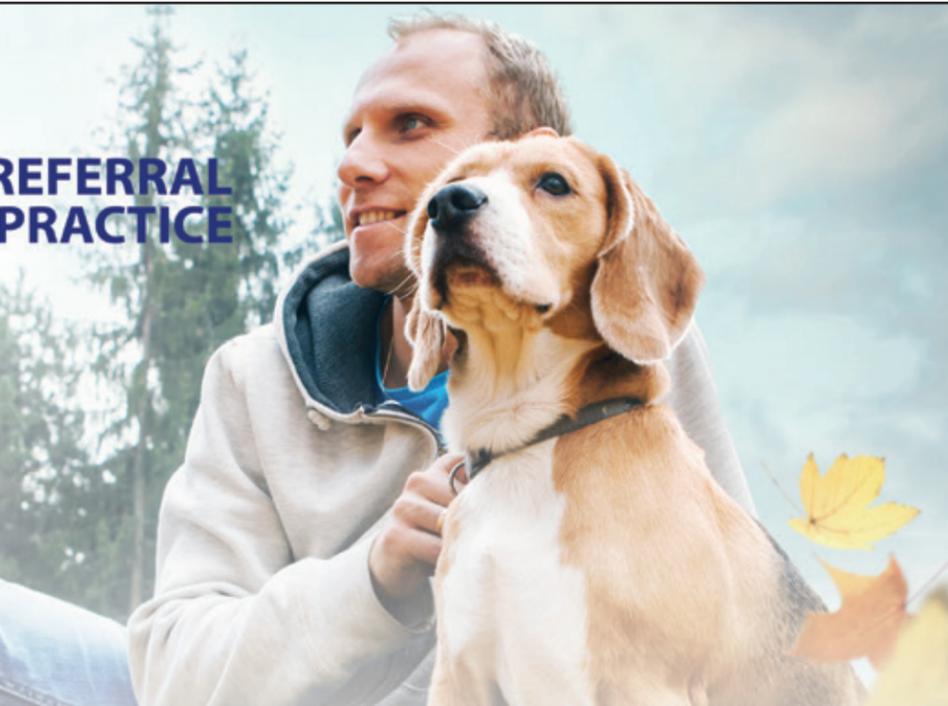
For a coverage comparison of your entire insurance portfolio to the PLIT program, call 800-228-PLIT (7548) or visit avmaplit.com.



VETERINARY REFERRAL SURGICAL PRACTICE

Surgery Neurology & Rehabilitation

Compassionate Expertise
and Personalized Care
from Injury to Recovery

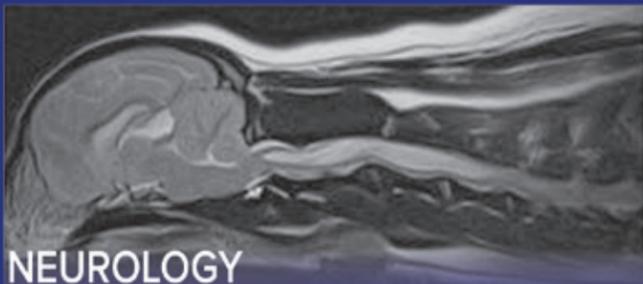


We Deliver a Heightened Level of Personal Service which Larger Clinics Simply can't Provide



SURGERY

Orthopedic, Soft Tissue,
Oncologic, Spinal Care



NEUROLOGY

Brain, Spinal and Neuromuscular
Disorders, Neurosurgery



ADVANCED IMAGING

CT, MRI and Ultrasound
Diagnostics



REHABILITATION

Physical Rehabilitation,
Conditioning and Fitness

David V. Filer, DVM, MS | Thomas J. Noone, DVM, DACVS | Kahrma Wagner, DVM, MS, DACVS
Jeffrey Little, DVM, DACVS | Jill Narak, DVM, MS, DACVIM (Neurology)

ROSWELL 770-594-2603 | MARIETTA 770-424-6663 | WOODSTOCK 678-214-0300 | AARF 770-594-2688
VeterinaryReferralSurgery.com • AtlantaAnimalRehab.com



Practice Sales | Valuations Associate Buy-Ins | Buyer Representation

Get your practice appraised in 3 weeks!
Call Rebecca Robinson, CBI for your complimentary consultation
and a FREE Practice Appraisal with any new listing.



"Excellent, efficient and supportive! Rebecca is the entire package. Thank you for helping to make my dreams a reality."

Tammy Wages

VETERINARY PRACTICES FOR SALE:

- GA Lake Oconee Area
Beautiful Facility, Grossing \$700K
- GA COMING SOON!
Specialty Practice, Grossing \$1.1Mil
- GA Rome Area - Spacious Facility
- GA Dublin - PRICE REDUCED!
- NC Asheville - Grossing \$700K
- NC High Point Area - Gross \$800K, \$154 ATC
- NC Southeast - COMING SOON!
Grossing Approx. \$1.5 Mil
- NC South Charlotte - AVAILABLE!
Well Established, Prime Location
- NC Clinton - Tram Road Animal Hospital
- SC Greenville Area - COMING SOON!

**More Practices Coming Soon!
Call To List Yours!**

Featured Listing

The Cat & Dog Clinic
Athens, GA
Real Estate & Practice only \$405K



844-4-PSA-HELP or 912-268-2701
Hello@PracticeSalesAdvisors.com

Current practice listings:
www.PracticeSalesAdvisors.com



301 Plantation Chase
Saint Simons Island, GA 31522



Georgia Veterinary Medical Association
2200 Century Parkway, Suite 725
Atlanta, GA 30345

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 11
Athens, GA

Address Service Requested

SIMMONS

Veterinary Practice Sales & Appraisals

Sales & Acquisitions | Valuations | Exit Strategy | Facilitation | Buyers Agency

What's your exit strategy?



(800) 333-1984 | Southeast@simmonsinc.com | www.simmonsinc.com | 1610 Frederica Road, St. Simons Island, GA 31522