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Compliance Is About Best Care

When you go to the doctor, what are you looking for? Competence will always top the list, followed closely by a desire for trust, compassion, and open communication with your health care provider.

We all realize that medical care can be a bit daunting at times, even scary. It's important that we know and feel that our provider cares for our well being. Care is an important word. Webster's dictionary defines care as a state of *watchful attention*. Don't we all want our doctors to be "watchfully attentive" and to recommend with confidence the actions, tests, procedures, or medications that will benefit our health?

What do you suppose our veterinary clients want from us?

According to the 2003 AAHA/Hill's compliance study, they want the same thing. That landmark study revealed several basic realities about how we practice medicine and what clients want from us as health care providers to the pet members of their families. Above all else, we learned that clients want a recommendation from their doctor. They want to hear what we as veterinarians believe is in the best interest of their pets.

Turn to **page 3** for an outstanding overview on compliance written Dr. Chuck Wayner. I hope you will read it closely. You will see that compliance is about delivering complete, high-quality care, and I believe you will find that the definition of "care" as being watchfully attentive rings true. Simply stated, compliance is about every animal receiving a recommendation for the care the health care team believes is best for that animal: in its living environment; at its life stage; with the risks and challenges attendant to those conditions.

Recommend Your Best

It may be that in order to practice compliance-based medicine, you will have to rethink your style of practice. It may take some effort to unlearn habits that caused you to hesitate to offer best care to every client. I am sure that at some point in time, each of us has

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wondered whether a client would want to hear about a specific treatment; if she would be willing to undertake the expense of that treatment or be able to undertake the effort to administer a treatment to the pet.

Why not recommend what you believe to be the "best care" for the pet and then allow the client to make that decision? When we don't make the recommendation

of best care, we may not be meeting our obligation our patients. The good news is it's a habit we can change. As Dr. Kathleen Ruby, my coeditor, explained in her article "Neuroscience, Change, & *Exceptional Veterinary Team*" (November 2009, page 16),

we know that the human brain exhibits a surprising degree of plasticity, and that new neural pathways can be developed, allowing for habits to be changed. We must, however, make an explicit effort to adopt new habits that can change and improve our approach to practice.

New Resolution

The next time you are in a room with a client, remember he or she won't necessarily know what approach to strategic deworming you believe is best. Realize that despite all the access to information clients may have, they may not understand the long-term value of appropriate nutrition, periodontal therapy, or weight management. Remember that it is up to us to ensure that clients know what is best for their pets.

In the end, that's our responsibility as health care providers—to recommend the care we believe is best, every time, for every patient. When we recommend best care, we are advocating on behalf of the pet's best interests. It's good medicine, it's consistent with our veterinarian's oath, and it's good business.

I know you hope your physician doesn't hold a recommendation for best care back from you. What do you think your clients want for their beloved pets?

Watch a replay of Dr. DeBowes' webinar, "Meet Client Needs & Enhance Adherence" at myEVT.com

Share your thoughts: editor@myEVT.com or on our website

Skillssets addressed in this article: relational competencies; self-awareness