

Other Careers in Veterinary Medicine

If you choose not to become a veterinarian, you can still contribute in a significant way to a veterinary practice. You can choose from a variety of careers, including: Veterinary Technician; Veterinary Assistant; Kennel Worker; Veterinary Receptionist; and more. Veterinary Medicine is a true team effort with each member of the team making a significant contribution.

The ideal candidate for employment in a veterinary setting should be extremely reliable, cheerful, a good team player, detail oriented, a good communicator and able to easily multitask and fully complete every job given to them. In addition, they should be eager, willing and able to learn new tasks every day. They should be good listeners, able to take direction well, able to self-motivate and be willing and able to present a professional attitude and appearance. They should have the stamina needed to survive the rigors of long hours, cranky and sometimes dangerous patients and a lot of hard, very unglamorous, work. They should love and be compassionate to animals in an effective way. If they are interested in working in an emergency or specialty hospital they, and their families, have to be ready to make sacrifices like working nights, overnight shifts and working on every holiday.

Veterinary Technicians

The veterinary technician is responsible for direct and indirect patient care which includes, but is not limited to: cleaning; stocking; advanced laboratory testing and animal handling and restraint as well as administering medications; assessing patient status; pulling blood, placing catheters; taking radiographs (x-rays); obtaining blood pressure measurements; obtaining vital signs; obtaining ECG readings; demonstrating microscope skills; maintaining patients on oxygen therapy; monitoring anesthesia; performing medical and pharmaceutical calculations; maintaining intravenous infusion pumps and assisting veterinarians in whatever way is needed. Advanced technicians participate in more invasive procedures such as tube placement, blood transfusions, endoscopic exams, etc.

Most technicians go through an exhaustive education program and then are trained further while on the job by more senior staff members. The best place for a new veterinary technician to start working is in a general family practice. It will allow them to hone their basic skills in a calmer, less demanding environment.

You can obtain information on becoming a veterinary technician from the New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association (NJVMA) web site at <http://www.njvma.org/careers/default.asp/>

A large amount of information can also be obtained from the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) website at <http://www.navta.net/> They have even established five areas where technicians can excel and obtain their own specialty status –Dentistry, Anesthesiology, Internal Medicine, Emergency/Critical Care and Behavior.

Veterinary Assistant

The technician assistant is responsible for direct and indirect patient care which includes, but is not limited to: cleaning; stocking; laboratory testing; animal handling and restraint and assisting the veterinary technicians in whatever way is needed. Individuals that are currently enrolled, but have not completed, training programs often serve in this role.

Kennel Worker

Kennel Workers are responsible for indirect and very limited direct patient care (under supervision) which includes, but is not limited to: hospital cleaning and stocking; cleaning cages; walking animals and giving them food and water according to specific instructions.

Veterinary Receptionist

Receptionists are responsible for maintaining the flow of patients and offering exceptional client service. They answer phones and direct calls accordingly, they make appointments and prepare medical records for those appointments, they participate in triaging incoming patients and maintain our computerized medical records. In addition, they deal with billing and invoicing, supplying medical records to clients and making sure that medical records and referral reports are faxed to the family veterinarians.

In general, they are involved in all aspects of the paperwork necessary to run a successful practice.

Other Positions Available

In addition to these positions, there are also other essential positions filled by individuals with unique skill sets. These include, but are not limited to, Practice Administrators, Hospital Managers, Human Resource Liaisons, Information Technology Managers, Inventory Managers, Financial Managers, Bookkeepers, Accountants, Billing and Accounts Payable Clerks, Staff Supervisors and Managers, and Facility Maintenance Workers.