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New UVSA Research Uncovers Opportunities for Improvement in Consumer Experience with Veterinarians

Abingdon, MD (June 7, 2019) During its inaugural conference under its new name and mission, the United Veterinary Services Association (UVSA) released commissioned research that highlights opportunities for strengthening the veterinary industry in a new era of corporate and ecommerce competition. The research presented was based on a national consumer survey of U.S. pet owners (sample of 2000) conducted online in April 2019, with the data centering on a gap between the extremely high marks that pet owners give veterinarians for the quality medical care provides, and the relatively moderate level of pet owner satisfaction with their overall experience at the vet.

Assessing the quality of medical care that their veterinarians provide, fully 95% of dog owners and 94% of cat owners describe themselves as “highly satisfied.” In contrast, only 70% of the dog owners and 75% of cat owners surveyed “strongly agree” that they are satisfied with the veterinary clinic they use, while 25% of dog owners and 22% of cat owners only “somewhat agree.”

In exploring why pet owners aren’t always fully satisfied with their trips to the vet, UVSA’s research found that cost is the top concern, cited by nearly half (48%) of the customers who weren’t fully satisfied with their veterinary clinic. In addition, and less predictable, was a long if secondary set of issues that emerged, including both service/convenience for the pet owner (20%) and the pet’s experience at the vet (11%).

In terms of cost concerns, customers single out medical tests and vaccines as the charges they particularly consider high-priced, rather than the general check-up fee. Among convenience issues, excessive waiting time to see the vet is the main concern, followed by lack of weekend or evening hours—issues that carry over from the human medical industry. Concerns over the veterinary experience for the furry pet—rather than the human client—were distinctive and particularly important findings of this UVSA research, pointing to heightened expectations for pet care in this new era of “humanized” pets.

Excessive waiting time was again the highest-ranking concern, but now closely followed by a tangle of issues related to pet stress: the waiting area being too hectic, the vet’s staff not handling pet gently enough, and the clinic’s set-up either causing unnecessary stress for pets, or not doing enough to proactively minimize pet stress (such as providing a separate entrance and waiting area for cats, rather than a dog-dominated environment). These findings resonate in the larger pet industry context where 85% of dog owners and 38% of cat owners agree that their pets sometimes have stress or anxiety issues. This trend, tied in part to the urbanization of pet ownership, has triggered a wave of new pet products ranging from Thundershirt anxiety vests to cannabidiol-based calming supplements.

Though veterinary customers are overwhelmingly satisfied with the medical care their pets receive, and cost is the main customer concern, UVSA is encouraging its members and the industry at large to continue tracking the expectations of a new generation of pet owners, to fully match the quality medical care with client’s level of overall satisfaction. This will help keep the veterinary profession where it belongs at the center of how we care for our pets, in return for how well our pets care for us.



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About UVSA -The United Veterinary Services Association (UVSA) is a national trade association comprised of distributors, manufacturers and suppliers of animal care products in the veterinary channel. UVSA's mission is to enhance animal care by supporting those who serve the veterinary channel. UVSA fulfills its mission by designing programs and services that will help distributors, manufacturers and suppliers remain relevant and innovative in the veterinary supply chain through a three-pronged approach focusing on 1) promotion of supply chain optimization; 2) providing a voice for the industry that includes collaboration with allied industry associations related to compliance and regulatory issues of concern to the animal health supply channel; and 3) providing Industry Insights through research on emerging markets, customer needs, wholesaler and supply chain benchmarks and consumer expectations. More information about UVSA can be found at www.uvsa.net.