



Lynne Catania, DVM Forsyth Mobile and Relief Veterinary Services

Dr. Lynne Catania received her degree from Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine in 2002. She is a fully mobile, progressive, experienced mixed animal veterinarian providing mobile veterinary care to horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, alpacas, dogs and cats in the Winston-Salem

area since June of 2013. With 12+ years in veterinary practice, she was raised in Western NY on a Registered Jersey Cattle Farm that showed nationwide. She was in mixed animal practice for 7.5 years in NW PA prior to going on her own in relief and large animal practice, in PA/NY. She moved to Winston Salem in 2011 with her husband and three children, and repeated her model from NW PA, offering relief veterinary services to the community. Currently, she serves several veterinary hospitals in the Triad, and also offers her services at the Central Spay, Neuter and Wellness Clinic in Kernersville in an effort to help control the pet population. It was her passion and desire to cultivate meaningful client relationships and her need to work directly with her own clients and patients that brought about the start of Forsyth Mobile and Relief Veterinary Services in June of 2013.

Benefits of "At Home" Veterinary Care

"At Home" Veterinary Care seems to be a phenomenon that is catching on across the country. When I started my mobile mixed animal veterinary service in June of 2013, it was on the hunch that pet / animal owners would be excited about the utility. So far, my hunch has been correct! In my travels recently to CA, I noticed a large number of "mobile vets" especially in the small animal realm, on the road. It seems that this is a growing business model nationwide. I am quickly learning why! Pet owners love the service for many reasons. I have tried to itemize some of them here.

My personal background is in both small AND large animal medicine. While it is my calling to serve dogs and cats, it is due to my love for hooved animals (cattle, horses, llamas, alpacas, goats, sheep and the occasional pot-bellied pig), that I felt a mobile "mixed animal" practice would be a novel idea. So, for farm animal owners, YES - I will see your dogs on a farm call, too! But, for the nature of simplicity and this magazine, this article is written in regards to house pets.

Pets tend to feel "safe" when within their own environment and they truly tend to be more at ease to handling. There are not as many "foreign smells" within the home of the pet that would get them alarmed. This often allows the veterinarian to do things, with the owner present, that may not be remotely possible in a veterinary office without sedation or even the need for general anesthesia.

Pets that succumb to car sickness, have immense anxiety from a car ride or setting foot into a traditional veterinary hospital, are prime

candidates for "at home" veterinary care. Those extra-large patients or those that are less mobile from arthritis can also benefit tremendously!

Many owners find that if they have several pets requiring preventive care (vaccinations, etc.), it is much more convenient to have them all examined / attended to at once, in the home. This would save them time and would avoid the need to make several trips to the veterinary hospital with a few pets at a time. Oftentimes, this can also be a more cost-effective deal, as you pay for one house call.

Also, having your veterinarian come to you lowers the risk your pet will be exposed to diseases that could be lurking in a clinic waiting room from sick pets. This is a tremendous advantage if your pet is very young, elderly or has a weakened immune system.

For the pet owner alone, at home veterinary care may be a huge blessing for people with hectic or unpredictable schedules, for couples with a new baby or young children at home and for shut-ins, senior citizens, and people who don't drive.

Owners who are facing the death of a beloved companion may prefer to have their pet euthanized at home, surrounded by family members. This is a very hard time for all, and can be a very loving and comforting thing to offer a pet that has been so special in their family's life.

Many services that can be offered in a traditional veterinary hospital can be offered or obtained in the home. Preventive care, exams, lab samples, and medical services that tend to be the most common can be offered, without compromising the standard of care. This is especially true for most preventive care, such as vaccinations, flea / heartworm and monitoring of many common conditions such as controlled diabetes, thyroid disease and most skin conditions. Services may vary depending on the equipment that the particular mobile vet has access to.

This may seem like a wonderful thing all the way around, however, there are some disadvantages to mobile veterinary services.

Service limitation may be a concern sometimes with "at home" veterinary services. When there is severe injury, radiographs, ultrasound, other advanced diagnostics, or the need for advanced surgical care / alteration - referral or transfer to a traditional veterinary hospital or even a specialty referral hospital may be necessary. So, if your pet is very ill or requires a specialist, a mobile unit probably isn't the way to go. Mobile clinics are also not typically equipped to handle emergencies. This will vary from one mobile service to another though. For this reason, it is recommended you call first to see what services are available from the mobile vet that you choose.

Appointment scheduling may sometimes be an issue. Due to travel, set-up time and other peculiarities of operating a mobile vet clinic, these vets-on-wheels are able to see far fewer patients each day than their counterparts in regular practice. You could run into a situation where appointments are booked far in advance or on a time table that may or may not work with your needs or the needs of your pet.

Mobile veterinary services can be more expensive than the same services at traditional veterinary clinics. Travel to and from appointments carries its own expense, and each mobile call takes considerably longer than regular clinic visits. Mobile vets generally have no choice but to charge higher fees for the convenience of bringing their clinic to their patients rather than the other way around. However, this may vary from one service to another, depending on what services they offer and it's recommended that you do your homework and evaluate what type of care would work out best for you and your pet.

Weigh the pros and cons, and if you decide that at home veterinary care is for you and your pets, call Forsyth Mobile and Relief Veterinary Services. Please see our ad on page 10 for more information.