

Veterinarian Cooperative to Provide Increased Profitability to Independent Clinics

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The Veterinary Cooperative (TVC) will begin taking membership applications September 4th 2012. TVC will provide veterinary practices with purchasing, marketing and business solutions to enhance veterinarians' operations and profitability and host an interactive forum for exchange of ideas and best practices. This will enable members to compete in the consolidating marketplace and provide superior service options for the care of their patients and clients.

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The Veterinary Cooperative (TVC) will begin taking membership applications September 4th, announces TVC's Chief Executive Officer Richard A. Morris. Dr. Don Holst, DVM, owner of Arlington Park Veterinary Hospital in Rolling Meadows, Illinois and Morris have been working for nearly two years on a way to help independent veterinarians become more competitive.

"Recent trends in the industry—including the entry of Wal-Mart selling prescriptions for pets, and the potential of the Fairness to Pet Owners Act—threaten the ability of independent veterinarians to compete fairly. Veterinarians need to be sure they can obtain everything at the same cost as their competitors," says Holst.

"If you are a small vet clinic, you need a program like TVC to survive: You don't have the sales volume, skills, staff, or time to negotiate on your own," explains TVC board member Scott Carlin, who owns APC Veterinary Clinic in Tulsa, OK. "I've been killing myself for years trying to figure out how competitive clinics have been able to promote retail prices that are BELOW our cost. We can't match them. But now that I see the [pricing that TVC can get for our clinic](#), I'm incredibly relieved to finally know how I can both match their pricing and make a solid profit."

"You name an industry, there's a cooperative in it," says Adam Schwartz, founder and principal of [TheCooperativeWay](#). "Hardware stores, grocers, insurers, and automotive parts distributors have developed co-ops so they can stay independent, yet get the pricing of their big box or large corporate competitors."

"Better veterinary pricing will be an important objective of TVC, but it will not stop there," adds Morris. "There is more money to be made for an independent veterinarian by sharing best practices in operations, marketing, and patient care. Each veterinary practice will still make its own independent decisions, but armed with better tools and information. For example, TVC will conduct market research and provide its members better information as to market prices from providers such as Banfield, VCA, and 1-800-PetMeds. Having more accurate market information will help each member make its own decisions on where to price its products," said Morris. "TVC will also develop tools that members can use to improve their pricing decisions that will automatically update their practice management systems."

Amir Shanan DVM, owner of Compassionate Veterinary Care in Chicago IL and board member of TVC, notes, "I cannot wait to be the beneficiary of a veterinary cooperative. When we pay higher prices and pass them on, it makes us look like we are gouging our clients. We really need the competitive pricing TVC will help us get from suppliers."

Dr. Ronald Anders, DVM, owner of County Animal Clinic, Inc. Coldwater, Ohio, used to be a member

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of PVP Veterinary Buying Cooperative. “Being a member of a cooperative allows me to offer my clients good pricing on animal health care while still allowing me to make a profit. That is why I joined TVC and became one of the founding board members.”

Morris believes based on his research, the coop can grow to at least 5,000 members within the next five years. “And when it does, it will be a powerful force in the market, with more buying power and locations than many of the big-box stores.”

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