The Most Comprehensive
Guide to Evaluating
VETERINARY PRACTICE
Information Management Software (PIMS)

talkatoo

Veterinary medicine is eclectic. Ask 10 vets the same question and you'll get 15 different answers, each one backed with facts, references, and strong opinions. There is no very best veterinary practice management software, because each practice situation is unique and varied.

In general veterinary PIMS features include appointment scheduling, electronic medical records (EMR), prescription processing, reminders, client database, invoicing, accounting, inventory tracking, and reports based on the data acquired.

PIMS started, of course, as stand-alone, on-premise Windows, then Mac programs. Deployment evolved to include android, iPhone/iPad, and web-based cloud services. It appears that cloud-based deployment will prevail in the coming years by providing easier implementation, back up, and better security.

With the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak telemedicine components are important to consider for maintaining physical distance between staff and client. The pandemic brought a tremendous increase in stress and burnout for veterinary staff and practitioners. While an EMR brings efficiencies to many areas of practice, employee labor costs are inherent. Staying in the office late at night to update the EMR increases burnout. Anything that minimizes EMR labor cost, such as elegant software solutions and transcription applications that can decrease the time it takes to create and maintain the EMR will justify a premium monetary expenditure.
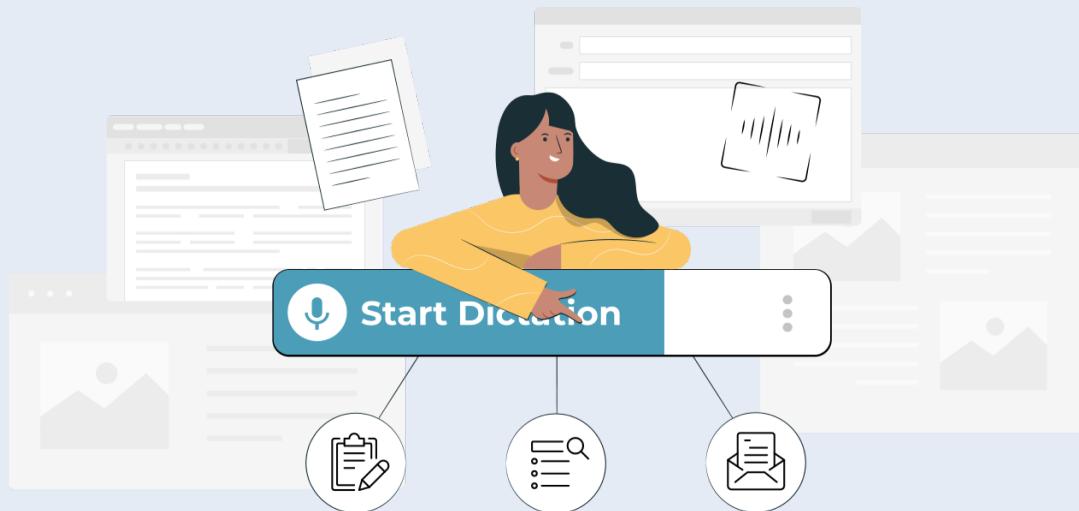
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SERVER BASED

Covetrus, founded late in 2018 with the merger of Vets First Choice with a spinoff, Henry Schein Animal Health, offers the following PIMS, the first three of which will be reviewed herein (https://softwareservices.covetrus.com)

- AVImark
- ImproMed
- eVetPractice (see cloud-based section)
- ImproMed Equine (https://softwareservices.covetrus.com/global/solution/impromed-equine-veterinary-software/)

AVIMARK

(https://softwareservices.covetrus.com/global/solution/avimark-veterinary-software/) is deployed as a Windows-only program. It has been available for decades and is quite popular. AVImark is used by more than 11,000 veterinary hospitals worldwide and rates 4.1/5 (395) with more Capterra reviews than any other veterinary PIMS. It is known for scalability, ease of use, and flexibility, which is a difficult combination to achieve. Its features include reminders, calendars for appointment and boarding scheduling, patient records, prescriptions, treatment plans, estimates, imaging, X-rays, inventory management, billing, and invoicing.

It can be integrated with most of the leading blood chemistry analyzers including AXIS-Q, Abaxis, Hemagen, Heska, IDEXX, and scil and automatically request lab tests, define test result fields, and download results. It can also be integrated with Rapport, a Covetrus veterinary client communications software, Vetstreet Pro, and other 3rd party appointment and reminder software. There is even an option for you to take AVImark with you into the field with Sidekick.


Telemedicine capabilities include:

- **Video and chat for virtual visits**
- **Email the invitation to clients**
- **Can launch video from your calendar or the patient medical record**
- **Can record video/chat consultation and upload that back into the EMR**

There is no free or trial version available. Pricing starts at $169 monthly.

IMPROMED

(https://softwareservices.covetrus.com/global/solution/impromed-veterinary-software/) rates 4.1/5 (159) and, like AviMark, is deployed as Windows-only program in the Covetrus family of veterinary PIMS. Also like AviMark, it has been around for decades. It is rich in features, which include reminders, calendars for appointment and boarding scheduling, patient records, prescriptions, treatment plans, estimates, imaging, X-rays, inventory management, billing, and invoicing.

It offers integration with VetPressOnline, Rapport, AXIS-Q and a multitude of other software systems to connect with reference labs, digital imaging, pharmacy references, and others. ImproView, the mobile application, allows users to access records and upload images.

DVMAX
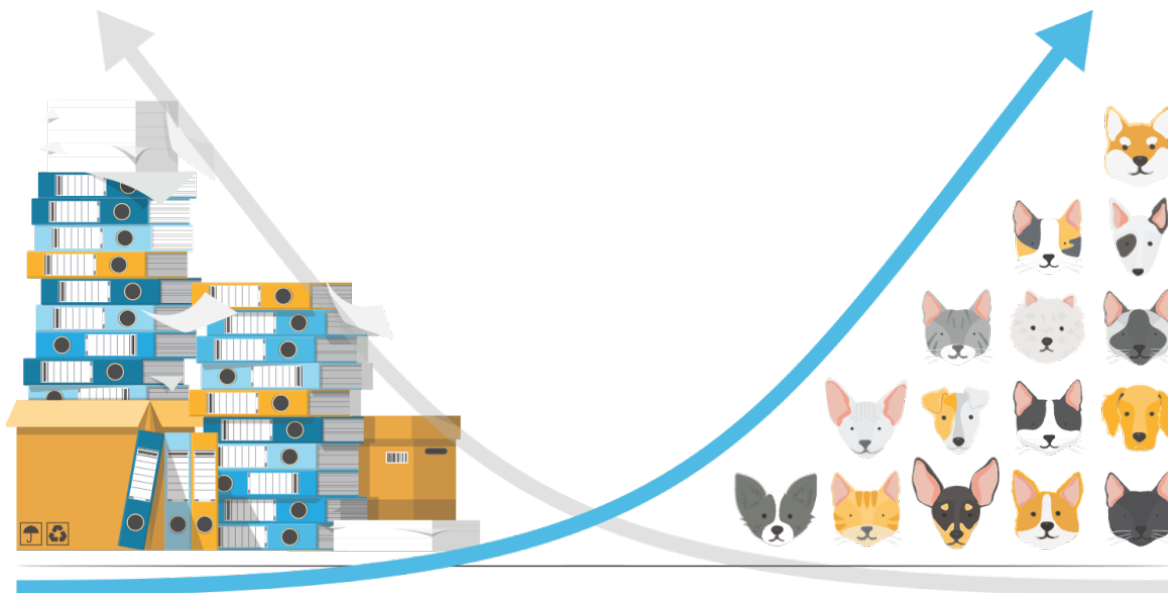
(https://www.idexx.com/en/veterinary/software-services/dvmax-veterinary-health-management-software/) was a United States software company founded in 1989, but the software, rated 3.5/5 stars (13), is now part of the IDEXX product line. Herein we'll cover DVMAX Practice, their Veterinary PIMS, not DVMAX Research, an EMR developed for facilities working with animals outside of veterinary practice.

DVMAX Practice features include reminders and appointment scheduling. You can browse appointments from iPhone or iPad. It has an EMR with treatment plans available, ability to email and fax directly from the patient record, prescription management, billing & invoicing, boarding management, image storage, reporting tools, and inventory management.

The stand-alone version can be deployed on Windows or Mac, DVMAX 8.7. It includes IDEXX Web PACS (picture archiving and communication system) integration, internal messaging, rVetLink integration with referral clinics. Recently launched DVMAX 8.8 is available as a tablet-friendly version of DVMAX that is touted to help teams work more effectively wherever they are in the practice.

DVMAX Practice lab integration includes VetConnect PLUS, 2-way integration with IDEXX Reference Lab and VetLab, and integration with most blood analyzers. It also integrates with Cubex systems and credit card processing.

Phone support is provided at various levels and prices. There is no free version or trial available. Starting price is $4,995.00/one-time.

VIA

(http://www.viainfosys.com) [3.2/5 stars (6) on Capterra] is the full-featured veterinary PIMS by VIA Information Systems, a VCA Inc. company, part of the Mars conglomeration. VIA, which stands for Veterinary Information Assistant, was developed in 1999. Today it is deployed as a Windows-based program, VIA Business Centers software, which is designed to satisfy the needs of multi-site hospitals and as a Windows 8 based application optimized for tablets, VIA Touch, which is designed for exam room data access and entry. For house call practices VIA Sync is available as an add-on so you can access medical history, capture SOAP notes, and update client information and billing, even when offline. When fieldwork is complete you can synchronize to update your hospital database days or weeks later.

VIA configures Dell, Lenovo, Microsoft, and Xerox hardware, servers, workstations, laptops, and tablets to provide a single source to go to for support, which is available via phone, email, and remote desktop assistance. For an additional fee they offer emergency technical support on a 24/7 basis, too.

Features include medical and boarding appointment scheduler, reminders, EMR with SOAP-format templates, prescription processing, white board and treatment flow sheets, and DICOM PACS and ultrasound imaging via integrations with Cuattro and MedRx VetScope. Laboratory integration with Mars-owned Antech is of course available, as is integration with IDEXX, Abaxis, Heska, Phoenix, and Scil ABC Vet hematology equipment. Controlled substance logbooks and an employee time clock and staff scheduler are also provided.

Client communication is enhanced with built in email and instant messenger. Credit card processing is available via integration with OpenEdge & X-Charge and electronic signature capture is available for consent forms. Integration with Lifelearn provides client education.

Considering how long this full-featured software has been offered it is surprising that there are only six reviews (3.2/5) on Capterra, which states there is no trial or free version available and that pricing starts at $2,900.00 as a one-time payment, per user.

INTRAVET

(https://www.pattersonvet.com/SignatureSolutions/Intravet) rates only 3.1/5 (26) on Capterra, but is touted by Patterson Veterinary as the industry's most powerful software. It is a Window's-only deployed program based on their original PMS IntraVet Classic (https://www.pattersonvet.com/SignatureSolutions/Software-Connection/IntraVet-Classic), the latter of which integrates with their marketing program, ePetHealth, and credit card transaction program, XCharge. You can use texts and emails to send appointment and health service reminders with ePetHealth. You can also survey client satisfaction, provide client education, email newsletters, send reminder postcards, and more.

IntraVet also manages patient records and imaging, medical history, lab results, SOAPs, reports and client reminders, and integrates with the client education tool, Diagnostic Imaging Atlas.

Positive reviews focus on its features and ease of use. Reviews were more positive prior to Patterson's acquisition. Consistent complaints are that the system has not kept up with the times and that customer service and support could be better. The company promises support staff training and upgrades are always in the works.

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SERVER-OR CLOUD-BASED

VETLINKSQL

VetLinkSQL (https://www.vetlinksql.com/) rates 4.8/5 (44), is built on SQL (Structured Query Language) technology, deployed as either a cloud-hosted or Windows on-premise PIMS, and offers a free trial. It has IOS and android mobile apps. Key features include appointment booking, reminders, billing, inventory, e-forms, reporting, client text-messaging, a client portal, and cloud backup and data recovery.

VetLinkSQL is appropriate for a variety of practice types. It offers in-house lab integration for both IDEXX VetLab Stations and Abaxis Vetscan machines. External lab integration includes IDEXX, but not Antech. Third party integrations include e-commerce programs, data-facilitation providers, and MailChimp. Clinic use of text-messaging tools provides clients with pet post-surgical and medical updates, appointment and vaccination reminders, and special offers.

The New Zealand-based company was founded in 1989. Most of its reviews are from Australia.

The veterinary PIMS offered by 2i Nova (https://www.2inova.com/our-veterinary-software/) only had 12 reviews on Capterra, but most were favorable (4.6/5) and 75% of the reviewers ranked the software 5/5 for every category. The U.S. based company has provided veterinary software for over 30 years and currently offers a Windows-deployed clinic-based program, VTP Platinum, and a cloud-based program, Prime.

VTP Platinum's features are deep and include: appointment and boarding scheduling, client auto-check-in, reminders, EMR, treatment and wellness plans, chalkboard and whiteboard, prescriptions, imaging and x-rays with radiology log (and automatic surgery, controlled drug, and prescription logs), billing, split billing, invoicing, and inventory management with purchase orders, auto markup, bar coding, and vendor tracking. According to their brochure VTP Platinum integrates with Abaxis, Heska, and IDEXX.

VTP also offers staff time clock, internal staff email, and remote backup. They boast the software is AAHA compliant.

VTP accounting software is included and integrates with Quickbooks. Other integrations include VetScene, Heartland payment systems, Scil, Lifelearn, Simondr, Z(o)asis, and MS Office.

VTP Platinum works on regular monitors and is also optimized for touch screen monitors. VTP Mobile is included, which allows for off site billing and invoicing. Then VTP uploads your work when you return and plug in.

Their cloud-based program, Prime, can be accessed from most devices with Internet access including iPads and tablets. According to their website Prime includes enhanced versions of all current VTP features including complete integration with Heska, Antech, and IDEXX.

Published pricing is a starting price of $135/month with a $350 setup fee and, if necessary, a $500 conversion fee. A free trial/demo is available.

RXWORKS

(https://softwareservices.covetrus.com/apac/solution/rxworks-veterinary-software/) was rated 4.3/5 (35), was developed by Henry Schein Veterinary Solutions, and is available via Covetrus. It is deployed as a Windows (RxWorks Veterinary Software) or cloud-based (RxWorks Hosted Solution) PIMS. RxWorks has been around a long time, was founded in 1988, and is available in 19 countries including Australia, but not in North America.

Features include reminders, appointment scheduling, billing, invoicing, imaging and X-rays, inventory management, and patient records including treatment plans and prescription processing. Use Insurance Manager to create paper-free, accurate insurance claims for patients, avoiding the drudgery of manual data entry. Use Laboratory Manager to integrate with a range of in house lab devices and external lab services and automate workflow to provide results to doctors and clients.

Newly developed telemedicine capabilities include video appointments with email invitations to clients with a viewer link. Video sessions can be launched directly through the RxWorks web app.

The online version will provide increased flexibility since it can be accessed on Windows, Mac, Android, and iOS devices, minimizing hardware costs and ensuring keeping up with the latest version. Training is available in-person, live online, through webinars, and by documentation. Support with a live rep is available 24/7.
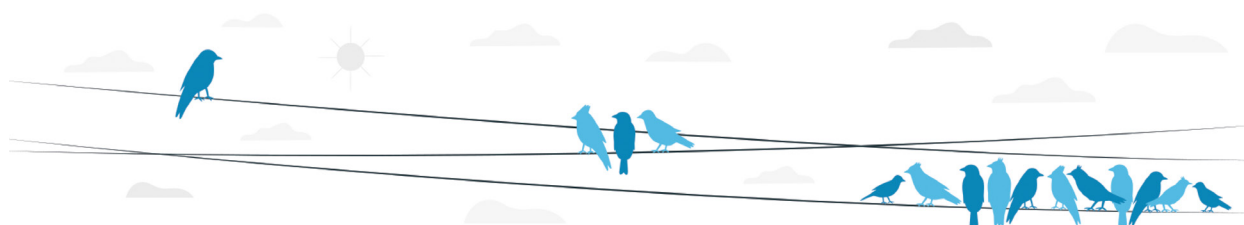
CLIENTRAX

ClienTrax (https://clientrax.com/) PIMS, 4/5 (17), is offered by a company that has been in business in the United States since 1987. It is deployed as a Cloud-based software as a service (SaaS) or installed on Mac or Windows computers.

Features include appointment scheduling, reminders, EMR including treatment plans, prescriptions, lab integration, digital imaging PACS, client retention program, wellness plans, boarding management, billing, inventory, and a mobile app. ClienTrax-mobile allows clients to schedule appointments and the practitioner to contact the client by phone regarding reminders, recalls, and even send a client satisfaction survey, including automatically posting favorable reviews on Facebook. The company claimed bidirectional integration with Antech, Heska, and IDEXX (but not Abaxis) lab products in a 2018 response to a reviewer complaint, but didn't specify regarding in-house versus external lab capabilities. ClienTrax includes online support and Monday to Friday phone support during business hours.

ClienTrax integrates with Dragon for dictation. ClienTrax integrates with Timeless Veterinary Systems for practitioner telemedicine with board-certified specialists, VPR Cloud, a drug formulary, and Talkatoo, the latter also for dictation. It also integrates with OpenEdge for payments and QuickBooks for accounting.

ClienTrax offers 3 sequentially increased levels of PIMS programs: Basic, Standard, and Accounting. The company does not reveal costs, but does offer a demo program to try.

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CLOUD
ONLY SAAS

EZYVET

ezyVet (http://www.ezyvet.com/) is available from a New Zealand-based company that touts its veterinary SaaS PIMS, "is the next generation in cloud-based software for Primary Care, Emergency and Specialty referral." Ranked at 4.7/5 (119) it is one of the more popular and highly regarded offerings available. They claim 99.95% uptime, 24-hour support, and 99% customer retention. Their website has a nice overview, but to get information about specifics, especially about integrations and customizations, it's best to call the company and get a demo. Pricing for the starts at $150/month/user and they offer a free trial.

ezyVet can be used from your laptop, desktop, tablet, or phone. The features ezyVet offers include appointment scheduling (color-coded drag-and-drop calendar) and reminders, imaging, x-rays, patient records, prescriptions, treatment plans (including a wellness module), billing, and invoicing.

Animal records, prescription details, treatment history, and appointments are stored in one place. Multiple users can view and edit patient records at the same time. Client communication is available via 2-way SMS, email, and efax. Clients can check-in or create a new contact, animal, or appointment.

Integration with lab equipment in house and outside diagnostic labs is apparently available, but specifics are not revealed. According to IDEXX its SmartFlow Software integrates with ezyVet. According to various review sites and reviewers ezyVet integrates with distributors, Zoom and Amazon Chime (online meeting and video conferencing), Xero (book keeping), PayJunction (payment processing), Vetstoria's Veterinary Online Booking software, and VitusVet. One reviewer complained that the company is did not deliver promised integrations. The company responded that data security required they needed to be careful with selection of 3rd-party integration partners. That said, many reviewers were happy with integrations and customizations.

Co-founder and CEO Dr. Cynthia Barnes, a veterinary practitioner, started Shepherd App in 2016 as a cloud-based SaaS PIMS. Its Capterra reviews 5/5 (16) reveal stellar quality, but not a large number of reviewers. They boast an intuitive design that is optimized to chrome browser, perfect for tablets, laptops, or desktop computers. It can be used on android or iPhones, too. Shepherd claims their software, "automatically generates invoices, discharge instructions, and client reminders as you administer treatments and update your patients' medical records."

They also boast that their design is so intuitive and user friendly that training is unnecessary, a boast corroborated by several reviewers on independent software review sites and by testimonials on Shepherd's website, https://shepherdapp.com.

Their website has an in-depth help center and training resources page with a multitude of articles and videos that can be easily searched and accessed. Questions posted there are promptly answered.

Features include appointment scheduling, invoicing, billing, and SOAP-formatted EMR including imaging, reminders, prescriptions, and treatment plans. The program does not manage inventory or offer a lot of integrations, but those features are in the works. With an existing open API in place, the company promises integration with IDEXX, Abaxis, and others coming in the very near future. In the meantime, loading lab results is a download-and-paste process that results in having a complete medical record without a lot of extra effort. It is a simple, straightforward workaround solution. Shepherd is integrated with Banquest Payment Systems to ease payment processing.

Cost is $299 monthly for 1 doctor, $499 for 2-3 doctors, and $749 for 4-7 doctors, with unlimited users, cloud backup, scheduling, treatment whiteboard, integrated payments, free automatic updates, speech-to-text, and online U.S. chat support. There is a free trial available.

VETTER SOFTWARE

Vetter Software (http://www.vettersoftware.com) is a cloud-deployed, SaaS, secure 256-bit encryption software that can be used on any hardware that can access the Internet. While optimized for tablet size screens and larger it can be used on android and iPhones, especially those with larger screen size and higher resolution. The company is working on improving the usability on smaller cell phones.

Used by over 1,300 practices, it is rated 4.6/5 (891). Vetter has been a long-time favorite of house call practitioners, especially in the early years after launch in 2011 when they offered a free subscription for up to 300 clients. Sadly that option is not available, but they do offer a demo trial account that is fully functional to see how everything works in your hands. This full-featured PIMS starts at $99/month for the solo practitioner with stair-step subscriptions to $399/month for up to 15 users. That fee includes set up, backups, software updates, data ownership and access (formatted in comma-separated values [CSV] or SQL), instructor-led free training offered thrice weekly, and 24/7 phone and email assistance. The only other fee their subscription won't cover is sending texts, which costs $0.05/message. Vetter frequently ranks at the top of veterinary PIMS for their customer service.

Vetter Software touts itself as providing everything needed to run your practice from booking to payments, inventory to reminders. They say their mission is to deliver innovation that helps coordinate and improve the care and health of the world's animals and that their cloud practice management software allows practices to run better by automating manual tasks, streamlining cumbersome workflows, and improving visibility into the financial health of the business.

Features include appointment scheduling, reminders, EMR, prescriptions, treatment plans including the newly available integrated treatment board, reports, billing, invoicing, boarding management, and integration with diagnostic labs Antech, IDEXX, Heska, Animal Reference Pathology, and ZNLabs.

There are many other integrations available such as scheduling software Next In Line and telemedicine software VitusVet.

EVETPRACTICE

eVetPractice (https://softwareservices.covetrus.com/veterinary-solutions/evetpractice-veterinary-software/) is a cloud-based veterinary PIMS in the Covetrus family of veterinary software that rates 4.4/5 (176).

There are three plans available on a monthly subscription basis:

- **Foundations for small or start-up practices**
- **Standard for medium-sized practices**
- **Premium for larger and corporate accounts**

All plans include access to the Covetrus Platform (Covetrus Connect, Client Communications, Prescription Management, Lab System integration, Payment Processing, and Inventory Management). Features, price, and training support increase sequentially. As an example, wellness plans, anesthetic monitoring, and telemedicine features are available in the Standard plan, not Foundations.

It features SOAP-based EMR management, reminders, appointment scheduling, and prescription processing. The EMR includes document storage, lab forms, and test result history. There is diagnostic lab integration with Abaxis, ANTECH, and IDEXX. Reports include daily or weekly billing, inventory, and controlled substance logs.

Telemedicine capabilities include those mentioned in the section on AVImark. Clients can access personal information, payment history, account balances, and appointments via a pet owner portal where they can also request appointments on smart phone and desktop devices.
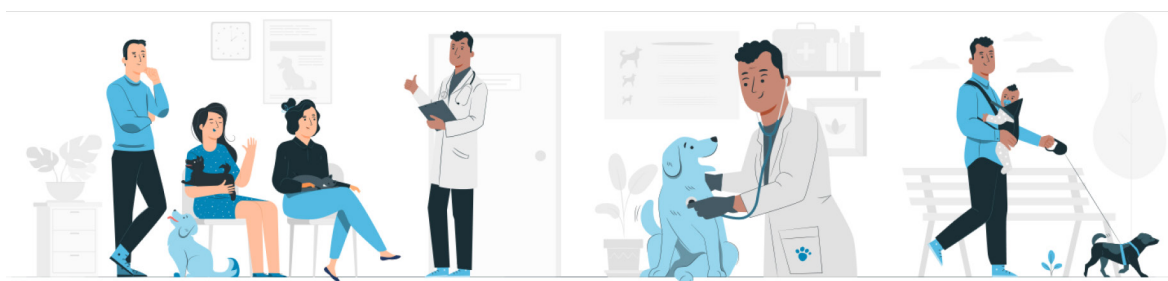
ONWARD VET

Onward Vet (https://www.onwardvet.com/) is the brainchild of Rajat Sharma, the CEO of Onward Systems, which he founded in 2000. It is a full-featured, cloud-based, SaaS veterinary PIMS that will work on any device with Internet access. It has excellent reviews 5/5 (21), but not a lot of them considering how long it has been around.

Onward Vet promotes itself as being appropriate for any size practice. Features include appointment scheduling, reminders, invoicing, billing, and SOAP-formatted EMR, prescriptions, controlled substance log, whiteboard, treatment flow sheets, and inventory management. The client portal allows for text and email reminders and clients to use electronic signatures on estimates and consent forms. Two-way reference lab integration is provided for IDEXX and Antech. Integration is available for in-house lab machines such as IDEXX vet lab station and via Abaxis/ Zoetis FUSE, VETSCAN point of care diagnostics. Additional integrations include distributor MWI, online pharmacies, Quickbooks, and credit card payment processing.

Onward Vet pricing starts at $300.00 per month for first full-time veterinarian and an additional $100/month for each additional vet. They do not have a free version, but Onward Vet offers a free 2-week trial. Live staff training is free online. Support is available online during regular business hours.

You'll need to call to find price of one-time data conversion fee and 24/7-support availability.

DIGITAL

Relative newcomer, Digitail, (https://www.digitail.io/) has excellent Capterra reviews 5/5 (40). Founded in 2016, they offer a full-featured, cloud-based, SaaS veterinary PIMS with a focus on telemedicine, making it a real up-and-comer. The veterinary PIMS is associated with a phone app for the public that is designed to drive clients to you to ask a question or set up an in-clinic or telemedicine appointment.

Features available in their Starter package include EMR, appointment scheduler with public online calendar that clients can use and even book an appointment from your Facebook page, reminders, treatment and wellness plans, invoicing, billing, a client portal, chat, and other telemedicine essentials.. Stock management for up to 200 items is included in the Starter package. With the Growth package you get complete inventory management, controlled substance record, accounting, payment processing, and lab integrations.

Monthly cost for annual signup starts at $79 for Starter package, $95 for mobile vets, and $159 for the Growth package. Use of SMS will incur additional fees.

Digitail integrates with Abaxis, Antech, and IDEXX diagnostic labs. Integration with Talkatoo provides easy dictation and TextBlaze provides discharge and treatment templates. Client communication is enhanced by integration with SendGrid, Sinch, and CometCha. Other integrations include Quickbooks for accounting.

You can interact with clients via email, video consultation, SMS, or via push notifications in the app. Two-way chat allows you to quickly communicate with your clients or send photos or lab results. Images can be imported into the medical record, but DICOM is not yet available.

Their website resources page is searchable and provides step-by-step instructions. Support is available 24/7 by email and chat. You can book an appointment for zoom or phone support. Free trial is available.

HIPPO MANAGER
VETERINARY SOFTWARE

Hippo Manager Veterinary Software (https://hippomanager.com/) a solely cloud-deployed SaaS, full-featured PIMS is rated 4.1/5 (122). It allows you to use whatever hardware you have on hand that accesses the Internet: desktop, iPad, tablet, laptop, and still be able to keep up with the latest features and integrations. It was relatively recently founded in 2012.

A favorite of the mobile practitioner, it can also be used in solo or multi-location mega practices. Features include reminders, calendars for color-coded appointment and boarding scheduling, patient records, prescriptions, treatment plans, estimates, imaging, X-rays, inventory management, billing, and invoicing.

The program is optimized for touchscreen devices and can be used on iPad2 through the latest model and tablets including Kindles, Samsung Tablets, Android devices and more. Hippo Manager can also be used on cell phones, but a larger screen is recommended.
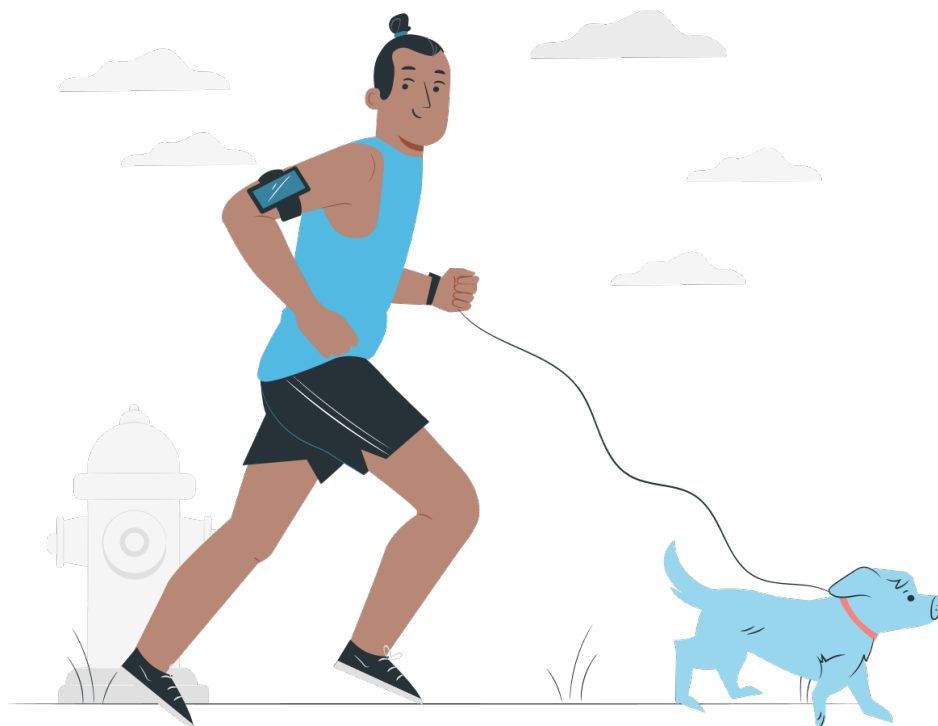
The company touts that Hippo Manager serves as the central nervous system for your practice, integrating your patient data with labs, pharmacy, client communication and more. They promise to give you the autonomy to practice the way you want with integrations for IDEXX reference lab and onsite equipment, Antech reference lab, ALLYDVM, VCP Wellness Plans, Scratchpay, Clearent (credit card payment), Stripe, zipwhip (text and SMS messages), Vetsource, Vets First Choice, Google Calendar (manage client appointments with 2-way sync), PetDesk, and TeleVet (VCPR-compliant remote care through text, call, or video chat).

The DICOM-style viewer works with a plethora of file types. Keep up with medical records using speech-to-text via Dragon or Talkatoo.

Free trial is available. Current pricing is $119 per month per full-time veterinarian. You can migrate data from any PIMS to Hippo for a fee. The company promises that you will always own your data so you can take it elsewhere if needed.

NAVETOR

(https://www.pattersonvet.com/SignatureSolutions/NaVetor), also marketed by Patterson Veterinary, is appropriate for a variety of practice types including mobile and start up. It has cloud-only deployment and excellent Capterra reviews, especially for exceptional customer service, by nearly a half dozen folks 4.6/5 (5). Support is available 24/7. Training is available in manuals, in-person, live online, and in webinars.

Features include: appointment reminders and scheduling, billing, invoicing, imaging, x-rays, inventory management, patient records, treatment plans, and prescription processing. It includes a mobile application, texting, reputation management, and boarding functionality. You can easily send text, email reminders, and birthday greetings right from NaVetor through Patterson's ePET Lite, which is built into the system. It also offers two-way integration with reference labs and laboratory equipment from IDEXX, Antech, and Zoetis.

This is a new PIMS, which will have glitches as a result. It was launched in 2018. But with a history of excellent customer service and routine updates it seems like a good bet to place. Since it is cloud-based you can use it anywhere and don't need to upgrade hardware to keep up with software enhancements. NaVetor has a free trail period available. It costs $129 monthly or more depending on the number of users.

NEO

Neo (https://www.idexxneo.com) software, an IDEXX product, rates 4.2/5 stars (81). It is a cloud-based PIMS that's geared more to small, independent, and mobile practices. It offers appointment management, invoice creation, and payment processing features. It also has an activity dashboard to manage employee tasks.

Neo provides a learning manual and help-desk chat for basic help and trouble-shooting. Additional online training and phone support are also available for purchase. Be aware treatment sheet integration is not available without paying extra for IDEXX's SmartFlow software, which irritated and prompted one user reviewer to switch from it to Patterson Veterinary's cloud-based PIMS, NaVetor. Neo offers a free trial and comes as a monthly subscription.

RHAPSODY

The Seattle-area startup, Petabyte Technology, recently raised $8 million to build the cloud-based full-featured SaaS veterinary PIMS, Rhapsody (https://www.rhapsody.vet/). The software is so new that it only has one Capterra review, but it's a 5/5 stars. Rhapsody looks pretty slick and comprehensive. It works on any device connected to the Internet, desktops, laptops, tablets, and phones using any common operating system. All major browsers including Chrome, Firefox, and Safari, are supported. For phones Chrome or Safari browsers are required.

Features include appointment scheduling, invoicing, billing, and SOAP-formatted EMR, reminders, prescriptions, whiteboard, and treatment plans. Exam findings, lab results, and report cards can be emailed or texted to clients directly from the PIMS. Staff time clock is included. Send-out and in-house lab integrations include IDEXX, Abaxis, Antech, ZNLabs, Heska, and others. There is no mention of DICOM or other imaging capability or integration.

Support is available online at their help center. You can chat, email, and get phone support. For information about cost you should contact the company, but the PIMS is linked to your clinic's use of their merchant service, Rhapsody Pay, which is a fully integrated, mobile, and secure platform that powers your practice's card processing. Rhapsody Pay incorporates your software costs, hence they charge a flat-rate transaction fee every time you process a card payment. Costs are outlined on their blog (https://blog.rhapsody.vet/). There is a one-time fee of $300 per payment terminal and $1,000 for data migration.

Then the following flat-rate transaction fees are applied:

- Credit card – 2.69%
- Check card – 1.79%
- Debit card – 1.39%

Setting up involves registering with First American during onboarding and then having the option of setting up with Rhapsody Go, storing client's payment information in their PCI-certified vault and/or adding a service fee to recoup 70% of processing fees with Rhapsody Pass.

They currently support migration from AviMark, Cornerstone, Impromed, Vetter, and eVetPractice. The cost of PIMS migration is unclear so you should call them to clarify what cost will be in your particular situation. According to Petabyte most practices save money with their PIMS.
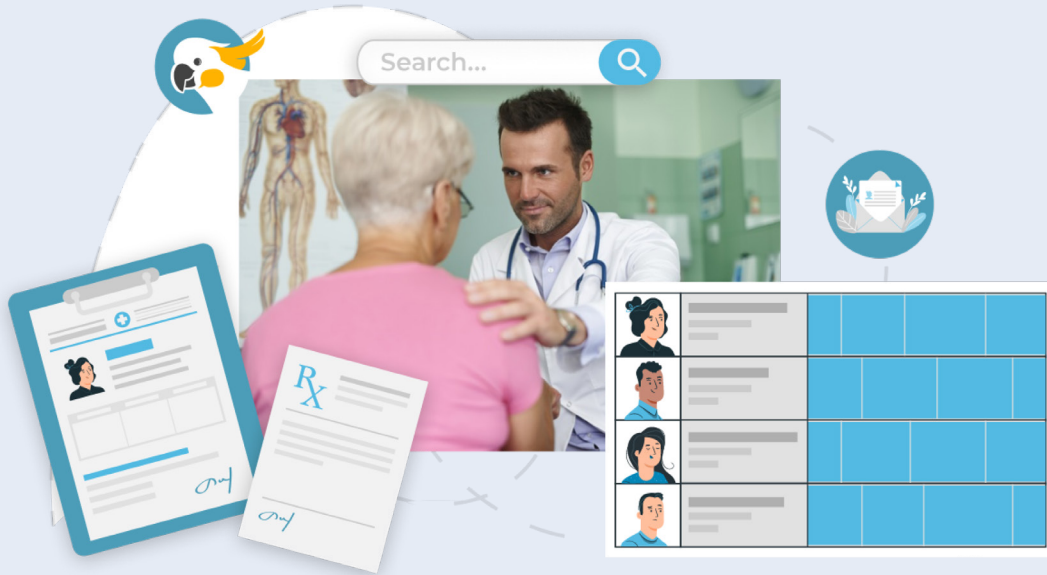
4

TELEMEDICINE AND OTHER SUPPLEMENTAL SOFTWARE

Telemedicine refers both to the practice of providing medical care when the veterinarian and client/patient are widely separated and to the use of telecommunication technology to provide and enhance healthcare services by linking to other clinics and facilities, or transmitting data such as diagnostic images and examination findings to another site. Regulations vary so you need to check with your state licensing board regarding the practice act that applies to your situation. Some software companies have telemedicine capabilities incorporated within their veterinary PIMS such as Onward Vet and Digitail with client email and text capability through the client portal. Others integrate with other services to provide various telemedicine features. The following are some software programs that integrate with veterinary PIMS to provide various telemedicine capabilities.

TELEVET

TeleVet (https://televet.com/) provides a self-service menu on your website for clients to schedule an appointment or virtual visit or request a refill, records, or talk to staff. It integrates with AVImark, ClienTrax, DVMax, eVetPractice, exyVet, Hippo, IDEXX Neo, IDEXX Cornerstone, ImproMed, Intravet, RxWorks, 2i Nova, Via, and Vetter. The annual membership costs $99/month/clinic site.

4.8/5

VITUSVET

After Dr. Mark Olcott had a challenge as an emergency veterinarian on a Sunday afternoon wherein lack of access to a patient's medical record ultimately led to that patient dying, he co-founded VitusVet (https://vitusvet.com/) (4.8/5 [16]) to put a complete medical record into the hands of pet owners and solve the problem. Since the SaaS, cloud-based program was launched in 2013 the company has added more and more features, especially telemedicine functionality, but it is not a full-fledged veterinary PIMS, has no inventory management. It integrates with Cornerstone, AVImark, ImproMed, IDEXX, DVMAX, Clientrax, Via, Intravet, Infinity, Advantage+, Vetter, and eVetPractice.

Pet owners can download medical records apps VitusVet from Google Play (4.7/5 [7088]) or VitusVet Pet Medical Records (4.9/5 [9400]) from the Apple App Store. The App store also has the recently released VitusVet Connect (3.5/5 [11]) for two-way text and picture imaging. As a result, clients with VitusVet or similar apps, such as PetDesk, sometimes request full medical records to be downloaded for their access. Practitioners may or may not be required to comply depending on their state veterinary practice act and may or may not feel comfortable sharing all their data via a link on an email request. Prudence dictates most veterinarians will contact the client to insure the client actually made the request and share appropriate records via fax or PDF copy.

Additional VitusVet features are that the practice phone number can send and receive text messages and images. It will send text, email, and in-app reminders for appointments and refills. Appointment scheduling can be requested by the client online. VitusVet also offers postcards, surveys, reviews (with ability to add positive reviews to website or social media) veterinarian payment plans, tablet checkout, and text-to-pay. Cost for an annual subscription is $319/month and includes phone and email support and a dedicated account manager to help with marketing and coaching.

VETTOOLS

VetTools (https://www.vin.com/vinx/index.html) by VINx has been part of the Veterinary Information Network (VIN) family of services since 2014. There are two plans available, VetTools Messaging, which focuses on text messaging, and the full VetTools platform, which also features reminders, EMR sharing with clients (via PetSites) and specialists, automated appointment communications, newsletters, marketing, and more. The service integrates with AVImark, Cornerstone, Intravet, ImproMed, Infinity, VIA and eVetPractice. Annual service costs between $99 and $359/month depending on which plan you get, if you are a VIN member or not, and if you sign up within 30 days of your VetTools demo.

There are many other software systems to consider that provide telemedicine enhancements to your full-featured veterinary PIMS. Adding ALLYDVM allows you to email and text clients and to provide a clinic mobile app for clients to access their pets EMR, request refills, request an appointment, and more. PetDesk also has a mobile app for your clients plus two-way messaging, video chat, and appointment requests, and other features that address curbside protocols and save time. Other similar competing programs to consider include Vetstreet, DemandForce, ePetHealth, Petly, and Vet2Pet.

TIMELESS VETERINARY SYSTEMS

Timeless Veterinary Systems (https://www.timelessveterinary.com/), previously mentioned as integrating with ClienTrax, provides an interesting combination of services, some of which are helpful for telemedicine. Its cloud-based telemedicine package helps veterinary practitioners consult with a broad array of board-certified specialists in their network from radiologists to pathologists using Cloud PACS storage. They offer Vet Drug Index, a drug formulary designed by Drs. Etienne Côté, Stephen Ettinger, and Wayne Schwark. They also offer Talkatoo dictation software.

VETCONNECT PLUS (IDEXX)

(https://www.idexx.com/en/veterinary/software-services/vetconnect-plus/) provides prompt 24/7access to IDEXX laboratory results and one-click ability to share those results with clients from your desktop or smart phone. Compare historical patient results side-by-side or in graphs to check for trends. Interpret results and determine next steps for diagnosis using and up-to-date protocols, research, and publications. Get expert guidance from IDEXX board-certified specialists. Share client-friendly result summaries directly from the VetConnect PLUS app, which requires a phone with Android 5.0 or higher and 2GB of RAM or more.

VetConnect PLUS is fully integrated with IDEXX's Cornerstone and Neo. It is also compatible with DVMax, AVImark, and ImproMed. VetConnect PLUS offers two-way integration with select PIMs including:

- ezyVet
- IntraVet
- RxWorks
- ClienTrax
- VTP (2i Nova)

If integrated with the following PIMS you can more easily share results with clients because their email address will automatically appear:

- AVImark
- Cornerstone
- ImproMed Infinity
- IntraVet Classic
- IntraVet SQL
- VIA
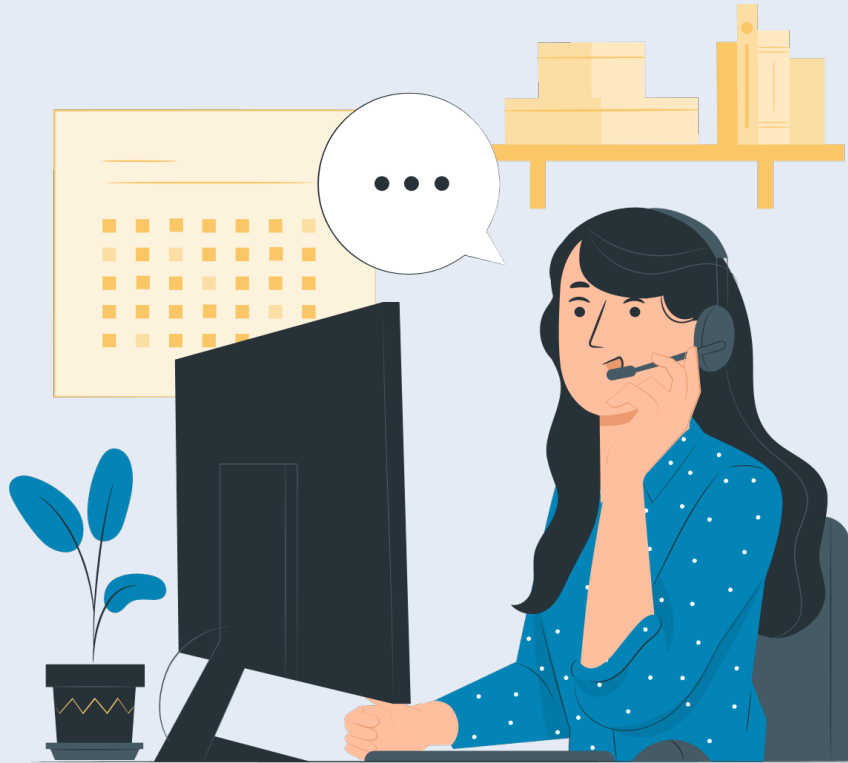
5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For your convenience the veterinary PIMS software is roughly listed in order of most refined to least elegant in each category keeping features, value, and reviewer rating quality and quantity all in mind.

That said, how does one go about picking the best veterinary PIMS for their particular situation? If you are a mobile vet starting out your needs will be dramatically different than those of a stand-alone brick and mortar solo practitioner or those with a multisite or mega practice.

Begin with a list of must-haves. This is the most important part of the process. What are your needs? Sure there are things you want the software to do, but first, what MUST it do?

You are going to need to ask yourself a lot of questions, starting with deployment, "Am I comfortable with my Internet access and my data being stored in the cloud?" If not, your choices are more limited, but you won't fall for being on the bleeding edge either. Maybe you're old school. Maybe you are afraid the Internet itself will completely crash or that your access will drop. If you don't have a rock-solid Internet service and cell phone service in your area beware. If either service is spotty, avoid the cloud. It won't work well for you. Being unable to access your records is frustrating, to say the least. Talk about a burnout generator! Whew!
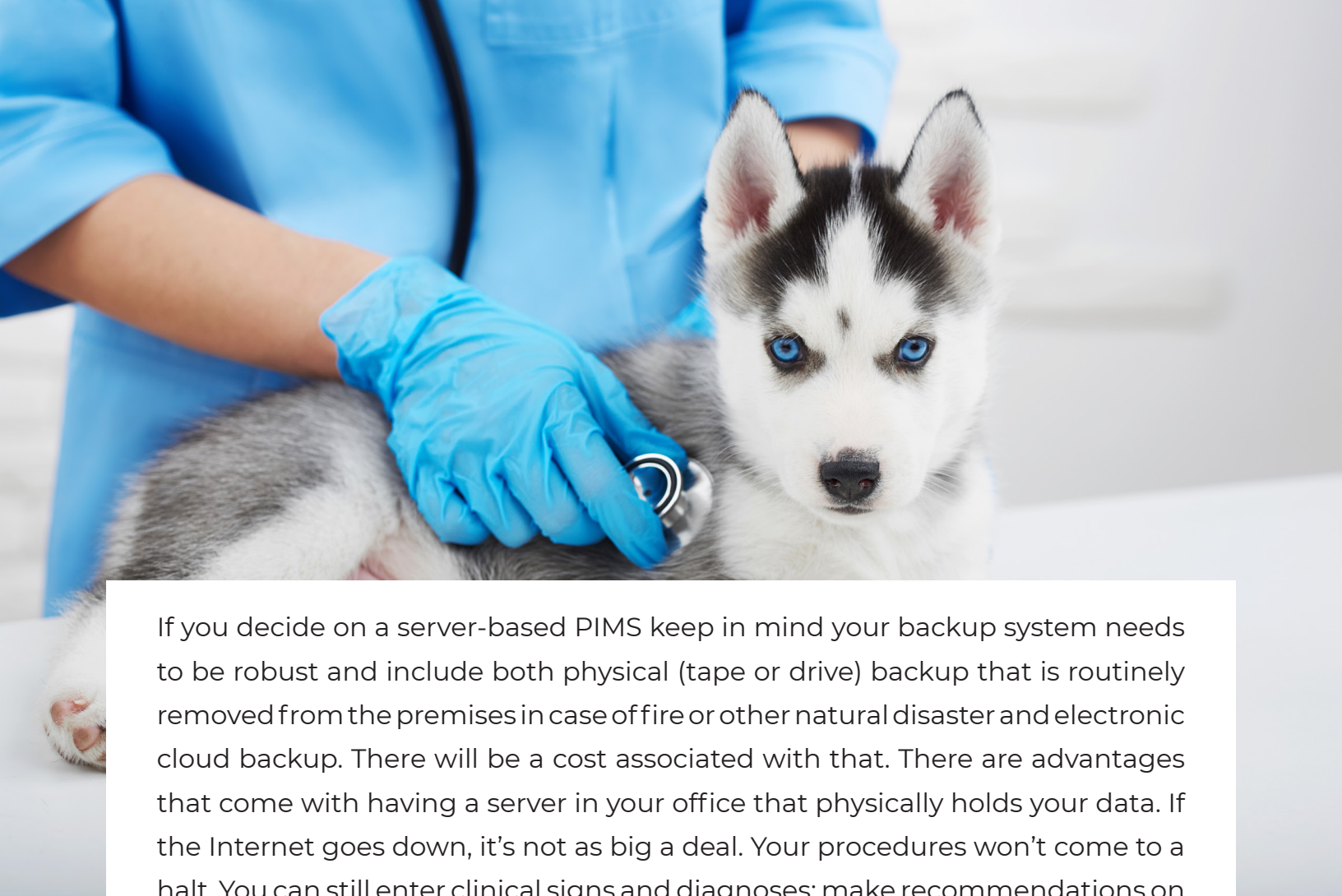
If you decide on a server-based PIMS keep in mind your backup system needs to be robust and include both physical (tape or drive) backup that is routinely removed from the premises in case of fire or other natural disaster and electronic cloud backup. There will be a cost associated with that. There are advantages that come with having a server in your office that physically holds your data. If the Internet goes down, it's not as big a deal. Your procedures won't come to a halt. You can still enter clinical signs and diagnoses; make recommendations on the EMR and print out prescriptions; print out invoices and process payments, or at least take credit card information for later processing.

If you've decided you must have a server-based Windows software then start with ImproMed or AVImark and compare your choices against them. If you must have a Mac server, then check out DVMax.

If you want the advantages of having your data on a server, but are open to a cloud-based deployment in the near future might want to check out companies with programs that are available in both formats: VetLinkSQL, RxWorks, ClienTrax, and 2iNova's offerings.

If, on the other hand, you appreciate the advantages of a SaaS, have great Internet and phone service, and are ready to jump into the future with both feet, eyes wide open, then start with ezyVet, eVetPractice, Vetter, or Shepherd App, all excellent full-service, cloud-based PIMS options with good track records.

Now that you've decided on deployment select your top three SIMS choices and ask yourself some more questions!

How tech-savvy are you? How about your staff? Do you need a company that can hold your hand during start-up and later, too? What does their onboarding procedure look like? How user-friendly is the program? Is it easy to use and learn? Ease of training is very important, for onboarding and for new hires in the future. Is it so user-friendly, like the Shepherd App claims to be, that training and onboarding are relatively easy?

Does it have an intuitive interface and provide efficient workflows? You'll need to get a demo, or better yet, trial version to find out how it works in your hands.

If you are replacing a PIMS, does the new software support migration of your data? What does that cost?

Do you need a software manual printed in your hand or are you just as comfortable with accessing online videos? Some software has excellent help access within the program itself. Others, like Cornerstone, have help dropdowns built on archaic platforms that even refer you back to solutions or work-around procedures that are no longer available or necessary.

Does it require third-party add-ons to meet my needs? Integrations leave you vulnerable to changes in the programs with which your PIMS integrates. Is that acceptable or would you prefer an all-in-one solution?

What are your reporting needs? Staff performance? What reports do you need to figure DVM or staff production-based salary?

Do you want to track inventory and, if so, how closely? Does the PIMS optimize pricing and inventory? Does it already have an inventory catalog with codes preloaded? Is that what you want or do you prefer loading your inventory into the program so there are not a lot of extra items clogging up the system and making selection of inventory items for the invoice a tedious process? The same question needs to be asked about service codes.

Inventory management seems like it ought to be an easy function for a PIMS, but many find this process a nightmare and go back to maintaining a legal pad with notes staff enter as they notice low inventory.

Is invoicing automatic as you enter things into the medical record? This feature will decrease dropped charges.

How do you keep records now and what kind of records do you want to keep after onboarding? Are EMR notes in a format that works for you? Does it have templates that will accomplish your needs? Will dictation software help you complete medical notes promptly during the exam so you don't have to stay late every night updating your patients EMR?

Are you ready to go completely paperless for your records? Is your physical setup such that you have convenient workstations in place or do you need flexible access to the EMR and ability to enter exam findings on the fly? Tablet data entry can provide a significant advantage. Is that a must-have for your situation?

What lab equipment do you use in-house? Does your prospective software integrate with it? If not, is there a convenient work-around? What diagnostic lab do you use and is it compatible? Is there two-way communication? Regarding integration also consider images, x-rays, ultrasound, accounting, distributers, merchant services, and client communication software.

Is telemedicine a big part of your practice? Have you considered moving in that direction? Do you want software that incorporates two-way client texting, emails, and video conferencing in the EMR? If the software you otherwise love is lacking in this area, can you supplement it with a service like TeleVet?
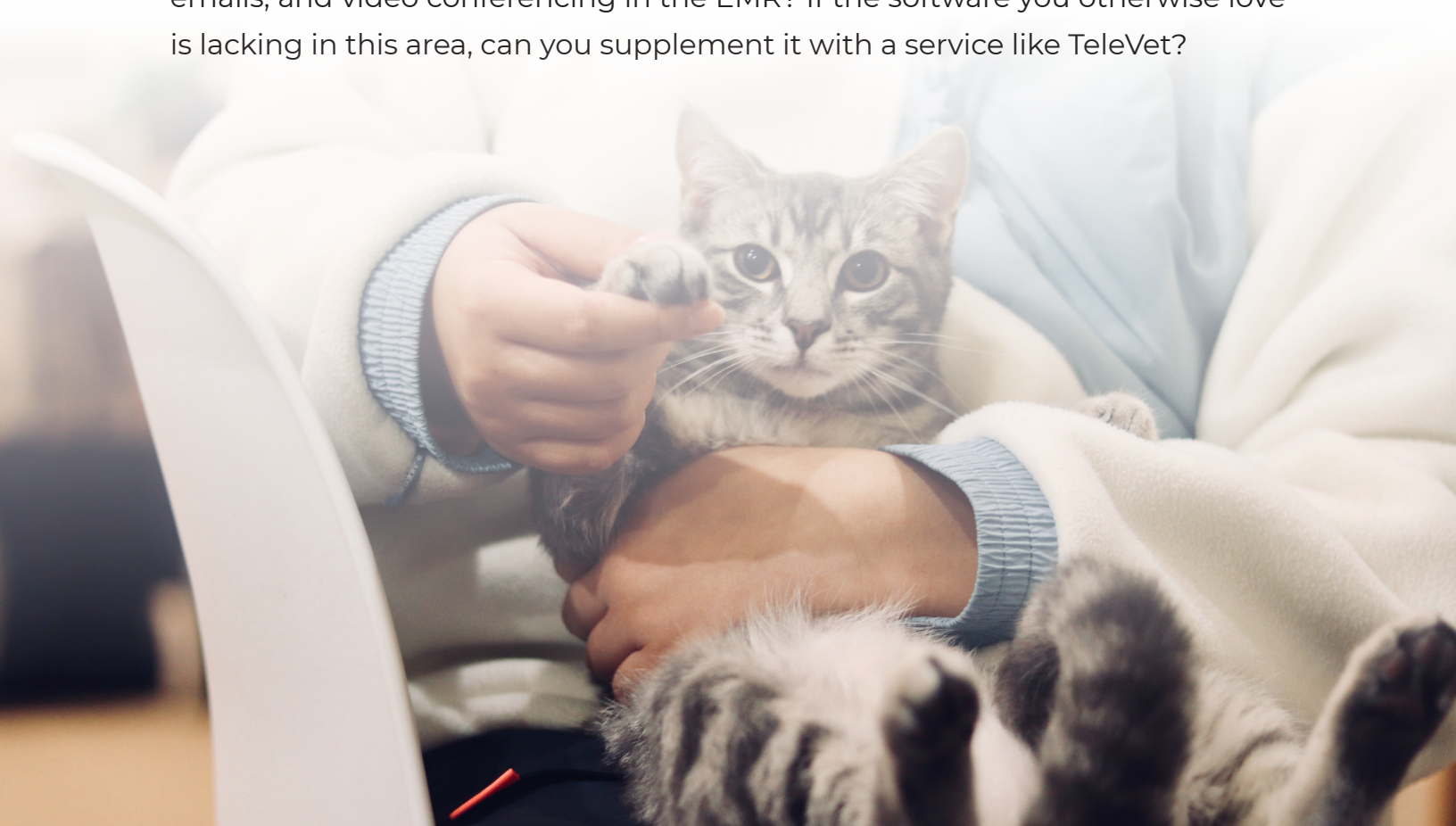
Scheduling appointments can be done in many ways nowadays. Do you want clients to be able to tentatively schedule appointments? If so you'll have to prepare the way for that or onboarding the system will be a nightmare. Consider drop offs vs appointments vs boarding vs grooming vs surgery vs dentistry. How does it handle more than one doctor? Even if you are solo now, you may want to add a doctor in the future.

If you pick a software program that matches your needs it should help you engage clients and increase compliance. What kind of client education materials do you use now? Are they sufficient?

Finally, do you need something customized? Some companies routinely provide customization, others don't.

There is tremendous potential for a new PIMS to increase your quality of life while it improves your practice. Once you narrow your search to a few programs call the companies and let them know which ones you are comparing. Once up and running will the PIMS save you time or be a constant drag, sucking up staff and DVM hours?

Check out review sites. Post your questions to users in veterinary Facebook groups and on VIN. What did using the PIMS really cost them in terms of time, training, and money? How easy has it been to use? What are their favorite features? What features are lame, are not used, and for what reasons? Once again, what additional programs have been necessary to meet their needs?

Be up front with your needs. Ask the company tough questions. You can't use a demo too much or ask too many questions prior to making a decision. If things are not working out after a month or two, can you back out? What does that process look like? You may not like the answer, but it is a good question to ask.

Meditate on your decision.

Take some time.

Realize your practice's potential.

Capterra (https://www.capterra.com/veterinary-software/) was the primary site used for software features, reviews, and ratings, but SourceForge (https://sourceforge.net/software/veterinary/), Software Advice (https://www.softwareadvice.com/veterinary/), and GetApp (https://www.getapp.com/industries-software/veterinary/) were also consulted.

This blog was written by:

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