Spreading the Warmth

Veterinary technicians welcome responsibility of administering Class IV laser therapy.

By Dennis Ap

Controlling Edema

Alyssa Travis, DVM, River Road’s owner and operator, says the laser’s effect in controlling post-operative edema “is my favorite thing about it.”

“That’s part of where the positive return on investment comes in.”

That and the way it has helped the technicians on her staff grow into a new role.

“I completely rely on the technicians to manage the laser therapy,” she says. “It’s their modality. They keep up to date on its use and work closely with the techs who represent the manufacturer. If they have a question, they make a couple of phone calls and get the information.”

“They truly act like a nurse would on the human side.”

As a solo practitioner, Dr. Travis especially appreciates being able to prescribe a laser treatment plan for a patient, then yielding to staff members so she can focus on other elements of care and on managing her practice.

“I am not a fan of euthanasia cases,” says Schaefer, head veterinary technician at River Road Animal Hospital in Southport, N.C.

“Veterinary technicians welcome responsibility the other end of the care spectrum. With lightning speed, Class IV laser therapy everts the balance of his day back into positive territory.

“It’s a definitely great to know there’s something I can do to help a patient—and client—feel better,” Schaefer says.

As the use of laser therapy expands, it’s often veterinary technicians who will be the baffled of it. Not only does assigning this task free up veterinarians, thereby strengthening a clinic’s return on investment, but it also enriches the techs’ professional lives, practitioners say.

“The overall workload becomes more enjoyable, those involved note, and the technicians become more committed advocates for veterinary medicine in general and for their home clinic in particular.”

All Schaefer knows is that when he turns on his clinic’s LiteCure Companion Therapy Laser, more than the patient feels the warmth.

“The laser puts some of the healing power in the hands of technicians, including myself, and that’s something we all appreciate,” he says.

Schaefer was a skeptic before the clinic added laser therapy to its pain-management arsenal about a year ago. Then a demonstration team came in, “and now I can’t say enough good things about it.”

“We’ve seen an incredible step-up in recovery times from surgery, and we’ve seen the difference it makes in reducing swelling. It’s absolutely fantastic.”

Chronic Pain

Another plus: The laser has shown pet owners “how wonderful our technicians are in helping their pets heal,” Travis says. “It’s been a great eye-opener for everyone.”

At Vulcan Park Animal Care in Birmingham, Ala., hospital manager Chuck Eagar has always found rewards in his daily duties. But often he doesn’t get to experience the direct effects of his care.

“If the owner doesn’t follow up, you hope the patient got better, but you don’t see it,” he says.

Mobile Again

With the laser, Eagar enjoys overseeing the treatment of patients such as a 14-year-old Chow Chow, who was boarded at the clinic because of his limited mobility and eventually was unable to use his back end at all.

“Since the laser, he’s able to walk a little bit more,” says Jennifer Donaldson, a vet tech who administers 95 percent of the laser therapy treatments at Bronteaven Park.

“It’s a moment when we all can feel thankful.”

He does too.

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