Vital Steps for Referral Success

Many of our hospital services have significant appointment wait times. Follow these simple steps to reduce potential wait times for your patient:

- **Choose the correct service.** If you are unsure of which service is best for a particular patient, before submitting the referral paperwork, please contact the Referral Coordinators at 865-974-3939 or **utvetref@utk.edu** for assistance. It may be recommended to consult with a specialty service clinician/s to ultimately decide what is best for the patient. This will help streamline the appointment process for that patient, help prevent additional delays in treatment, and ensure other patients that truly are booked on the appropriate service would have more accessibility to possibly be seen at an earlier date.

- **Choose ONLY ONE SERVICE per referral form.** Multiple service referrals will not be able to be accommodated on the same day. They will need to have separate referral forms submitted and appointments will need to be made on separate receiving days. This helps ensure that the patient receives full attention from the receiving service they are seeing at each appointment and that time is allowed for proper workup of their ailments/issues. If only one referral form is submitted with multiple services marked, it can delay getting the patient scheduled, since those services may need to review the paperwork and the Referring Veterinarian may need to be contacted.

- **Provide estimates to your clients prior to referring them to determine if the referral is feasible.** Some clients are not made aware of the costs associated with a needed surgery, procedure, or treatment prior to their visit with UTCVM. If there is potential financial concern, please contact the Referral Coordinators for help getting an estimate. This can prevent the client from becoming upset during the visit, due to the cost being prohibitive for them. It can also free up an appointment slot to be available for another patient to receive care.

Please note the additional requirements below prior to sending clients to UTCVM.

MUST:

- Submit a COMPLETED referral form to **vetclientservices@utk.edu**. If there is concern that patient needs to be seen prior to the needed service's next available appointment date, please document on the referral form to "please review" or consult with a clinician on the service.

- The referral form will need to completely filled out regardless of any accompanying medical records.

- The referral paperwork including pertinent medical history notes, lab results, and radiographs/imaging needs to submitted at least 48 hours prior to the patient's appointment.

- Once again, indicate on the referral form the specific service to which you are referring. Multiple services in one appointment is not allowed. If you have questions about which service to refer to, please contact the UTCVM Referral Coordinators at 865-974-3939 or **utvetref@utk.edu** for assistance. If a patient is referred to the incorrect service, they will have to be rescheduled with the appropriate service at a later date.

- If you are emailing medical records, please combine all pages into one PDF before attaching to an email (no zip files or more than 3 attachments). This does not pertain to radiographs/images. You can learn how to combine PDFs here: **tiny.utk.edu/CombinePDFs**

MUST - Orthopedic Service:

- Complete a physical and orthopedic examination to localize/diagnose the problem prior to referring

- Submit appropriate two-view diagnostic radiographs/consult form prior to referring the patient. A more detailed estimated can be provided once these are submitted.

- Aggressive animals must be referred to the Behavior service prior to being seen by Orthopedics, due to the potential of handling issues during lengthy hospitalization times and multiple visits.

MUST - Soft Tissue Surgery, Dermatology, Oncology:

- An aspirate should be submitted for diagnosis of masses, lumps, bumps, and sores prior to referral. This will help determine to which service the patient should be referred.

STRONGLY SUGGEST:

- Provide the client with an estimate of costs for workup, surgery, and other treatments. Estimates for the most common procedures can be found in the Referral Guide in the VOLVetPortal: **tiny.utk.edu/VOLVetPortal**, or contact the Referral Coordinators at 865-974-3939 or **utvetref@utk.edu** for assistance.

- Remind clients to cancel at least 48 hours prior to the appointment so that the slot can be used for another patient.

- If the owner simply wants a second opinion, but not necessarily fully committed to a surgery or procedure, we have appointment dates set aside for these situations. Please write "second opinion" on the referral form so that patient is scheduled appropriately.

DAYTIME EMERGENCY:

- An ER clinician must receive a call along with a submitted Referral Form from the referring clinic before the patient is sent to UTCVM Veterinary Medical Center during regular business hours. This call will help clarify expectations and provide an estimate for the client.

- We do not provide walk-in services during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm).

- The Emergency & Critical Care Service, during regular business hours is for referral emergencies only.

AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCY:

- The after-hours Emergency & Critical Care Service accepts both referral and walk-in patients. When possible, the referring veterinarian should call the ER service to the make the referral known, discuss the case, and confirm which services are available. They can also provide an estimate and determine the client's estimated time of arrival.

- Walk-in cases are accepted after-hours. The primary veterinarian (if provided by the client at time of check in) will be contacted via the automated communications system, or on the next business day by the receiving service/clinician.

For more detailed referral guidelines, please visit us online at: **tiny.utk.edu/UTCVM-Referrals** or the Referral Guide in the VOLVet Portal for service specific guidelines and estimates.

DOWNLOAD
SMALL ANIMAL **Referral Form**