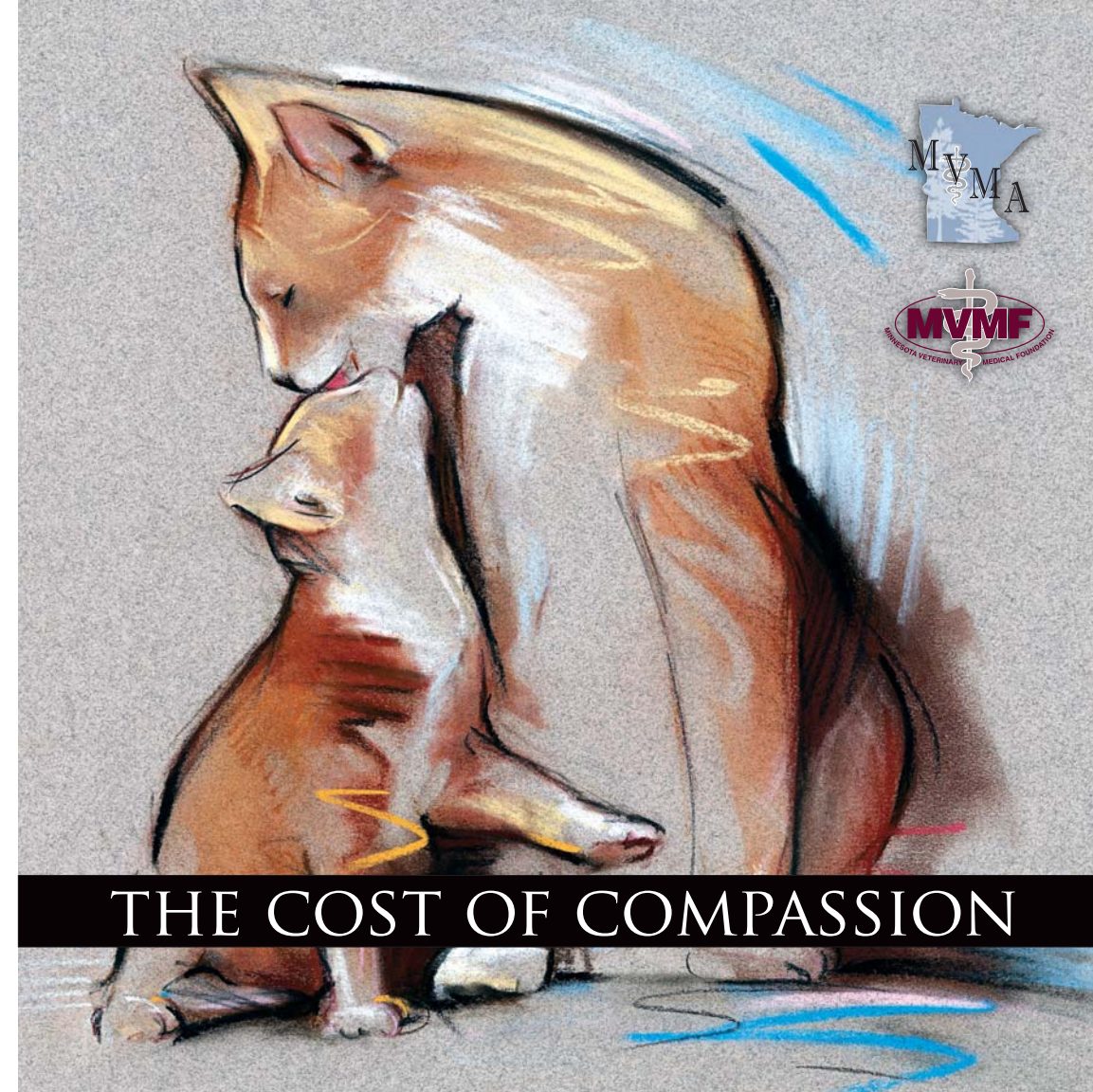




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THE COST OF COMPASSION



INVESTING IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR VETERINARIAN . . . FOR YOUR PET'S HEALTH

Why does veterinary care seem so expensive?

Your veterinarian is not only your pet's general physician, but also its surgeon, radiologist, cardiologist, neurologist, dermatologist, dentist, and pharmacist. The cost of care includes equipment maintenance, as well as continuing education and salaries for qualified staff. These costs are necessary to provide the level of care your pet deserves.

An investment in your pet's veterinary care is an investment in a relationship with a veterinarian that will ensure quality care throughout your pet's lifetime. Every pet owner has different ideas on what is acceptable pet health care. Your veterinarian can guide you through the health options available for your pet. ▶



How can I save money on veterinary costs?

Avoiding the need for emergency care and being proactive in preventative care can save money over the lifetime of a pet.

- ✓ *Preventative medicine* helps reduce medical costs in both humans and pets.
- ✓ *Regular physical examinations*, current vaccines, and regular parasite control help prevent disease.
- ✓ *Avoiding dangerous situations* through obedience training, leash use, indoor lifestyle, and keeping pets away from toxic products can help owners avoid significant costs associated with a pet emergency.

Why do prices for the same procedures vary so much among different veterinarians?

Each practice has different expenses that fees must cover. These fees do not always reflect

the same set of services, though there may be certain basic procedures in common. The cost of pet health care reflects the full range of quality care provided to your pet. Different drugs, anesthetics, and antibiotics affect the cost of services. Also, different techniques may be used, as well as different products, overhead, and philosophies.

What about low-cost animal clinics? How can their prices be so much lower than those of my veterinarian?

Some low-cost animal clinics are unable to provide the full range of quality pet care offered at other hospitals, such as emergency care, treatment for major illnesses, or complicated surgeries.

It should be acknowledged that donor-subsidized clinics provide a valuable and often needed resource in the community by offering reduced-cost elective procedures to families with limited incomes.

My pet's office visit, vaccinations, surgery, and medications total hundreds of dollars, and I can't come up with that money all at once. Will my veterinarian work out a payment plan?

Contact your veterinarian in advance and inquire about various payment methods. Your veterinarian will be happy to clarify the hospital's payment policy.

Can I get pet health insurance?

Yes, third-party health insurance is available for pets. As with human health insurance, different companies offer various levels of coverage that have a wide range of deductibles and premiums. Contact your veterinarian's office for specific information on pet insurance.

Why shouldn't I purchase vaccines and medications from catalogs and over the Internet?

A pharmaceutical purchase from your veterinarian is an investment in a business

that will provide long-term health care for your pet. No Internet pharmacy cares as much about your pet as your veterinarian. Some online pharmacies and catalogs represent legitimate, reputable pharmacies, but others may be fronts for businesses operating in violation of the law.

Many drugs can be dangerous to your pet if not properly prescribed and monitored by your veterinarian. Most online medications are within 3 to 5% of the cost charged by most veterinarians. The savings are minimal.

An additional consideration is that many products purchased through Internet pharmacies are not guaranteed by the pharmacy or the manufacturer.

I want to have my pet spayed or neutered but am concerned about cost. What can I do?

Pet owners can prepare for the cost of spaying or neutering their pet by getting an estimate

from their veterinarian at the time they adopt their pet and setting aside an appropriate amount each week until they elect to have the procedure performed. Also, a routine spay or neuter is not an emergency procedure and can be performed at any time that is convenient. Spay and neuter procedures are major surgery for your pet.

Why can't my veterinarian provide a refund if treatment doesn't eliminate my pet's health problem?

Your veterinarian is committed to providing the best care for you and your pet. You are paying for an honest effort to diagnose and treat a problem. In veterinary medicine, as in human medicine, there are no guarantees. Some problems can be long-term or involve multiple or changing causes and treatment may be ongoing. Unfortunately, a veterinary patient can't tell us what is wrong or help us monitor the success of some of our treatments.

Why can't veterinarians advise, diagnose and/or prescribe medications over the phone and save me money and time?

For legal reasons, veterinarians cannot prescribe medications for pets they have not examined. To provide the highest level of care, provide an accurate diagnosis, and plan a successful course of treatment, your veterinarian needs to physically examine your pet.

How much should I anticipate initially spending for veterinary care for a puppy or kitten? Or on an annual basis thereafter?

Puppies and kittens need a variety of vaccines and medications, depending on their age and health status. Your pet will also need to be spayed or neutered at an appropriate age and treated for any unforeseen health problems that may come up. Talk to your veterinarian for an estimate.

