Implementing Telehealth

Considerations

1. User-friendly and reliable
2. Easily used by cell phone or computer
3. Not installed on practice servers or integrated with client data through practice management software
4. Doesn't require much on the part of clients (i.e. downloading apps or programs).

Scheduling

Scheduling of telemedicine appointments will vary depending on practice needs, situations and styles. Please bear in mind that what follows are simply suggestions on possible ways to approach this modality. One might consider having time blocks (2-3 hrs) for doctors to take telemedicine appointments (for existing clients with established doctor-patient relationships). In general, 20 minutes per consultation or similar to a regular appointment time works well. This could be easily set up in your practice management schedule, adding telehealth consults to the scheduler just like regular appointments. At the start of the call, charges are explained and a credit card number would be obtained and the client is made aware that no charges will be put through until after the consultation.

Charges/fees

There have been many questions regarding fees for this type of consultation. This, again, will vary from practice to practice. In general, it's been observed that those who offer this type of service are charging anywhere from ½ to ⅔ of their regular office call. If it is deemed that the patient needs to be seen for a full exam/drop off appointment based on consultation, a reduced fee for the exam would then be charged, perhaps the difference between the consult and the regular exam fee. At the end of the appointment, the DVM or tech would go over charges and any necessary medications, in addition to reviewing any recommendations for follow up which might include a drop off exam, diagnostics, etc.

Record Keeping

It is extremely important that proper record keeping is maintained. All communications including a complete history, findings and recommendations should be put in record/ideally typed into your PMS. If possible, include photos and video clips.