

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Medical Team - Inpatient Technician

Objective

To outline the responsibilities and procedures for inpatient veterinary technicians to ensure high-quality care for hospitalized animals and effective communication with pet owners. Ensures inpatient technicians understand their roles and responsibilities both in inpatient and within the outpatient team.

Scope

This SOP applies to all inpatient veterinary technicians working at The Animal Health Organization

Responsibilities

- Ensuring all hospitalized/inpatients are properly cared for and TAHO standards are met.
 - Ensuring completion and accuracy of records on SmartFlow
 - Performing all inpatient ("drop-off") appointments from start to finish.
 - Completing all client communication ("callbacks") listed for medical team members.
 - Completing all prescription requests prior to end of shift.
 - Completing all emails and client requests/concerns prior to end of shift.
 - Assisting outpatient medical department with tasks/responsibilities as needed and as available - remembering the level/scale of importance (Patient>Client>Team>Tasks)
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Inpatient/Hospitalized Care

Patient Care

- Provide daily care to hospitalized animals, including feeding, grooming, and ensuring a comfortable and safe environment.
- Administer medications as directed by the veterinarian.

Monitoring Vital Signs

- Check and record vital signs (temperature, pulse, respiration) at specified intervals.
- Report any abnormalities to the veterinarian immediately.

Assisting with Procedures

- Prepare animals and equipment/supplies for surgical and diagnostic procedures.

Sample Collection

- Collect blood, urine, and other diagnostic samples following established protocols.
- Label samples accurately and ensure proper handling for laboratory analysis.

Client Communication

- Provide updates to pet owners about their pets' conditions and treatment plans.
- Address any questions or concerns from owners with empathy and clarity.

Documentation

- Maintain accurate and detailed medical records for each patient, including treatment plans and progress notes.
- Ensure all documentation is completed in a timely manner.

Emergency Response

- Be prepared to respond to medical emergencies, providing immediate care and support as needed.
- Follow established emergency protocols.

Collaboration

- Work closely with veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and support staff to develop and implement effective treatment plans.

- Participate in team meetings to discuss patient care.

Education

- Educate pet owners on post-operative care, medications, and general health maintenance.
- Provide resources and materials as needed.

Daily Rounds

- Conduct hourly rounds of all inpatient animals, assessing their condition and administering care as needed. Entering detailed updates at start of shift and end of shift or patient discharge.

Medication Administration

- Follow the veterinarian's orders for medication dosage and timing.
- Document all medications administered in the patient's medical record.

Vital Signs Monitoring

- Record vital signs in the patient's chart at designated intervals (e.g., every 4 hours).
- Use appropriate equipment and techniques for accuracy.

Prescription Requests

- Ensures that all prescription requests are handled and completed by the end of shift
 - Chewy Portal
 - TAHORx Portal
 - Other pharmacy - faxed/emailed requests
- Ensures that denied clients are contacted to advise of reasoning for denial.
- Ensures that all requests (approvals and denials) are recorded thoroughly in the MR.
 - Denials should be entered as a CC.
 - Approvals should be entered as a Prescription with title including Drug Name. Pharmacy and team member completing/approving should be recorded in bold on the prescription.

Inpatient/Drop-Off Appointments

- Responsible for ensuring that all Inpatient/Drop-Off appointments are completed (Start to finish)
 - Utilizes SmartFlow to ensure patient care is maintained throughout shift.
 - Ensures SOAP is started and completed prior to patient discharge.
 - Ensures all treatments are approved by client and completed and all medications are filled.
 - Ensures all charges and treatment plans are completed and patient is ready for check out.
 - Ensures client is contacted and treatment/plan is reviewed and client fully understands.
 - Ensures a go-home instruction sheet outlining reason for visit, what all was done, and the plan going forward is completed and printed out to accompany patient.
- Inpatient/Drop-off appointments may be completed by any DVM that is available. Inpatient tech is responsible for assisting the DVM in entirety and ensuring all tasks are completed.
- Assists the patient care team with ensuring that the patient stays clean and comfortable during their stay and is given food (when applicable), water, and plenty of opportunity to go outside. Ensures patient stays clean, safe, and comfortable throughout entirety of visit.

Client Communications/"Call Backs"

- Ensures that all tasks assigned to medical professionals (outside of DVMs) are handled throughout the day and are fully completed prior to end of shift.

Outpatient Team Support

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- Inpatient tech should be familiar with each outpatient position and must be willing and able to assist the OP team as needed in any capacity. Must be vigilant and always keeping an eye on OP performance to step in when needed in order to maximize productivity and reduce client/patient waiting periods.
 - Inpatient tech should be assisting CSRs and Medical Team with managing the phone system without having to be asked. All incoming medical concerns/questions that are transferred to a medical professional should be handled by the inpatient tech.

Client Interaction

- Engage with clients in a professional manner, providing updates and answering questions.
- Document any significant interactions or concerns raised by clients.

Documentation Protocol

- Ensure all entries in medical records are clear, concise, and legible.
- Use standardized abbreviations and terminology as per the hospital's protocol.

Emergency Protocol

- Familiarize yourself with emergency procedures and protocols.
- Participate in regular training and drills to ensure readiness for emergency situations.

Compliance

- Adhere to all hospital policies, procedures, and local regulations regarding animal care and handling.

Review and Revision

- This SOP will be reviewed annually or as needed based on changes in procedures or regulations.
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Escalation Protocols

- Contact a veterinarian immediately if:
 - Unexpected medical issues are observed
 - Client requests services outside technician scope
 - The patient shows signs of pain, distress, or adverse reaction
 - Procedure cannot be performed safely
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Required Qualifications

- Credentialed Veterinary Technician (CVT/RVT/LVT) or highly experienced and qualified non-credentialed technician under DVM supervision (depending on state law)
 - Proficiency in patient restraint, client communication, and technical skills
 - Familiarity with time management. Must be self motivated.
 - Ability to follow hospital protocols and escalate concerns appropriately
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Quality Assurance

- Regular review and role-play during staff meetings.
 - Feedback collected from clients and team members through surveys or reviews.
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