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AMERICAN COLLEGE of  
VETERINARY SURGEONS

# ACVS Collaborative Relationship Communication Tool

Simple Steps To Take To Enhance the Relationship Among ACVS Diplomates, Primary Care Veterinarians, and Animal Owners

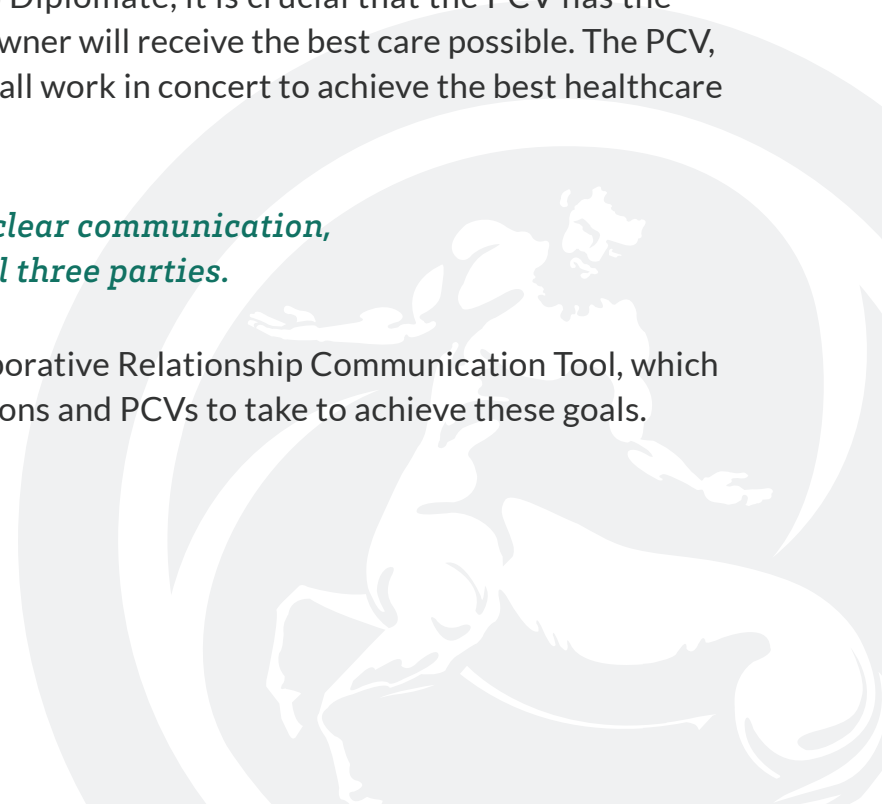
With rapid advancements in veterinary care continuing, the role of referrals for surgery and specialized medicine is on the rise.

Primary care veterinarians (PCV) may often find themselves in a situation where the best care for their patients involves referral to an ACVS Diplomate for advanced care, including consultations and surgical procedures.

When a PCV refers a patient to an ACVS Diplomate, it is crucial that the PCV has the confidence that their patient and animal owner will receive the best care possible. The PCV, animal owner, and ACVS Diplomate must all work in concert to achieve the best healthcare outcomes for the veterinary patient.

*Achieving the best outcomes requires clear communication, mutual respect, and empathy among all three parties.*

ACVS is pleased to share the ACVS Collaborative Relationship Communication Tool, which outlines simple steps for veterinary surgeons and PCVs to take to achieve these goals.





## ACVS Diplomate Communication TO the Primary Care Veterinarian (PCV) Partner

STEPS	TIMEFRAME	PROCESS
<p>An ideal preliminary step is to identify one surgery staff member who will be the point of contact for the surgeon to the PCV. This is a vital role and step in the process. If possible, this is the specialty practice manager's role. The surgeon introducing this staff member as the point of contact will clarify roles and expectations within the surgery practice and with the PCV.</p> <p><b>IDEAL SCENARIO:</b> A single online or cloud-based accessible location that the PCV, client, and surgeon can all access once the referral is made.</p>		
Surgeon provides the PCV access to the surgeon/surgery practice prior to referral to discuss case.	Varies with nature and urgency of case	Identifying a dedicated referral line/email/coordinator to facilitate this access is ideal.
Surgery staff communicates to PCV on behalf of surgeon.	Within 24 hours of consultation appointment	Designated surgery staff member contacts PCV with surgeon's comments.
Surgeon confirms with PCV that the client booked the appointment with you.	At time client books appointment	Designated surgery staff member communicates with PCV that client has booked the consultation appointment.
Surgeon sends results of the consultation to PCV.	Within 24 hours of consultation appointment	Designated surgery staff member communicates with PCV to share results of consultation.
Surgeon sends the plan for the patient to the PCV.	Within 24 hours of consultation appointment	Designated surgery staff member communicates with PCV to share the plan for the patient.
Share with PCV the ongoing communication being sent to the client.	Within 24 hours of request from surgeon/specialist	Designated surgery staff member communicates with PCV to share the ongoing communication being sent to the client.
Surgeon provides timely records and updates to PCV.	Within 24 hours	Designated surgery staff member.
Surgeon provides the PCV access to surgeon/surgery practice for follow-up questions after referral appointment.	Varies with case; ideally available the week following the appointment, if not sooner.	Dedicated referral line/email/coordinator to facilitate this access.
Follow-up plan, expectations of involvement, and mapping of continued care.	Available at discharge or within 24 hours	Designated surgery staff member communicates with PCV to share plan, expectations, and continued care needed.



## ACVS Diplomate Communication With the Animal Owner

STEPS	TIMEFRAME	PROCESS
What to expect during the consultation	At time client books appointment	Designated surgery staff member communicates with client what to expect during the consultation.
Estimated cost of consult	At time client books appointment	Designated surgery staff member communicates with client the estimated cost of the consultation.
Plan for patient	At consult	Designated surgery staff member review with client to ensure an understanding of the plan for the patient.
Estimated cost of plan	At consult	Designated surgery staff member communicates with client the estimated cost of the consultation.
Instill confidence that the surgeon and the PCV are communicating about the animal's care	Should be made clear during all interactions of the case	Designated surgery staff member reports to client that the surgeon and the PCV have been in communication.
How the referral process works	At time client books appointment	Provide info on website or a welcome packet sent to new consults that covers these items and ensure designated surgery staff member is trained on communicating the information.
What to expect at appointment	At time client books appointment	Provide info on website or a welcome packet sent to new consults that covers these items and ensure designated surgery staff member is trained on communicating the information.
Outline who will be in charge of ongoing care and who they contact with questions	At consult or discharge	Provide info on website or a welcome packet sent to new consults that covers these items and ensure designated surgery staff member is trained on communicating the information.



## ACVS Diplomate Communication Needs FROM the Primary Care Veterinarian (PCV) Partner

STEPS	TIMEFRAME	PROCESS
Complete medical history	Needed 24 hours in advance	Designated surgery staff member provides PCVs a detailed template of the information needed.
Summary of history (bullet point, chronological, legible)	Available within 24 hours	Designated surgery staff member summarizes the medical history sent by the referring PCV for the surgeon.
Ongoing client communication from PCV	Available within 24 hours	Designated surgery staff member summarizes and communicates to the surgeon the ongoing communication received from the PCV.
Recent or pertinent lab results/radiographs/medications	Available 24 hours in advance	If available, a specific email or a single online/cloud-based location is used.
PCV concerns about case/clients	Available 24 hours in advance	Designated surgery staff member uses a template to collect this information from the PCV.
PCV expectations for the case, including contact desired and if willing to be involved in follow-up care		Designated surgery staff member uses a template to collect this information from the PCV.

### Take the first step!

ACVS encourages Diplomates, residents, primary care veterinarians to share and discuss this tool with each other, all members of their practice setting, and their clients.