

Avian Ambulatory Practice



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KEYWORDS

- Avian ambulatory practice • Mobile practice • Avian practice • Legal issues
- Business plan • Start-up costs • Marketing • Vehicles

KEY POINTS

- Avian veterinary medicine is a niche discipline that is an excellent choice for an ambulatory practice.
- Working with avian patients requires less space than with nonavian patients, an advantage when working inside a vehicle.
- Laws vary with each state and are regulated by that state's veterinary medical board.
- The importance of a business plan when starting an avian ambulatory practice is presented, including descriptions of the primary sections of a business plan.
- Information about vehicles available for avian ambulatory practices is presented, including descriptions of specific and customized features and the average cost of each vehicle.

INTRODUCTION

Ambulatory services have long been an important veterinary service provided to clients and their companion birds. Avian ambulatory services can be provided as part of a stationary avian practice or by an ambulatory-only avian practice. Avian ambulatory services are more often provided by an ambulatory-only practice. Starting an avian ambulatory practice is an easier and more affordable alternative to starting a stationary practice and, for this reason, is generally appealing to associates, relief veterinarians, and new graduates who want to open their own practice.

DEFINING AN AVIAN AMBULATORY PRACTICE

Avian specialty veterinary medicine is a niche discipline that lends itself as an excellent choice for an ambulatory veterinary practice. The foundation of an avian ambulatory practice is a vehicle that is designed, customized, and equipped specifically to fit the needs of an avian ambulatory practice. Avian ambulatory practice vehicles provide only a limited amount of space, which must be used efficiently to accommodate the

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equipment, supplies, and workspace needed to operate an ambulatory avian practice. Avian patients are well suited for an ambulatory practice because they tend to be smaller than the vast majority of nonavian patients, requiring less space. Along the same lines, avian patients weigh less, which allows for the use of a tabletop scale instead of needing a large space-occupying floor scale.

Space requirements for an avian ambulatory practice are also lower because some of the services that are traditionally offered in nonavian practices are not offered in an avian ambulatory practice. For example, bathing services and, for obvious reasons, dental care are not provided, which eliminates the need for a large associated equipment. An ambulatory practice is an affordable, practical, and effective option for practicing avian specialty medicine. It is a viable option to provide full-service avian medicine that is affordable as a start-up practice, operates with lower expenses, and has the capabilities of generating an excellent income.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF OPERATING AN AVIAN AMBULATORY PRACTICE

Advantages of Operating an Avian Ambulatory Practice

Two major advantages of operating an avian ambulatory practice are lower overhead costs and lower operating expenses compared with a stationary avian practice. In general, overhead expenses are fixed costs and operating expenses are variable. The advantage of lower overhead and operating expenses produces a higher profit margin.

An ambulatory avian practice is typically a 1-doctor practice, which has the advantage of allowing practitioners the autonomy of operating a practice at their own discretion. Solo practitioners working for themselves in an ambulatory avian practice have the flexibility to set their own schedule, which gives them the freedom to attend conferences, plan time for vacations and other recreational activities, spend time with their kids, or just take a day off.

There are advantages of an ambulatory avian practice for clients as well. The flexibility of a practitioner's schedule makes it easier and more convenient to schedule appointments. Clients generally prefer that their birds do not have to be placed in a carrier and transported to their veterinarian and reverse this process on the return trip; this is especially true for clients needing to transport multiple birds. An avian ambulatory practice is also convenient for those clients who are less mobile because of age or disability.

The advantage to the patients is that they tend to experience less stress when seen in the home environment where they feel secure. Clients are more relaxed when they see that their bird is less stressed and comfortable.

Avian ambulatory veterinarians can take advantage of home visits to view patients' environment and living conditions. Husbandry, basic care, cage set up, and cage placement within a client's home all have an effect on a bird's health. Adjusting these environmental factors can improve the bird's health and quality of life.

Disadvantages of Operating an Avian Ambulatory Practice

Solo practitioners in an avian ambulatory practice have only themselves to answer to, with the advantage of having freedom to decide what is best for their business and when they need to work. This situation also has its disadvantages. Solo practitioners are the only source of income for their practice, which can restrict the freedom to decide when they want to work. When solo practitioners are not working, there is no revenue generated. Time off comes at the expense of no pay.

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