Guide to Choosing Veterinary Practice Software for Emergency and Specialty Care

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In the high-stakes setting of emergency veterinary care, your patient management workflows can make a life or death difference for your patients and mean the world to your own wellbeing.

You likely already know the challenges emergency veterinary practices are facing, with 1-in-3 pets needing emergency veterinary treatment every year, pet ownership rising globally, staffing shortages, and vet hospitals getting busier all the time.

In your hospitals, that might look like a great deal of turnover, unexpected retirement or reduction in hours, mental health concerns, and more. And with a substantial part of daily workflows still happening on paper, illegible handwriting and transcription errors still account for an estimated 61% of medication errors.

For some or all of these reasons, you're looking at replacing your current systems with a modern practice management platform. You're in the right place! Let's talk about what to look for when evaluating new systems to choose what works for your emergency or specialty practice.

Types of Veterinary Software and What They Do
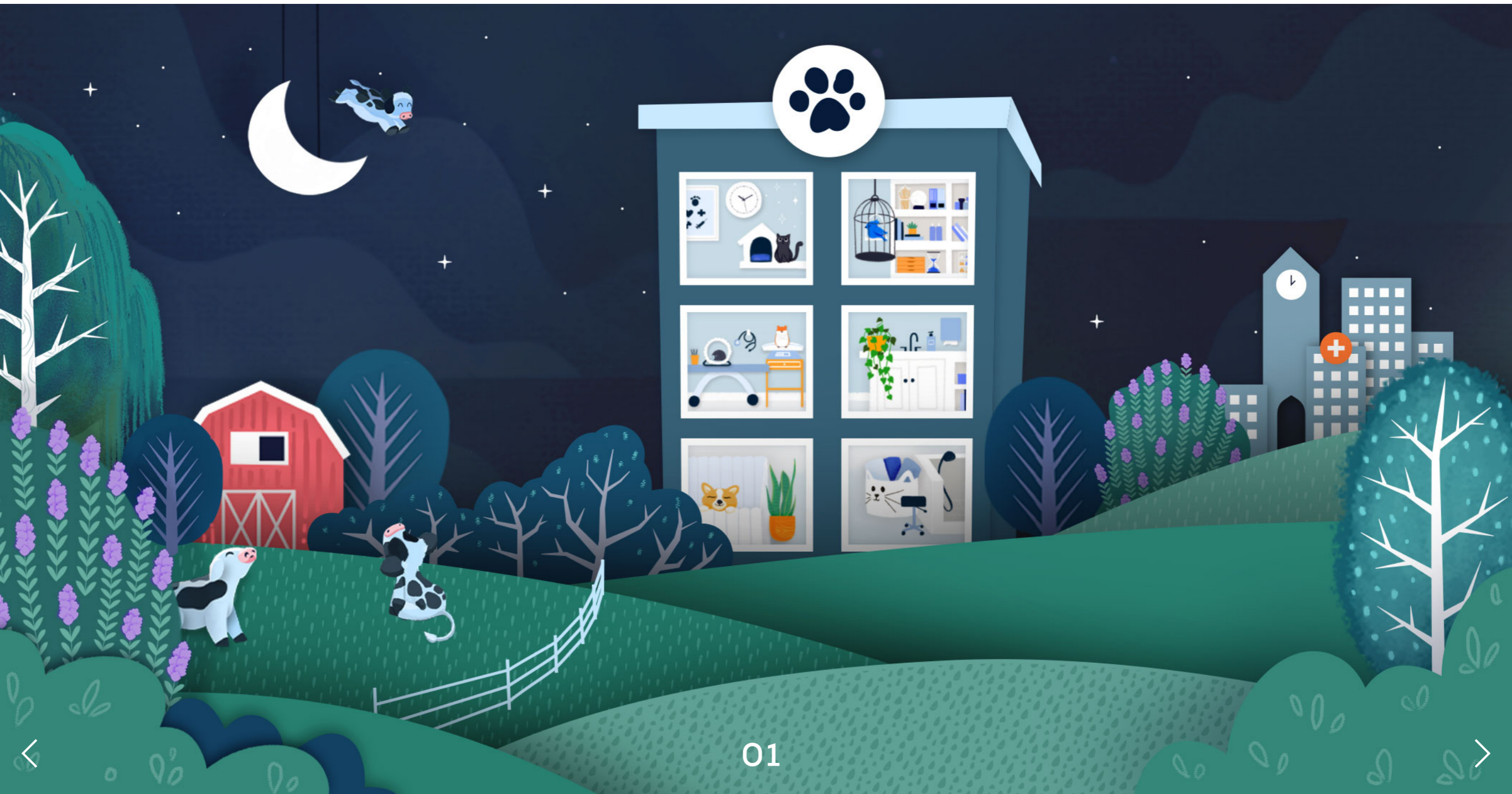
The veterinary technology market has been <u>advancing rapidly</u> to meet skyrocketing pet ownership trends and increased demands for quality pet care amidst staff shortages.

A new generation of tech-savvy pet owners are driving the advancement of technology that focuses on improving the customer experience like mobile-check-in, telemedicine, dictation, and client communications. As new software emerges, integrations and all-in-one tools are becoming more critical than ever to streamline practice workflows across the board.

In emergency veterinary settings, there are two primary types of software to consider for providing best-in-breed care while reducing manual processes:

Digital treatment sheets/digital whiteboards:
offer a 360-degree view of your treatment processes so you can see the status of every patient and what needs to be done next. Digital treatment sheets remove manual/paper processes, streamline tasks with templates and shared notes, improve accuracy with embedded calculators, automate charge capture, and more.

Practice management software:
abbreviated with PIMS or PMS, these platforms act as control centers for the whole practice, centralizing all patient, production, and financial data, streamlining tasks, reducing redundant operations, and producing business and operational reports.

How Software Can Benefit Your Emergency or Specialty Practice

Of course, the right practice management software can have significant positive impacts for your practice, enabling your team to:

01 **Improve workflow & staff efficiency.**
Easier access to electronic health records means your staff can maintain documents and data online, see a 360-view of all patient history and treatment status, and automate many manual tasks within your practice, from streamlining the check-in and check-out processes, to sending records to a patient's primary care provider and sharing prescriptions with pharmacies.

Practice management software can help you improve communication across the care team and put an end to manual data entry that keeps staff working after hours, thus improving employee happiness, patient care, and customer experience.

02 **Reduce medical errors and improve patient care.**
Humans make on average 3-6 errors per hour and 50 errors daily when working with manual data entry. While we strive for perfection and avoiding harm in a medical environment, we are still only human. Digital treatment sheets help reduce everyday errors that are bound to happen using paper sheets, and practice management platforms you're looking at should contain thoughtful safety features that enhance patient care.

03 **Improve practice profitability.**
Even the best veterinary practices are estimated to lose roughly 10% to 30% of gross revenue from services that are performed but never make it to patients' bills. In an emergency or specialty veterinary setting, the rapid cycle of intake, treatments, and discharges are happening so fast that it's common for practices to see huge billing discrepancies, missed charges, and payments.

Your PIMS should have a variety of solutions that tackle invoicing and billing processes so you can capture charges for **all treatments**– this will likely increase your gross revenue, allowing you to pay your staff competitively, without increasing their workload.

# 10 Essential Features to Look for in PIMS for Emergency Care

01

Rapid registration tools

that enable you to immediately take patients back for treatment while the owner provides full registration information. These will ensure your charges aren't missed and that all patients are registered, regardless of condition upon arrival.

02 **Patient safety features** that automate safety warnings and drug calculators that assist in automatically calculating correct doses, without having to reference a paper dosing sheet.

03 **An embedded system for prioritizing treatments** and managing complex schedules, such as a stop-light triage system.

04 **A hospital-wide communications board** where you can view a history of notes across the entire staff, and assign follow up tasks for the care team and front desk.

05 **Digital whiteboard/digital treatment sheets** where you can see the status of every patient and what needs to be done next to progress them to the next stage of treatment. In your PIMS, you should be able to auto-fill previous notes, vaccines, previous visits, and upload images and videos into the record.

06 **A modern UX/UI** that promotes ease-of-use and simple onboarding for new team members.

07 **Lab integrations:** the software you're planning to use should integrate with your existing clinical instruments and applications.

08 **Integrated payments:** Enable customers to pay their bill with text/link to pay.

09 **Automatic billing:** some PIMS enable invoices to capture charges as treatments are being completed. If you have a fully integrated Treatment Sheet and PIMS, the bill is automatically handled across the board.

10 A **cloud-based platform**, so you can login from anywhere.
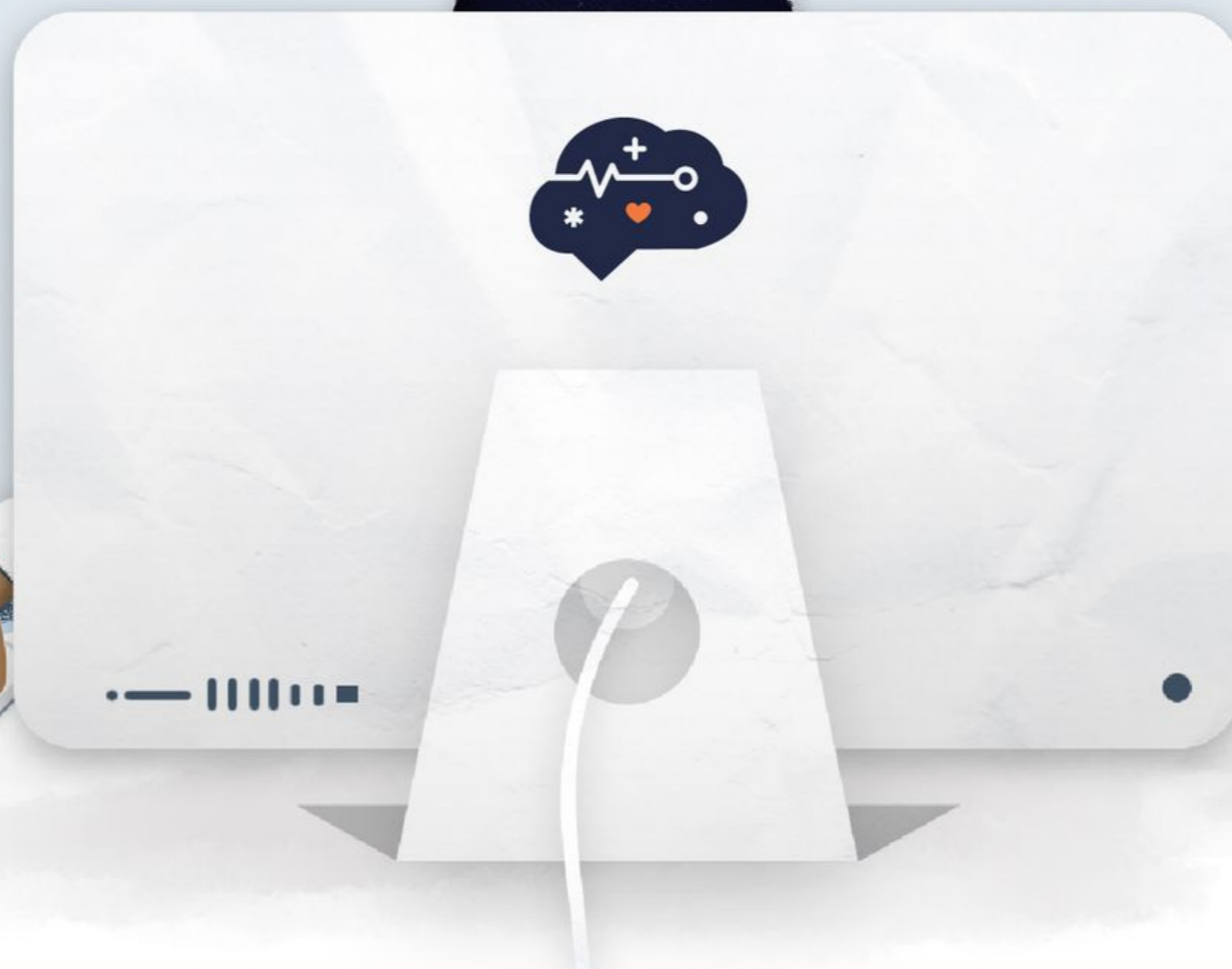
Questions to Ask When Choosing Practice Management Software

01

Why am I looking at buying software for my practice? What challenges will this solve for the team?

The first and arguably the most important question to ask when choosing software: ask yourself why this decision is timely and important. Are you using outdated or inefficient software? Are you finding difficulty integrating new technologies into existing workflows, and training the team? Is employee morale suffering? Are client retention rates suffering? Identify what is bringing the most friction into your work life so you can easily pick out the must-haves from the nice-to-haves when choosing a platform.

02

Does this platform have the capabilities we need to run more efficiently?

These can include and are not limited to:

Complete practice management: holistic solution to manage daily tasks at your location(s).

Seamless UX/UI

Enterprise security

Ability to enter and track all patients

Recording patient SOAP notes

Managing charge capture and customer billing

Generating financial and productivity reports for staff members

**03** **What benefits will this platform unlock for our practice?**

We talked about some of the biggest benefits your PIMS should unlock for you: improving workflow and staff efficiency/productivity, decreasing long hours made even longer from manual processes; reducing medical errors, improving patient care; and improving + tracking practice profitability. Are customers of the platforms you're looking at seeing benefits like these?

04 **Is this platform designed by someone who knows the challenges of an emergency hospital?**

Technology should enable your values and help decentralize decision making. It's crucial that a team who shares your values and has been in your shoes before played a role in developing the platform you'll implement to run your practice. Take a look at the platform's website and see who owns the company, as well as their mission.

05 **Does this integrate with our existing instruments and technology?**

Across diagnostics, payments, imaging, dictation, and other technologies, how does the platform enable communication between your existing tech, so you can streamline information between multiple systems?
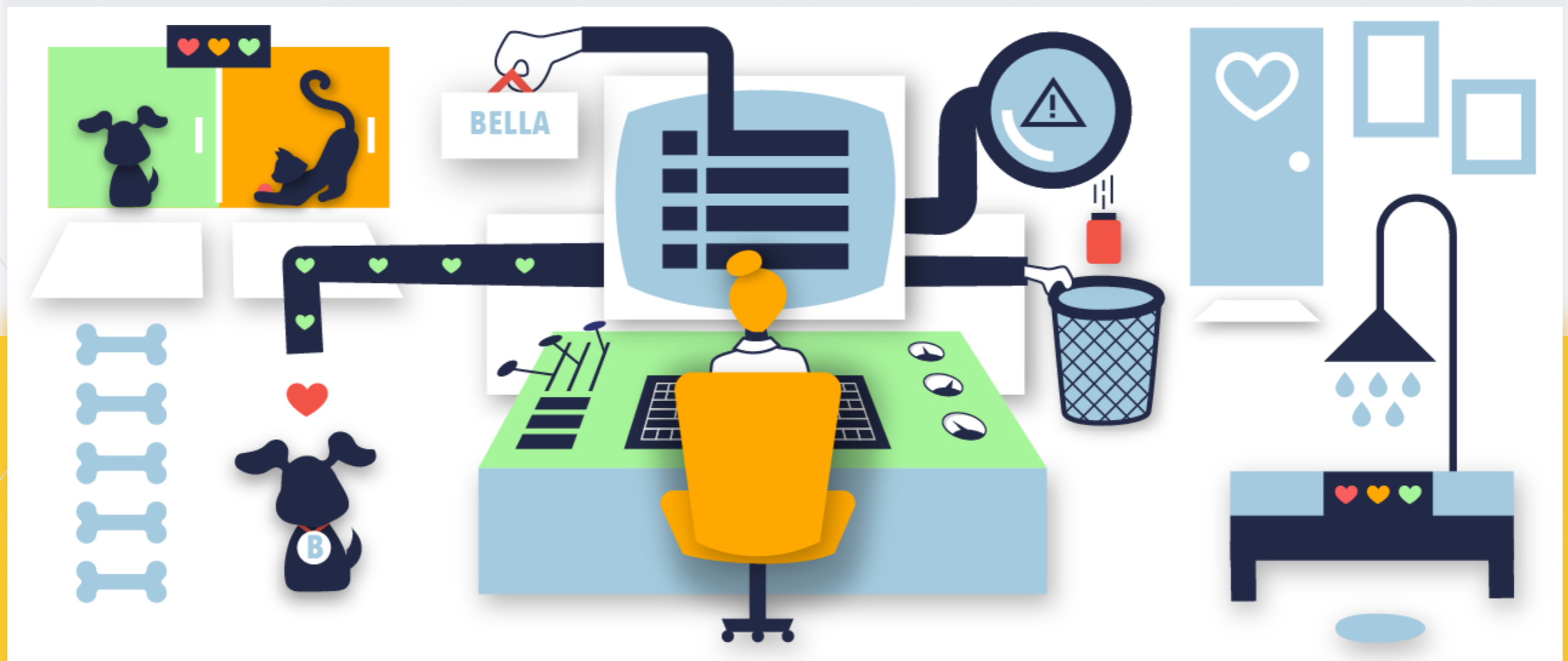
06 **Does this platform offer the ability to integrate digital treatment sheets within the PIMS?**

In an ideal world, you can keep track of patient history and treat your patients from one place. Today, most PIMS platforms are separate from digital treatment sheets/whiteboards, but this is a growing area.

07 **What type of support and training do they offer? How quickly can your team get back to me when I ask a question?**

Look for platforms that offer 24/7 chat or similar, and have experience supporting and onboarding emergency or urgent care hospitals.

08 **When was their latest feature release?**
You want to see a company that is constantly making improvements to their software, responding to customer feedback, and iterating on features.

09 **Will their user experience work for my team?**
Software should be easy to use, with a smooth and interesting interface for your team.

10 **Will this platform help me grow my practice?**
Look to invest in a platform where you'll be able to prove positive ROI from enhancing productivity, growing your team and/or customer base, and make better business decisions based on reporting and analytics. ▪

Managing Your Practice
with Instinct Science

Owned and led by an emergency veterinarian, Instinct is the patient nerve center for advanced veterinary hospitals, offering expert-guided tools to supercharge practices, provide a gold-standard of care for patients and employees, and restore work-life harmony for veterinary teams.

Instinct is the only practice management software with integrated digital treatment sheets, which allows our customers to keep track of patient history and treatments all in one place. **We call this an EMR (Electronic Medical Records) system that goes beyond standard practice management software.**
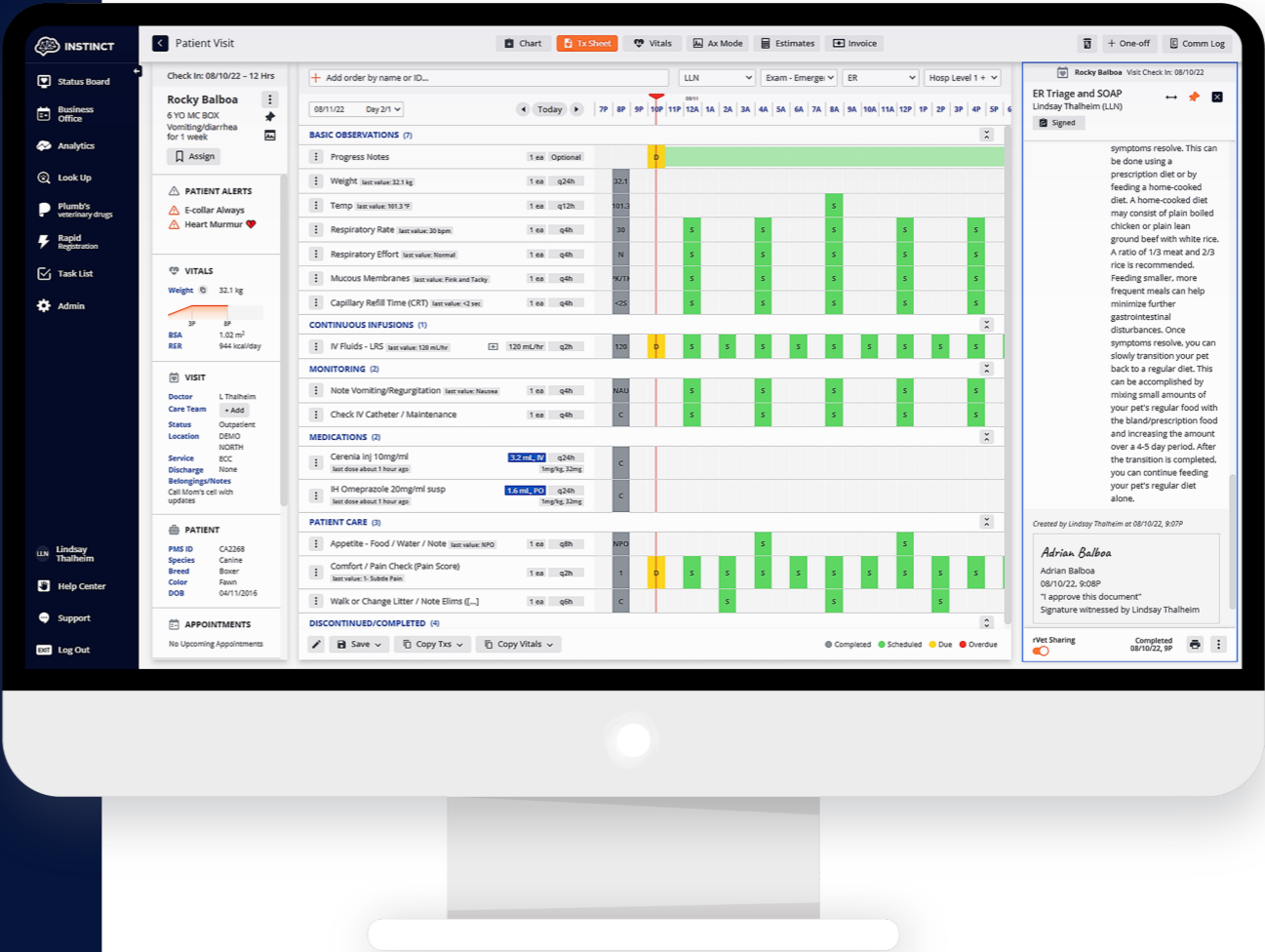
Our platform was mission-built for emergency and specialty care centers and independently owned, meaning we build our best-in-breed platform from the ground up to suit our customers' real needs. We deliver more than just software: Instinct brings our hospitals peace of mind in their diagnoses, prescriptions, and treatments, as well as significant revenue increases (up to $1.2M) from our platform, enabling them to grow their teams and offer more competitive salaries.

With Instinct's full practice management software & integrated digital treatment sheets, your team can:

✓ Manage your entire staff's workflow from one place, from patient registration and triage through integrated payments and digital treatment sheets

✓ See a bird's eye view of your entire hospital: view wait times, make staffing decisions, and monitor treatment status as patients check-in and out

✓ Improve quality of patient care and outcomes using safety tools like our embedded drug calculators, safety warnings (high/low dose alerts), new staff training with "student mode," last dose given alerts, and Plumbs integration

✓ Capture charges automatically from digital treatment sheets and push them into your practice management software

✓ Reduce manual billing, paperwork, and filing, freeing up time to prioritize patients (and your own life), and physical hospital space

✓ Seamlessly share information among other staff in the practice

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