

Why Is Veterinary Care So Expensive?

Many clients have shared their frustration after visiting another clinic while I was briefly away, often shocked at the size of their bill. Unfortunately, this is not uncommon — and there are reasons behind the rising costs of veterinary care.

Over the past several years, veterinary medicine has become a major target for corporate investment. Pet care is a multi-billion-dollar industry, and large corporations — including VCA, Banfield, CitiVet, VEG, ValueVet, Chewy, and others — are now owned and operated by non-veterinarian investors. Their focus is on financial returns, not necessarily on affordability or community care.

These corporations often receive steep discounts on medications, preventatives, and vaccines from major suppliers such as Zoetis Animal Health — sometimes as high as 40% to 90%. Independent veterinarians, however, pay full price. Despite these advantages, corporate clinics rarely pass savings on to pet owners. Instead, they often charge more, knowing that most families will do whatever it takes for their pets.

This trend is driving the cost of care higher and higher, sometimes to the point where families feel they cannot afford treatment. In some heartbreaking cases, corporate practices may present euthanasia as the only option when a pet's care is quoted at \$8,000 or more and remain silent when they well know that independent practices, like North Hills, may be able to offer treatment and advanced surgery at a far more reasonable cost.

Another concern is transparency. Many pet owners believe they are supporting their local veterinarian, when in reality, the hospital has been purchased by a corporation. Currently, there is no requirement for corporate clinics to disclose this ownership to clients.

As independent veterinarians, we believe pet care should remain centered on compassion and community — not corporate profits. That's why I urge pet parents to support truly independent practices. Before choosing a clinic, call and ask if they are independently owned. By doing so, you are helping keep veterinary medicine accessible, personal, and free from corporate greed.

Together, we can preserve veterinary care that puts pets and families first.

Thank you

Dr. Yanneth Shuykin-Bentley