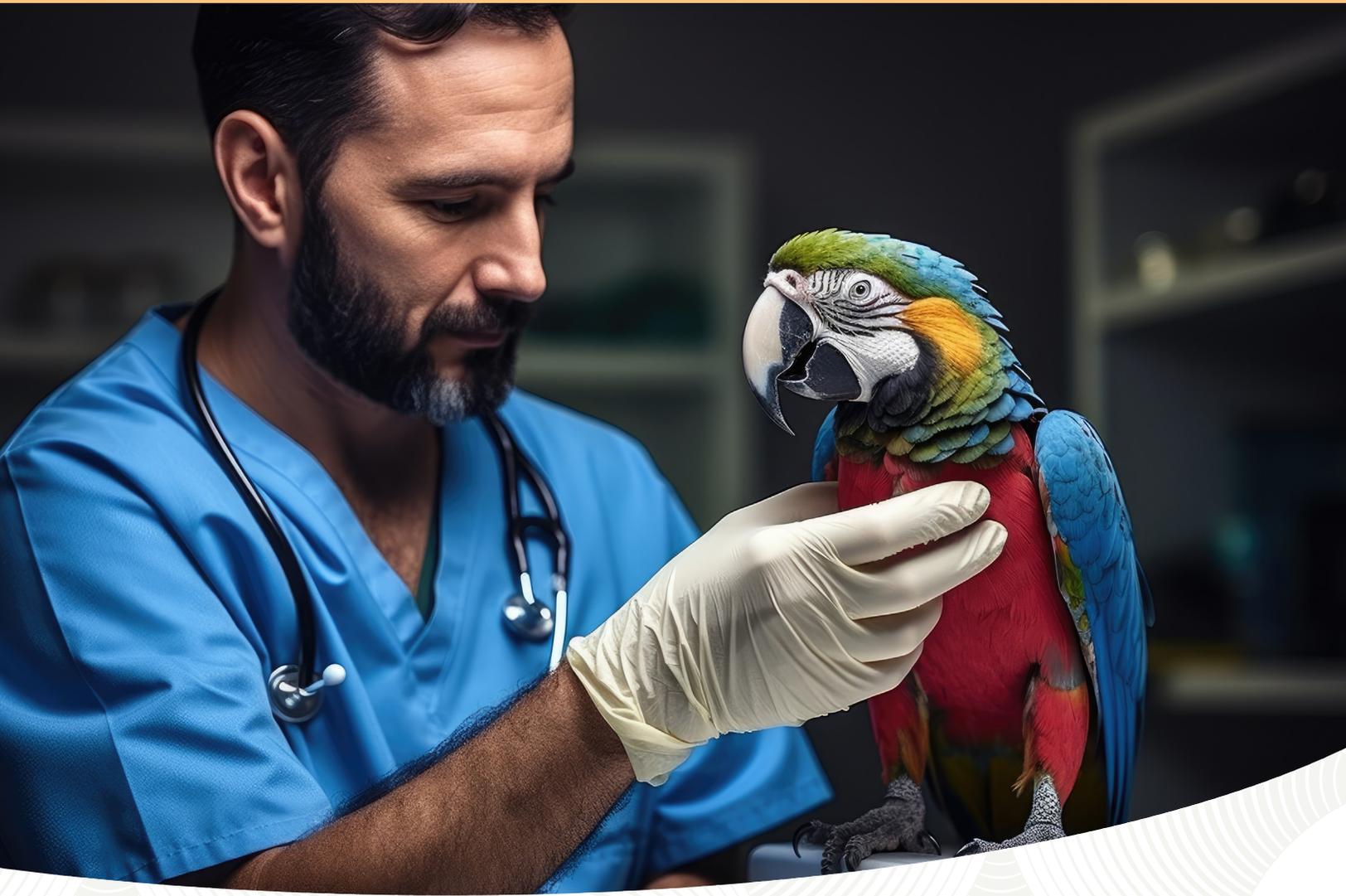




NATIONAL VETERINARY LAW GROUP AT  
MANDELBAUM BARRETT<sub>PC</sub>



**Veterinary Law**  
**Newsletter**  
*Volume 30*

## A Message from our Chair:

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As we move into the second quarter of the year, it's clear that 2026 is already presenting a dynamic landscape for veterinary practices and the professionals who lead them. From evolving regulatory frameworks to continued consolidation and growth opportunities, practice owners are navigating a period that demands both agility and informed decision-making.

At the National Veterinary Law Group, we remain focused on helping you meet these challenges with confidence. Our team is constantly looking for opportunities to engage with practitioners across the country in a variety of events. Whether you are planning for growth, evaluating a potential sale, or addressing day-to-day legal needs, we are here to provide practical, forward-looking guidance.

We encourage you to stay engaged with us throughout the quarter and take advantage of the tools and perspectives we're sharing. We value the trust you place in our team and look forward to continuing to support your success in the months ahead.

Finally, we are excited for the launch of a new project we have been working on that is set to go live in the coming weeks. More news to come!

Wishing you a productive and prosperous spring season.

*Peter Tanella, Esq.*

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## FEATURED ARTICLES



## The New Normal: Joint Ventures, Longer Commitments, and the Rise of Earn-Outs

How modern veterinary transactions are shifting from simple buyouts to long-term partnerships.

Across the veterinary transaction market, several structural trends are becoming increasingly clear:

- Joint venture structures are now more common than traditional full buyouts in many transactions
- Selling veterinarians are frequently expected to remain involved for four to five years following closing
- Earn-outs are increasingly tied to post-closing EBITDA performance rather than revenue alone
- Buyers are placing greater emphasis on associate retention and leadership continuity
- Taken together, these developments reflect a fundamental shift in how veterinary practice transactions are structured.

Over the past decade, the veterinary transaction market has undergone a significant transformation. Early waves of consolidation were often defined by relatively simple transactions in which a practice owner sold the business outright and transitioned out within a few years. Today, however, veterinary deals look very different.

Buyers and sellers are increasingly structuring transactions as long-term partnerships rather than one-time exits. Joint ventures, rollover equity, and performance-based earn-outs are now common features of many deals. These structures allow practice owners to obtain liquidity while remaining engaged in the practice and participating in future growth.

From our vantage point advising veterinary practices across the country, the structure of transactions has changed noticeably over the past several years. Earlier waves of consolidation were often defined by straightforward acquisitions in which the practice owner sold the business and transitioned out over a relatively short period of time. Today, however, buyers and sellers are increasingly structuring transactions as long-term partnerships designed to preserve leadership continuity, stabilize clinical teams, and align incentives after closing. The result is a transaction environment where alignment, not immediate exit, has become the central objective of modern veterinary deals.



## Why Joint Ventures Are Becoming the Dominant Model

One of the primary drivers behind the rise of joint ventures is the recognition that veterinary practices are highly relationship-driven businesses. Client loyalty, staff culture, and operational efficiency are often closely tied to the founding veterinarian. When that veterinarian exits immediately after a transaction, the practice may experience disruption. Staff turnover, client uncertainty, and leadership gaps can all affect performance. Joint ventures address this challenge by keeping the selling veterinarian engaged in the practice after closing.

Rather than selling 100 percent of the hospital, the owner typically retains a meaningful minority equity interest and remains involved in leadership and clinical operations. The corporate partner provides capital, operational resources, and infrastructure, while the veterinarian continues to lead the clinical team and maintain relationships within the practice. In some transactions, sellers receive passive equity in the consolidator's parent company, often referred to as "TopCo equity." In other structures, the seller participates in a joint venture entity tied specifically to the individual hospital, allowing the seller to benefit directly from the ongoing performance of that practice.

For many sellers, the appeal is clear. They gain liquidity while continuing to benefit from the future growth of the practice. For buyers, the benefits are equally compelling. They preserve the leadership and clinical continuity that made the hospital successful in the first place.

## Longer Commitments Are Now the Norm

Alongside the rise of joint venture structures, employment commitments for selling veterinarians have also lengthened. In earlier transactions, sellers might remain with the practice for two to three years following closing. Today, commitments of four to five years are increasingly common, particularly in transactions involving partial equity rollovers. Buyers view these longer commitments as a way to stabilize operations during the integration period and ensure that the practice continues to perform at a high level.

From the seller's perspective, these longer timelines often align with the joint venture structure. Because the seller retains equity in the business, remaining involved in leadership and clinical operations allows them to participate directly in the value created after closing. The result is a stronger alignment of incentives between both parties.

## The Growing Role of Earn-Outs

Earn-outs have also become a more prominent component of veterinary transactions. In many modern deals, the purchase price is no longer paid entirely in cash at closing. Instead, offers often include a combination of cash, rollover equity, promissory notes, and earn-out payments tied to post-closing performance.

An earn-out allows the seller to receive additional compensation if the practice meets certain performance targets after closing. These provisions are designed to bridge valuation gaps and encourage continued growth following the transaction. While earlier earn-outs were often tied to revenue targets, many buyers today link these incentives to EBITDA performance and operational benchmarks. This shift reflects a growing emphasis on profitability, operational efficiency, and sustainable growth rather than simply top-line expansion.

When structured thoughtfully, earn-outs can benefit both sides of a transaction. Sellers have the opportunity to participate in the upside created after closing, while buyers reduce upfront risk by tying a portion of the purchase price to future performance. However, earn-outs also introduce complexity. Disputes can arise if performance metrics are not clearly defined or if operational decisions affect the calculation. For this reason, careful legal and financial planning is essential when earn-out provisions are included in a transaction.

## Alignment Now Extends Beyond the Seller

Another emerging trend in veterinary transactions is the growing use of equity-based incentives for associate veterinarians and key employees. These structures may include option plans, profits interests, or other forms of participation designed to align the clinical team with the long-term success of the practice. As competition for veterinarians remains strong, buyers increasingly view team stability as a critical component of post-closing performance.

By providing associates with a stake in the practice's future growth, these structures can strengthen retention, improve leadership continuity, and support long-term enterprise value.

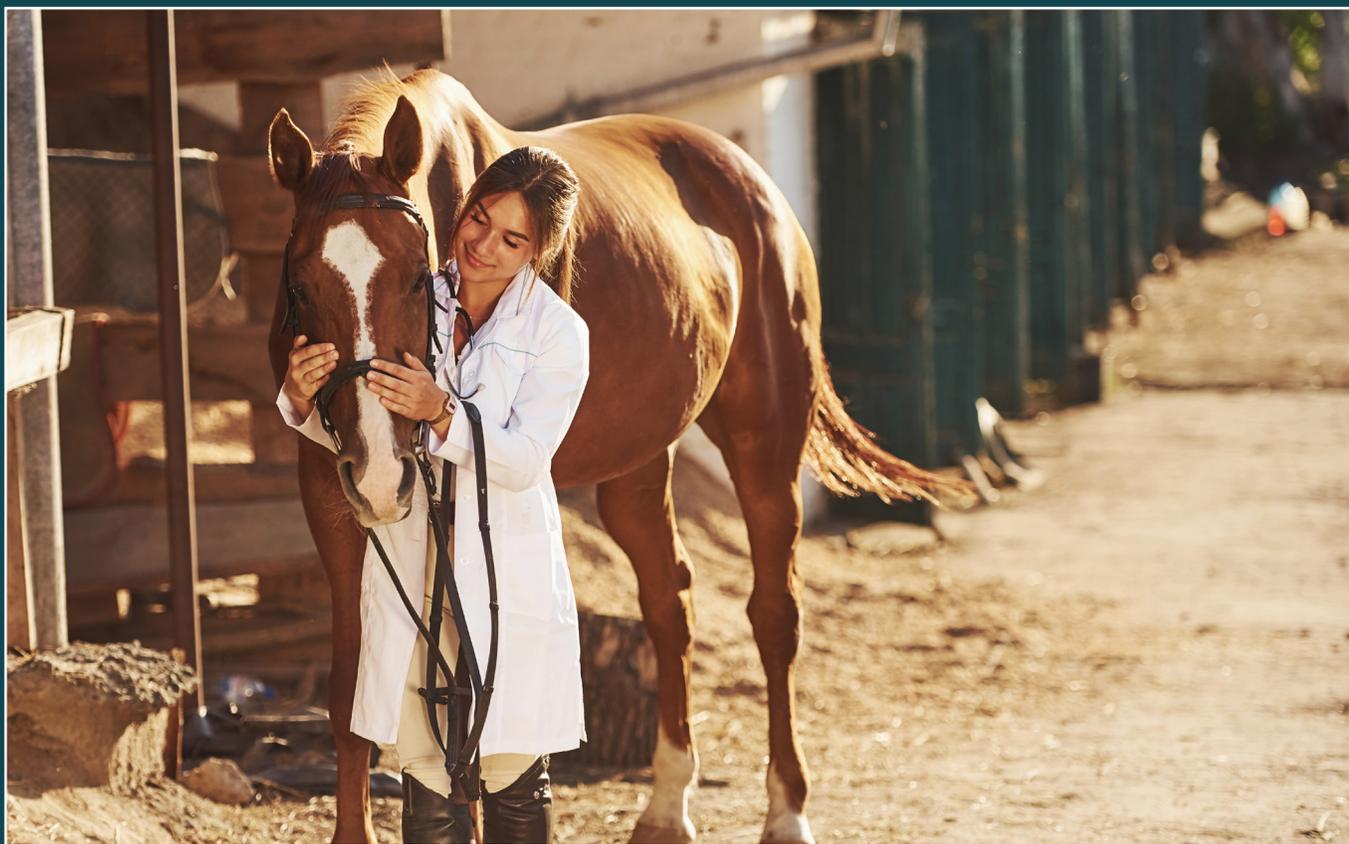


## What This Means for Practice Owners

For veterinary practice owners considering a future transaction, these market trends carry several important implications.

First, preparation should begin earlier than many owners expect. Buyers increasingly evaluate leadership continuity, associate retention, and operational stability long before a practice formally enters the market. Second, owners should expect to remain involved in the practice for several years following a transaction. Long-term commitments are now a standard component of many deals, particularly those structured as joint ventures. Third, the headline purchase price does not always tell the full story. Earn-outs, equity rollovers, and other contingent components may significantly affect the ultimate economic outcome of a transaction. Understanding these structures, and preparing for them in advance, can help practice owners approach a future transaction from a position of strength.

In today's market, successful transactions are no longer defined solely by price. They are defined by alignment, continuity, and the ability to create value together after the deal closes. This shift toward partnership-based transactions reflects the broader evolution of veterinary ownership – a theme we will continue to explore throughout this year's Veterinary Ownership Evolution Series.



## Understanding Hot Assets in a Veterinary Practice Sale: Tax Implications Every Seller Should Know

When selling a veterinary practice, many owners focus on the big-ticket items like equipment value, goodwill, and real estate. However, a critical but often overlooked component of the sale is the treatment of “hot assets” – a category of assets that can significantly affect your tax liability.



# What Are Hot Assets?

In the context of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC §751), “hot assets” refer to certain types of property that generate ordinary income when sold, rather than the more favorable capital gains treatment. In a veterinary practice, common hot assets may include:

- Accounts receivable (if not a cash-basis taxpayer)
- Inventory and supplies
- Depreciation recapture from equipment or leasehold improvements

These assets are termed “hot” because they trigger ordinary income tax rates, which are often higher than long-term capital gains rates — potentially leading to a larger tax bill upon sale.

## How Hot Assets Affect a Practice Sale

In most veterinary practice sales, the transaction is structured as an asset sale, particularly if the practice is operated as a sole proprietorship, partnership, or LLC. In an asset sale, each asset is individually valued and assigned a portion of the total purchase price. The IRS requires that both buyer and seller report these values using IRS Form 8594.

The way the sale price is allocated among assets, including hot assets, directly affects the seller’s tax outcome:

- Hot assets are taxed at ordinary income rates, currently as high as 37% at the federal level.
- Non-hot assets, such as goodwill and real estate held over a year, are usually taxed at the capital gains rate, typically 15–20%.

As an example, if \$200,000 of the sale price is allocated to fully depreciated equipment, that amount will be taxed as ordinary income to the seller, rather than at the lower capital gains rate.

## Planning Ahead to Minimize Taxes

Understanding and planning for hot asset treatment can save a seller thousands in unnecessary taxes. Here are some best practices:

1. **Negotiate Asset Allocation Wisely:** While buyers may prefer to allocate more to equipment (for faster depreciation), sellers should push for allocations that minimize exposure to hot asset taxation — such as greater weight on goodwill.
2. **Work with a Tax Advisor Early:** Before even listing the practice for sale, consult with a CPA or tax attorney familiar with veterinary practice sales. They can help forecast tax liabilities and structure the deal accordingly.
3. **Review Depreciation Schedules:** Depreciation recapture can sneak up on sellers. Ensure all fixed assets are correctly accounted for and updated.

## Equity

In rare cases where a sale of equity is possible (e.g., for a C-corp), it is important to be mindful of the Accounts Receivable in the transaction. If the seller is an MSO, which provides non-clinical and business support services to a veterinary practice, the MSO may carry large receivables from the Veterinary Practice. Proactive management of the Accounts Receivables is critical to avoiding a large tax bill in the future.

## Final Thoughts

Hot assets can be a hidden trap in veterinary practice sales, quietly inflating your tax bill if not handled properly. By understanding their implications and working with knowledgeable advisors, you can structure your sale to preserve more of your hard-earned value — and avoid surprises come tax time. **The National Veterinary Law Group at Mandelbaum Barrett PC is here to help. Contact us today.**



## Peter Tanella and Lucian Chen Co-Author Article for Today's Veterinary Business

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Your veterinary practice's most valuable asset may not be your equipment or real estate – it's your brand.

In the current issue of **Today's Veterinary Business**, **Peter Tanella**, Chair of the National Veterinary Law Group and **Lucian Chen**, Partner in the Intellectual Property and Brand Management Practice Group at Mandelbaum Barrett PC, explore why trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets are essential in today's consolidation-driven veterinary market.

From valuation and due diligence to avoiding costly rebrands, this article outlines the common IP mistakes practice owners make, and the practical steps they can take to protect their goodwill and exit strategy. If you're planning for growth, partnership, or a future sale, brand protection is no longer optional.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Today's Veterinary  
**Business**



## Peter Tanella Discusses Veterinary Practice Transitions in VetVet Interview

Selling your practice is a major life event and often the biggest deal you'll ever make.

During a recent **VetVet** interview, **Peter Tanella, Esq.**, Chair of the National Veterinary Law Group at Mandelbaum Barrett PC, shared why preparation is the key to a successful transition.

Whether you're years away or actively considering a sale, this is a must watch for practice owners.

[Watch the interview here.](#)



## “Just Vetting” with Peter Tanella, Esq. Interview Series

### Episode 13: Inside Specialty Leadership with Dr. Peter Chapman

In this episode of “Just Vetting,” host Peter Tanella sits down with Dr. Peter Chapman, Dual Board-Certified Internal Medicine Specialist and Medical Director of Red Bank Veterinary Hospital in Tinton Falls, New Jersey, for an honest, thoughtful conversation about leadership, specialty medicine, and the evolving future of veterinary care.

With candor and humility, Dr. Chapman explores the difference between managing and leading, why removing barriers matters more than micromanaging, and how building trust, whether with clients or colleagues, creates long-term success. He also dives into one of the profession’s biggest challenges: burnout. From leveraging technology and AI to restructuring support teams, he explains how efficiency isn’t about doing less, it’s about freeing doctors to do more of the work that fulfills them.

Dr. Chapman offers a grounded, experience-driven look at what it takes to lead a 100+ doctor specialty hospital while preserving culture, trust, and purpose. His perspective blends clinical excellence with systems thinking, and reminds us that leadership, at its core, is about relationships.

Whether you’re a specialist, a practice owner, a hospital leader, or an associate considering the next step in your career, this episode delivers practical insight and thoughtful reflection from someone navigating both the medical and business sides of modern veterinary medicine.



### “Just Vetting” with Peter Tanella Episode 12: Building a Community Practice with Justin Toth, DVM

In this episode, host Peter Tanella sits down with Dr. Justin Toth for a candid and thoughtful conversation about veterinary ownership, leadership, and what it truly takes to build a practice that lasts.

From a mechanically curious kid outside Atlanta to the owner of Dallas Highway Animal Hospital, Dr. Toth shares the journey that shaped his career — and the lessons that shaped his leadership.

With honesty and humility, he opens up about stepping into ownership at a young age, learning leadership through real-world mistakes, and discovering that strong culture and trust matter just as much as clinical excellence. His reflections offer a grounded look at what it means to lead with intention in a profession that continues to evolve.



## “Just Vetting” with Peter Tanella Episode 11: Beyond the Exam Room with Dr. Kelly Cooper

In this episode of Just Vetting, host Peter Tanella sits down with Dr. Kelly Cooper for an honest, reflective conversation about veterinary leadership, practice ownership, and what happens when independence comes faster than you’re ready for.

Dr. Cooper shares her unconventional journey into ownership, taking a leap early in her career, learning through trial and error, and discovering firsthand that clinical skill alone doesn’t prepare you for the realities of running a practice. With vulnerability and clarity, she reflects on the pressures of “doing it all,” the cost of isolation, and the pivotal moments that reshaped how she leads, supports teams, and defines success.



## “Just Vetting” with Peter Tanella Episode 10: Turning Vision into Action with Jen Coppens

In this episode of Just Vetting, host Peter Tanella sits down with Jen Coppens, founder of Coppens Business Strategies, to talk about what really drives sustainable growth in veterinary practices: process, leadership, culture, and financial clarity.

Jen shares her unconventional path into veterinary consulting after a 25+ year career in business, leadership, and IT, including scaling a company from \$2.5M to \$70M before transitioning into the veterinary space in 2015. Together, they dig into the most common operational breakdowns she sees in practices: leaders with a clear vision who struggle to implement change, teams lacking consistency, and clinics that lost key fundamentals during the pandemic and are now rebuilding.



## “Just Vetting” with Peter Tanella Episode 9: Weathering Change and Building Trust with Dr. Lisa Challberg

Welcome back to “Just Vetting” with Peter Tanella, Esq., the podcast where we step outside the clinic walls to explore the business, leadership, and personal journeys that shape today’s veterinary professionals.

In this episode, Peter sits down with Dr. Lisa Challberg, partner at Muddy Branch Veterinary Center in Maryland. Dr. Challberg shares her remarkable and deeply personal story of how an early passion for horses and a career in equine medicine took an unexpected turn after a serious riding accident, ultimately leading her to a decade-long home at Muddy Branch and, eventually, to practice ownership.



## “Just Vetting” with Peter Tanella Episode 8: From Foal Dreams to Equine Dentistry with Dr. Amelie McAndrews

On the new episode of Just Vetting, host Peter Tanella, Esq. sits down with Dr. Amelie McAndrews, a board-certified equine dentist and owner of Garden State Equine Dentistry, a thriving mobile practice serving New Jersey and beyond.



They discuss:

- How a horse-crazy kid became an equine dentistry specialist
- Why horses hide dental pain and how good dentistry transforms their health and performance
- The realities of practice ownership – control, financial upside, and stress
- Babies, boards & business – buying a practice 10 days postpartum and taking maternity leave as a solo practitioner
- Her advice for vets considering practice ownership and carving out a niche

If you're an equine vet, a general practice veterinarian thinking about ownership, or just wondering if you can design a practice around your actual life, this episode is for you.

## “Just Vetting” with Peter Tanella Episode 7: From Production Sets to Vet Med with Dr. Cindy Trice

Welcome back to Just Vetting with Peter Tanella, the podcast where we go beyond the exam room to talk business, ownership, and leadership in the veterinary world.



In this episode, Peter sits down with Dr. Cindy Trice — veterinarian, entrepreneur, and advocate for innovation and flexibility in Vet Med. From a career in corporate media to creating Relief Rover and KickIt Pajamas, Dr. Trice's story is a masterclass in curiosity, courage, and reinvention.

In this episode:

- Transitioning from media to veterinary medicine
- The story behind Relief Rover and redefining relief work
- Turning a cancer journey into purpose with KickIt Pajamas
- Leadership lessons, resilience, and embracing nontraditional career paths

Tune in now to hear how Dr. Trice proves it's never too late to chase your passions and make an impact — in vet med and beyond.



## COLLABORATIVE VETERINARY CARE FOR PETS AND THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE THEM

At **Symbios Animal Health**, we believe veterinary medicine works best when compassionate people work together with a shared purpose. Our family of veterinary hospitals is dedicated to providing thoughtful, high-quality care for pets while building lasting relationships with the families who trust us.

Founded and led by Dr. Nicholas Pope, Symbios Animal Health brings together a network of privately owned veterinary hospitals that share a commitment to excellent medicine, teamwork, and community. By working collaboratively across our hospitals, our veterinarians and support teams are able to provide a level of care that goes beyond what a single practice can often offer.

Whether your pet needs routine wellness care, diagnostics, surgery, or urgent treatment, our teams work together to ensure patients receive the attention and expertise they deserve.

Dr. Pope and the Symbios team believe that the strength of veterinary medicine lies in collaboration. Our hospitals regularly coordinate care between locations so that pets can benefit from specialized diagnostics, surgical expertise, and expanded treatment options while remaining within a trusted local network of caregivers.

This approach allows pets to receive advanced care while maintaining the comfort of a familiar veterinary team. It also ensures that families always have a clear path forward when their pet needs additional support.

At Symbios Animal Health, we provide a comprehensive range of services designed to support pets at every stage of life—from routine wellness visits to advanced diagnostics and surgery.

### **Preventive and Wellness Care**

Regular wellness exams, vaccinations, parasite prevention, and early disease screening help pets stay healthy and active throughout their lives. Our teams focus on proactive care that supports long-term health and quality of life.

### **Advanced Diagnostics and Surgery**

Our hospitals are equipped with modern diagnostic tools and surgical capabilities that allow us to diagnose and treat a wide range of conditions. When needed, our teams coordinate care between locations to ensure patients receive the best possible treatment.

### **Collaborative Veterinary Medicine**

What makes Symbios unique is our collaborative model of care. Our veterinarians work closely together across hospitals to share knowledge, coordinate treatment plans, and support complex cases—ensuring pets benefit from the combined experience of an entire network of veterinary professionals.

Through this cooperative approach, we are able to help more pets while maintaining the personal, compassionate care families expect from their local veterinary hospital.

### **Symbios Animal Health Locations**

South Branch Veterinary Services  
Clover Hill Animal Hospital  
Bedminster Veterinary Health Care  
Oldwick Animal Hospital  
Hunterdon Hills Animal Hospital  
Symbios Animal Health – Chatham





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## Ivey, Barnum & O’Mara LLC Attorneys Join Mandelbaum Barrett PC in a Strategic Talent Collaboration, Expanding Footprint and Capabilities

**Mandelbaum Barrett PC** has announced that 24 attorneys and staff of **Ivey, Barnum & O’Mara, LLC** (“IBO”), one of Greenwich, Connecticut’s oldest and most respected law firms, have joined Mandelbaum Barrett PC effective January 1, 2026. The addition of IBO attorneys expands Mandelbaum Barrett PC’s geographic reach into New England and provides expanded resources to the Connecticut firm’s clients. Further, it strengthens both firms’ capabilities across several practice areas, including real estate, trusts and estates, franchise law, litigation, and personal injury.

“This strategic expansion of Mandelbaum Barrett PC into Connecticut and the subsequent growth of our practice now allows us to serve both corporate and individual clients in the region with even greater depth, agility, and personalized service,” said William S. Barrett, CEO of Mandelbaum Barrett PC. “But, just as important, the attorneys and staff of Ivey, Barnum & O’Mara who have joined Mandelbaum Barrett bring a shared legacy of excellence, community leadership, and client-first values to our firm.”

Ivey, Barnum & O’Mara, LLC, established in 1950, is the largest law firm based in Greenwich and is widely respected for its expertise in real estate, trusts and estate planning, business, employment, litigation, and personal injury law. Many of the attorneys from IBO who have joined Mandelbaum Barrett PC have also served their communities in leadership roles, ranging from the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Senate to serving as Probate Judge and President of the Connecticut Bar Association.

Ivey, Barnum & O’Mara Partner and Management Committee Member Stephen G. Walko says, “Our firm was built in Greenwich, and our roots here in Fairfield County run deep. This partnership represents an opportunity not only to expand our capabilities and resources for our growing client base here, but also to preserve everything that has defined our practice locally. We are proud to take this next step with a firm that appreciates the importance of community grounded in places like Greenwich.

Fairfield County is home to many of the world’s leading financial and professional services firms, and most recently, a growing information services sector. It also ranks among the wealthiest counties in the United States.

“The addition of these attorneys to Mandelbaum Barrett marks a significant milestone in our firm’s strategic and steady growth from a small practice founded in 1930 with just one attorney to now 150 attorneys beginning in 2026,” Chairman Barry R. Mandelbaum added. “It is certainly an exciting way to start our 96th year and testimony to both the firm’s impact and the culture we have built over the years.” Mandelbaum’s father, Irving Mandelbaum, founded the firm in Newark, NJ.

“Our attorneys are excited to join Mandelbaum Barrett PC and bring even more value to our clients,” said Steven Steinmetz, also a partner and member of the Management Committee of Ivey, Barnum & O’Mara, LLC. “This move allows us to expand our capabilities under the Mandelbaum Barrett name, while staying true to the relationships and values that have defined our firm for 75 years. Clients of IBO will continue to work with their trusted attorneys, who are now part of a broader team of professionals offering a more extensive range of services. This will ensure seamless, continued access to high-quality, personalized legal counsel as part of Mandelbaum Barrett’s enhanced resources and reach.”

“

## Testimonial



Phenomenal group. Very professional yet personable. The firm answered my questions timely and went above and beyond. I will continue to use them for all veterinary related legal guidance.

- Samantha Miller, DVM

[Click Here To Leave a Review!](#)



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## Google Review



I used Peter Tanella's law firm to handle my practice sale and closing. I could not have been more pleased with the attention to detail that they provided in what is likely to be my most important financial transaction of my lifetime.

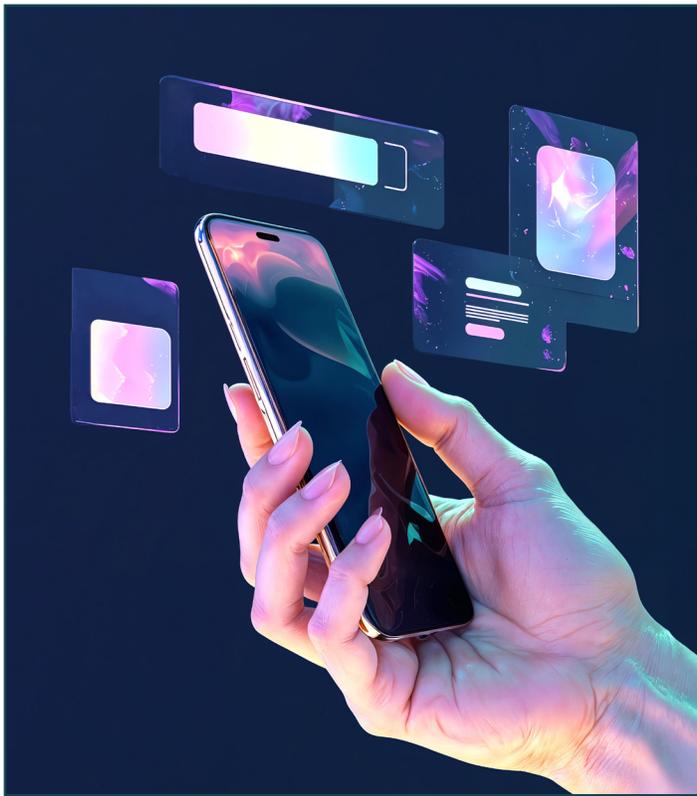
As a member of a VMG (Veterinary Management Group) of twenty years, I knew how important it was to assemble a team of experienced professionals to handling my practice valuation and sale. I started my AAHA Accredited Practice from scratch 35 years ago and it was my "other child". The transaction was not just about money but about who would continue my legacy and practice culture.

Peter's team did not disappoint. As I write this, I am sitting on a remote island of the coast of Belize and am at peace with my recent practice sale. It is a great relief to have been able to rely on such an attentive and professional team to help guide me through this important transaction.

Thank you Peter and team (Eileen Funnell and Lindsey Priolo).  
**You guys rock!!!**

- Mike Smith, DVM  
Clairmont Animal Hospital Decatur, Georgia

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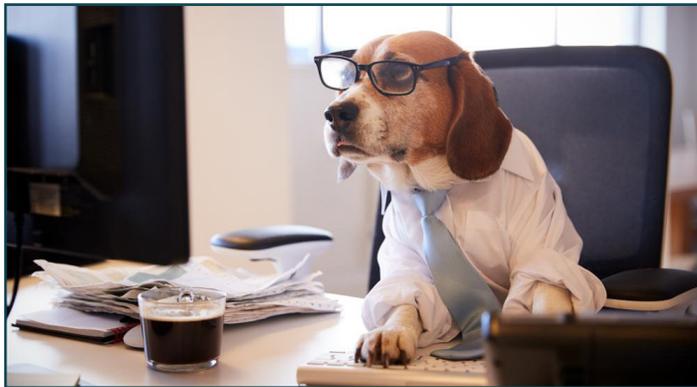


## “We want to hear from you”

Please let us know veterinary law “hot topics” you would like you to hear more about.



[veterinarylaw@mblawfirm.com](mailto:veterinarylaw@mblawfirm.com)



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