



The Ins and Out of In-Home Euthanasia

Rebecca Linot DVM

Introduction

- Graduated KSU CVM 2007
- GP associate for 8 years
- HVSN and surgical contract work, GP relief, and vaccine clinics
- Slowly started providing in-home euthanasia to friends and family
- April 2018 I started Tenderheart Vet ~ In-Home Pet Euthanasia
- Memorial Day 2018 – “inherited” a single-doctor practice
- For the next 2 years I juggled HVSN, practice ownership, GP relief, and my growing IHE business
- 2020 brought closure to all my other veterinary endeavors, and I’ve been solely IHE since



Euthanasia – the art of providing a gentle death

- 80-85% dogs die by euthanasia
- 6 million+ dogs die every year in the US
 - Over 5 million dogs euthanized annually
- The inclusion of dogs as “members of the family” is still on the rise, >85% pet owners giving this distinction
- 70% of owners experience emotional impact surrounding the loss of their pet, and 30% report severe grief
- Veterinarians are present at the death of their patients 5x more often than MDs



Why In-Home Euthanasia?

Owners' Perspective

- No need to move a pet with mobility issues
- No stressful visit to a place their pet doesn't like
- Choose a peaceful, favorite, or sentimental place
- Both family and pet can feel secure in familiar surroundings
- Easier to have other pets and kids or large families present
- The family doesn't have to be in public before and after
 - they won't have to drive home in an upset state



Why In-Home Euthanasia?

Veterinarian's Perspective

- Patients and owners are more comfortable
- Connect with families in a more intimate way
- Always helping
- Owner and doctor goals align
- Service for your brick & mortar (b&m) clients
 - Makes your practice more attractive to clients
 - Allows you to serve families through pet's entire life
- Career path – end of life exclusive practice
 - Offers a flexibility that isn't present in the clinic setting
 - Immense fulfillment in your job
 - Easier to remain objective and see your service for the help that it is



Getting Started – business options

- Work for a large, established corporation
 - No start up effort or pay lag
 - Have built in (virtual) support staff
 - Less flexibility in scheduling
 - Non-competes?
 - Lower pay
- Partner or work for an established local or regional service
 - Similar to corporate pros and cons, hopefully more flexibility and autonomy
- Start your own business
 - Takes more effort to start and get established
 - Start up costs are fairly low
 - No support staff (answering your own calls), at least initially
 - Ultimate control of your time and schedule
 - Most profitable option
- As a service under the umbrella of a full-service clinic
 - Wouldn't recommend this arrangement in most cases



Tenderheart Vet
In-Home Pet Euthanasia
Dr. Rebecca Linot

Starting your own business

Do your homework

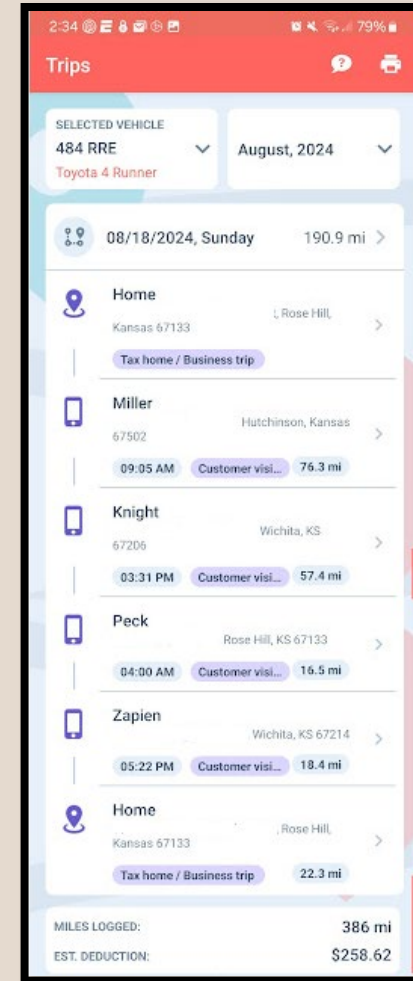
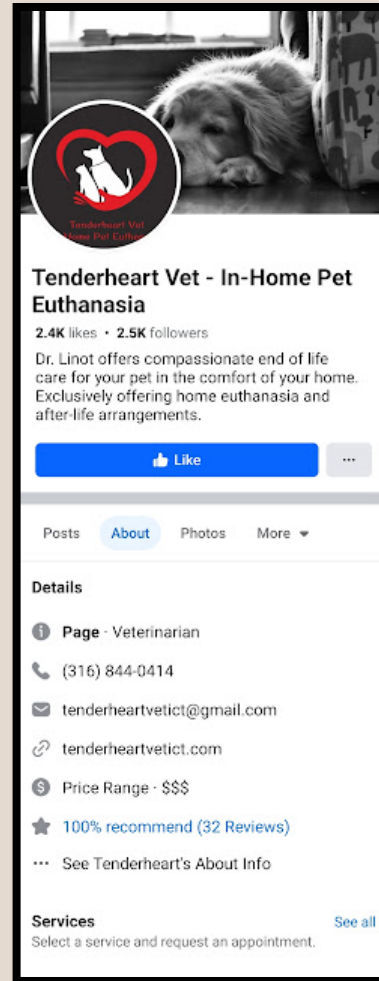
- Small business assistance programs
 - Local university; chamber of commerce; state, county or city programs; SBA
- Evaluate your personal finances
 - Can you continue at your current job while your business grows?
 - Do you have an appropriate vehicle?
 - Accountant can advise you on business structures
 - You may need an attorney
- Create a business plan
 - Consider your market and resources
 - Traditional “official” business plan
 - SBA offers outlines and examples to create plans
 - Needed for financing
 - Personal business plan
 - When will you see appointments
 - How you will handle client communication
 - Establish service area, travel fees
 - Fee structure
 - How you will market yourself



Starting your own business

Business Necessities

- Establish business structure
- DEA license registered to your home
 - Safe and logs
- State license
- Phone Number – digital service or 2nd phone
- Website and Social Media
 - [Google My Business](#) page
- Bank Account (+/- credit card)
- Credit card processor - Square
- Insurance
 - Professional & business liability
 - Car insurance
 - Business owners policy
- Accounting software
 - Mileage tracking - Mileage Wise
 - Receipt tracking - Neat
- Record keeping
 - Computer based
 - Cloud
 - Paper



Paper record forms

Tenderheart Vet
Dr. Rebecca Linot
316-844-0414

Euthanasia Consent Form

Owner's Name: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____ Phone: _____

Pet's Name: _____ Breed: _____
Sex: _____ Age: _____ Color/Markings: _____
Case Number: _____

Would you like your regular veterinarian to be notified of your pet's passing? YES NO

If yes, please list clinic or veterinarian name here: _____

Services Available, Please check next to your desired option:

_____ Euthanasia only and I choose to retain my pet for burial or other arrangements to be coordinated by me. Dr. Linot will provide me with a hand-painted clay paw print of my pet's paw, to be mailed or delivered to my home in 2-3 weeks. Fee \$350

_____ Euthanasia and I choose to have communal cremation performed. Dr. Linot will provide transportation to the crematorium and I will not have my pet's ashes returned. Dr. Linot will provide me with a hand-painted clay paw print of my pet's paw, to be mailed or delivered to my home in 2-3 weeks. Fee \$400

_____ Euthanasia and I choose to have a private cremation. Dr. Linot will provide transportation of my pet to the crematorium for private cremation and will arrange return of my pet's ashes to me. My pet's remains will be returned to me in a _____. Dr. Linot will also provide me with a hand-painted clay paw print of my pet's paw. Fee \$_____

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I am the owner or duly authorized agent of the animal described above. In being the owner/agent, I do hereby give Dr. Rebecca Linot full and complete authority to perform euthanasia services.

To the best of my knowledge, the information I have provided on this form is true and correct. I do also certify that this animal has not bitten, seriously scratched, or exposed anyone to rabies in the past 10 days. I understand that my wishes will be carried out upon the signing of this agreement. Fees for these services have been explained to me and will be collected at the time of service.

Signature of Owner or Agent

Date:

Weight _____

Med:
Telazol (reconstituted w/ ace) _____ Xylazine _____ B12 _____ Euthanasia Soln _____
Butorphanol _____

Medical Notes:

Reg Vet _____
Card _____
Pawprint _____

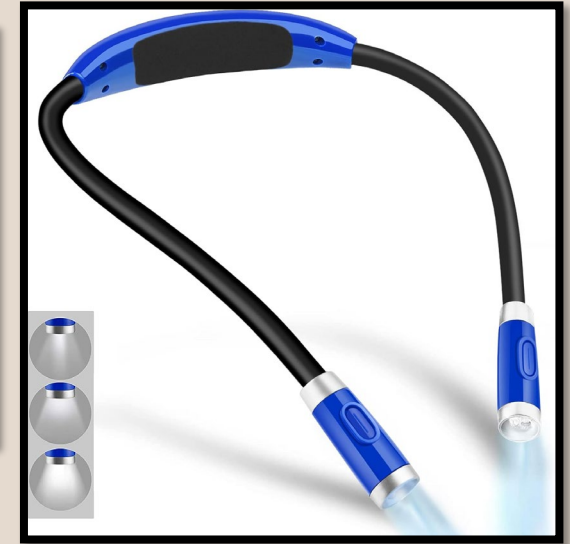
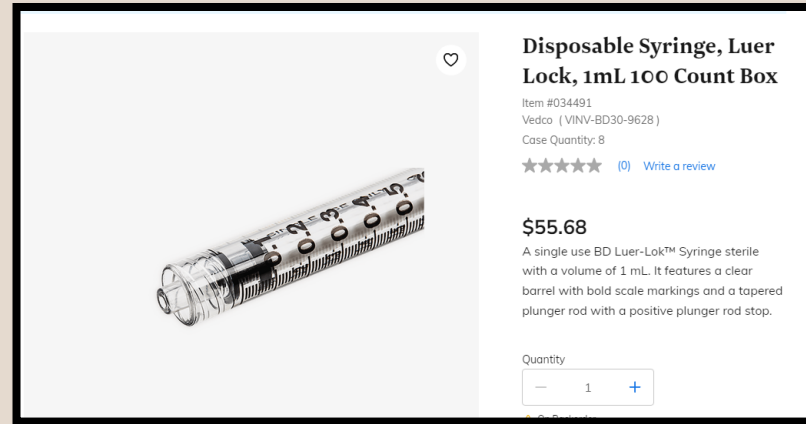
Remains _____

Fees
Euthanasia Fee _____
Remains _____
Total _____
Pd by _____

Initial Inventory

Veterinary Supplies

- Syringes in multiple sizes
 - 1ml, 3ml, 6ml, 12ml, 20ml, 60ml
 - All in luer-lock!
- Needles
 - 27g, 22g, 20g, 18g
- Indwelling or butterfly catheters
- Stethoscope
- Clippers
- Tourniquet
- Alcohol
- Gauze
- H₂O₂
- Potty pads – disposable or washable
- Light source
- Clipboard
- Card processing
- Clay, ink, paper, hair clipping supplies
- Doctor bag or tote
- Blankets and beds
- Stretcher



Initial Inventory

Pharmaceuticals

- Tiletamine/Zolazepam
- Butorphanol
- Acepromazine
- Euthanasia Solution
- Sterile Saline
- Pharmaceuticals you may choose to carry instead or in addition
 - Xylazine
 - Ketamine
 - Midazolam
 - Dexmedetomidine
 - Sileo or Equine Dormosedan

Business Supplies

- Business cards
- Rack cards or pamphlets
- Vehicle decals
- Sympathy cards



Getting Organized



Getting Organized



Pre-euthanasia drug choices

Acepromazine

- Sedation via dopamine blockage
- SQ, IM, IV, PO
- Dosing – much higher for euthanasia cases
 - dogs - 3-30mg/dog
 - cats - 3mg/cat
- Pros
 - effective if given orally (and transmucosal)
 - dilates blood vessels
 - antiemetic
- Cons
 - tastes bad
 - not reversible
 - lowers seizure threshold
 - rarely can increase aggressiveness
 - not a good solo agent



Pre-euthanasia drug choices

Butorphanol

- SQ, IM, IV, PO (not well absorbed)
- Pros
 - Causes rapid sedation
 - Least likely of the opioid family to cause vomiting (possibly anti-emetic properties)
 - In combination with ace it tends to minimize respiratory distress in patients with underlying respiratory function issues – CHF, tracheal collapse, larpar, etc
- Cons
 - Moderately expensive
 - Longer time to effect when given SQ, PO or transmucosal
 - Only moderate pain control – short lived



Pre-euthanasia drug choices

What about other opioids?

- Morphine, hydromorphone, fentanyl, methadone, oxycodone, buprenorphine
- These options offer stronger pain control and better sedation
- Higher potential for human abuse
- Schedule 2
- Most are more costly than butorphanol
- Pure μ agonists more likely to cause vomiting, panting, whining, and respiratory depression

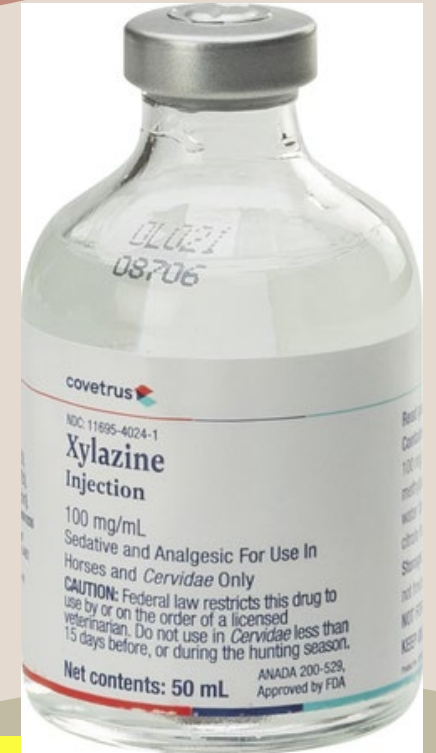
Pre-euthanasia drug choices

α -2 agonists

- Sedative via agonist effects on α -2 adrenoreceptors, ↓ norepinephrine
- Dexmedetomidine & medetomidine, xylazine, romifidine
- IV or IM (Sileo TM)
- Pros
 - Profound sedation
 - Cost (xylazine)
 - Reversible
 - On your shelf, not controlled

• Cons

- Peripheral vasoconstriction, apnea, lowers seizure threshold
- Nausea & vomiting – especially xylazine
- Restlessness, increased vigilance, hyperreactive to sounds
- Sedation is not predictable, especially as sole agent



Pre-euthanasia drug choices

Benzodiazepines

- Exact mode of action unknown – serotonin antagonists, ↑ GABA activity, ↓ acetylcholine release – makes patients feel relaxed (confusion, loss of orientation, weakness)
- Use Midazolam
- Diazepam IV only, so Midazolam more useful in home setting
- When to use
 - Seizure patients or those with brain disease
 - In cases of cardiac or respiratory compromise – minimal effects
 - In conjunction with ketamine to achieve anesthesia

Ketamine

- NMDA antagonist – induces anesthesia, smoother in conjunction with a benzo
- IM, IV, SQ, PO
- Pros
 - Cost
 - Less likely to sting
- Cons
 - Logging additional meds
 - I find it less predictable in time to effect and smoothness of transition

Pre-euthanasia drug choices

Anesthetics

- Alfaxalone – a neuroactive steroid, binds GABA receptors
 - IM use limited to smaller patients due to injection volume
 - Always use with a benzo for IM +/- an opioid
 - Short duration of action
 - Apnea possible with IV, less than with propofol
 - Great option for IV catheter placement

IM sedation	Alfaxalone	midazolam	+/- butorphanol	Volume in 10# patient
Dog	2-4 mg/kg	0.3 mg/kg	0.2 mg/kg	1.75ml
Cat	0.5-2 mg/kg	0.2mg/kg	0.2 mg/kg	0.75ml

- Propofol – alkyl phenol-derivative, enhances effects of GABA
 - IV use only – immediate unconsciousness
 - Apnea possible, especially if given quickly
 - Very short duration of action

Pre-euthanasia drug choices

Anesthetics – cont.

- Tiletamine/Zolazepam (Telazol, Tzed, Zoletil, Tizolan)
 - Combo drug of NMDA antagonist and benzodiazepine
 - My first choice for pre-euth anesthetic
 - Storage concerns
 - IM, SQ, PO, IV
 - SQ stings, PO tastes bad
 - Minimizing discomfort
 - Smallest needle possible – 27g
 - Warm injection
 - Dilute (+/- reconstituting with ace)
 - B12
 - Saline
 - Give it slowly
 - Splitting premeds into 2 step process
 - butorphanol and ace first, wait 5 minutes, then give Telazol



My pre-euthanasia protocol

Weight (in lbs)	Acepromazine	Tiletamine/Zolazepam	Butorphanol	Xylazine*
<5	0.1	0.1	0.1	-
5-10	0.15	0.15	0.15	-
10-20	0.2-0.25	0.2-0.25	0.2-0.25	-
20-40	0.3-0.6	0.3-0.6	0.3-0.6	hub
40-60	0.6-1	0.6-1	0.6-1	0.1-0.2
60-80	1-1.6	1-1.6	1-1.6	0.2-0.3
80-100	1.6-2.5	1.6-2.5	1.6-2.5	0.3-0.4
>100	3+	3+	3+	0.6

- My goal is anesthesia, not sedation¹
- Same doses for dogs and cats
- Meds are given SQ or IM
- Reasons to go higher on dose: giving SQ, overweight, high strung, vocal breed, in active CHF, young/systemically healthy, patients I want to go to sleep quickly, outside, lots of people present

* I rarely use xylazine, but may add it in very large dogs, hyper or overstimulated dogs, very obese dogs

- I will NEVER use xylazine in a vomiting or nauseous patient or in cats

Euthanasia Solution Choices

Drug choices – blue juice vs pink juice

- Cost
- Schedule 2 vs 3
- Viscosity
- Familiarity
- Other options when euthanasia solution is not available
 - KCI
 - DIY Epsom salt mixture
 - Propofol

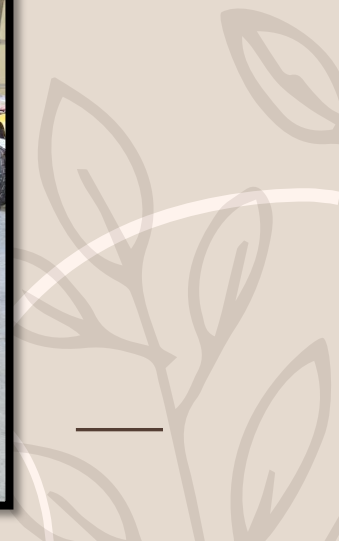
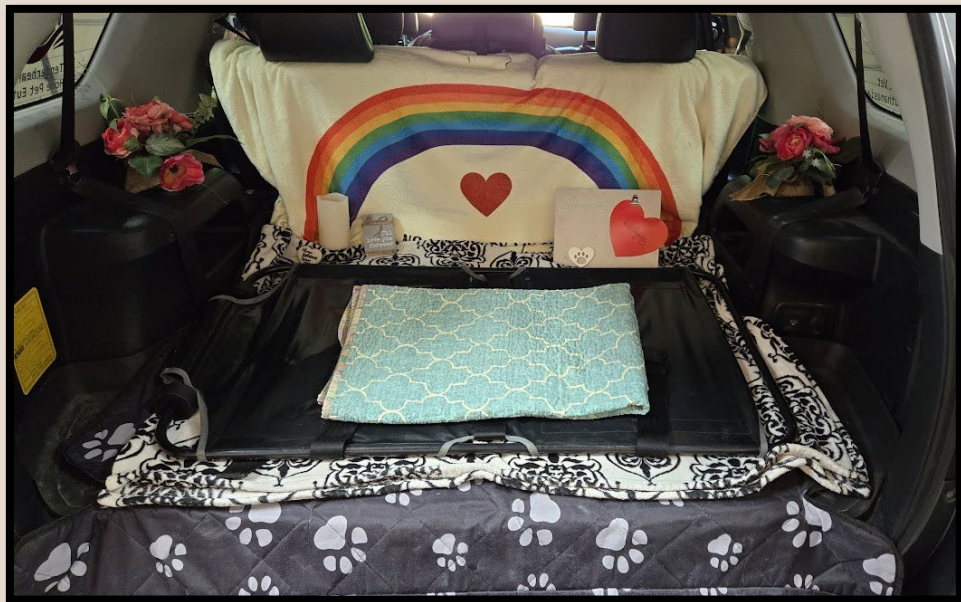


Aftercare

- Research crematorium options and visit the facilities
 - Private vs individual cremations
 - Do they offer communal cremations?
 - Home pickup vs you transporting them
 - Drop off at crematorium vs pick up at your home
- A large portion of owners don't want to deal with a second service and will pay for the convenience of having you take their pet – charge accordingly
 - Drive time and miles
 - Paperwork and time for body care
 - Blankets, beds, and transport supplies



Vehicle Presentation



Vehicle Presentation



Memorial Items

Ink prints

- Standard ink pads, paint, or bingo dabbers
- Inkless pawprint kits
- Paw and nose
- Can use a paw conditioner

Clay prints

- Claypaws – Veterinary Wisdom
- Sculpey clay – paint them

Hair clippings

- Simple clipping in a bag
- Special container
- Resin kits - UV

Sympathy cards

- Ideally write them as you go
- Keep them in your car to do between appointments
- Christmas cards are always well received





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Marketing & Advertising

- Carry business cards with you - in your car, in your work bag, always!
- Local clinics are a great resource – most want to have someone to refer to
- Sponsor local pet friendly events
 - Dog and jogs
 - Pet fairs
 - Rescue group carnivals
 - Microchip drives
- Google ads and social media posts
- Request pet memorials in your sympathy cards



The In-Home Euthanasia Appointment – start to finish

First contact, scheduling, pre-visit

- Owners want to know what to expect before you arrive
- They want to know you care
- Prepare a “script” that explains your visit and services
- Voicemail should state next availability
- Ideal availability is within 24-48 hours
- Most owners are open to text and I find it helps people to have this info in writing
- Offer payment and paperwork in advance
- If you’re providing cremation services, send choices in advance
- Recommend owner requests pre-meds from regular vet if the owner thinks anxiety, fear, or aggression may be an issue

I'm so sorry that you're in need of my info ❤️
I'm sure that it has been difficult to think about this decision.

Here is an overview of my visit and services. Please feel free to ask any follow up questions you may have.

I offer appointments 7 days a week. I prefer evening and weekends, but if a daytime appointment is needed, I can usually make childcare arrangements to make that work. I try to be available for appointments within 24-48 hours of you reaching out, but can also schedule out further in advance if wanted. I serve the Wichita and surrounding area.

My visit at your home typically lasts about 30 minutes. When I arrive, I take a few moments to let your pet get more comfortable with my presence. I typically collect payment at that time, so that we don't have to worry about it later. I accept cash, check, or card.

Once we're settled, I give an injection under the skin of a sedative. It takes about 5-10 minutes to take effect and for them to slowly fall asleep. During that time, you're welcome to love on them however you all are most comfortable. Once full sedation has taken effect and you are ready, I give a second injection that is the euthanasia solution. It works quickly and is not at all painful.

My goal is for everything to be calm and peaceful for all of you.

My visit fee is \$350. This fee does not include any aftercare. I can provide you with information for aftercare and cremation services if needed. I also offer paw print mementos if desired.

Overall, I try to make my time as calm and comforting as possible, considering the situation. I know from my own personal pets how hard it is to face this decision and think about those final moments. My heart truly goes out to you.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Packages

Individual pet cremation offers you peace of mind by helping provide a dignified farewell to a dear friend along with options for your pet's final resting place. Our high quality urns help you memorialize your companion in a meaningful and everlasting way.

Should your family prefer to work with a Wichita based contracting partner animal clinic, your pet will be safe in the trained & caring hands of Kansas Humane Society staff. Please see our website for a full list of partnering veterinarians.

Kansas Humane Society is dedicated to providing the absolute best for our furry friends, both in life, and after.

Additional Services

Keep your companion close to your heart with a jewelry pendant filled with your pet's cremains.

*Product styles will vary based on availability.

\$25
PER PENDANT



To memorialize your beloved pet, you also have the option to insert a vial of pet cremains in a paver in our new Friends of the Kansas Humane Society Garden, creating a peaceful space for reflection and remembrance. To order your custom paver, please visit kshumane.org/pavers.



All Prices listed include a fee for transportation to Kansas Humane Society by Dr Linot following her visit.

Bronze \$230

Our Bronze Package is the foundation of the cremations program and is the most affordable cremation solution offered in Wichita.

- 🐾 Signed "Certificate of Care" assuring your pet was in the care of trained & qualified staff at the Kansas Humane Society.
- 🐾 ID tag to ensure you receive **your** cherished friend's cremains.
- 🐾 Return of your pet's cremains; carefully placed in a temporary, biodegradable box to be picked up at KHS or your Wichita-based contracting animal clinic.

Should you wish to forever memorialize your pet by placing their cremains in more stylish urn, please select one of our full-service packages.

Silver \$280

- 🐾 Includes all benefits of the Bronze Package PLUS:
- 🐾 Your choice of one "Silver Package" urn.



Traditional Urns

This simple and understated wooden urn will allow your beloved pet to spend eternity where they feel most comfortable; close to you.

Steel Urns

These metal vase urns are available in two popular colors: Antique Silver or Antique Copper.



Gold \$350

- 🐾 Includes all benefits of the Bronze Package PLUS an upgrade to:
- 🐾 Your choice of one "Gold Package" urn.
- 🐾 Engraved plate with custom engraving of your choosing. (Limited to 25 characters, spaces & punctuation. 2 lines on plate.)



Tower Urns

These hardwood tower urns are designed for the pet owner who wishes to display their favorite "vertical" photograph to create a timeless memorial. Three options: Cherry, Oak & Walnut.

Garden Rock Urns

These beautiful poly-resin reproduction stones can be placed in a flower garden or displayed on your mantle.



Marble Urns

An elegant and peaceful resting place for your cat or dog, these 100% Natural stone urns are carved from solid pieces of marble by true old-world artisans. Three options: Dark, Light or Medium (colors will vary)

Brass Pawprint Urns

Take your beloved pet home in one of these wonderfully designed Paw Print Series urns with hand-carved paw prints and a personalized solid brass display base. Two options: Teal or Brushed Nickel.



*Size of urn will be based on pre-cremation weight of animal.

*All urns pictured are based on availability.

Pre-visit drug choices

Medication	Dose	Class/Use	Considerations
Trazadone	20mg/kg	SSRI	Serotonin syndrome Low BP
Gabapentin	100-300mg/cat 100mg/kg – dogs	Neuropathic pain/sedation	Not great alone Combine with Ace
Acepromazine	100mg – sm dogs and cats 150-300mg large dogs	Phenothiazine	Can give injectable orally
Sileo / dormosedan	Sileo- go by label Dormosed - 0.1ml/10#	Alpha-2 agonist	Owner safety Low BP
Phenobarbital	70mg/kg	Barbituate/ sedation	Lots of tablets

Pre-visit meds – maximizing success



- Have owners withhold food the night before
- Advise on methods of hiding meds
 - Alternating treats
 - Whip cream for sileo
 - Liquid ace mixed with coffee creamer for cats
- Give meds 3 hours before your arrival
 - Disagreement among vets on whether an initial dose the night before or 4-6 prior to main dose is beneficial

The In-Home Euthanasia Appointment – start to finish

Arrival at the home & sedation

- Text owners when I'm on my way with my ETA
- Spend a bit letting everyone adjust to your arrival
 - Great time to observe pet and determine ideal sedation dose and route
 - Get on the pet's level, as close as they seem comfortable with
- Take care of any remaining paperwork or payment
- Confirm aftercare arrangements
- Explain each step as you proceed
- Have treats to offer for sedation injection if they are eating
 - Churus are great for cats and dogs
 - Owner can feed from tube or can squeeze onto a lick mat
 - Giving injectable meds PO is an option



The In-Home Euthanasia Appointment – start to finish

Arrival at the home & sedation

"In a moment, I'll give Spike some medication under the skin on the back of his neck. It has some pain medication and anti-anxiety medication in it. It will let him relax and be pain free as he falls asleep. It usually takes about 5-10 minutes for him to fall fully asleep after I give it. He does need a second injection after this, so this first one is just to get him relaxed"

"Some dogs are a little sensitive to this medication, others don't seem bothered at all. Unfortunately, dogs without a lot of body fat seem more sensitive, and with Spike's weight loss, he falls into that category. I'm using a very small needle and giving it really slowly to help keep him comfortable. If he's bothered by it, I'll give what I can, let it take effect, then give more if needed"

The In-Home Euthanasia Appointment – start to finish

“Spike’s eyes likely won’t close all the way, even after he’s passed. As those muscles fully relax, the lids tend to lay open”

“With Spike’s recent seizures, there is a risk that he could have another one before the medicine has taken full effect. The meds I’m using are actually designed to prevent and stop seizures, so we’re doing everything we can to control them”

“It is possible that Spike’s bladder will empty after he passes. I have a potty pad in my bag that I’ll place under him so you don’t have to worry about that.”

Euthanasia process

- While letting anesthesia take effect, you may need to explain normal changes as they happen
 - Avoid trying to prepare owners for every single possibility, but predict more likely issues and mention them along with what you’re doing about it
- Monitor depth of anesthesia while being with the family
 - Try to match the family’s tone, ask questions if appropriate
 - Use this time to change positioning if needed
- As pet seems to fully relax, let everyone find their spots
 - If pet has undesirable respiratory changes, a pillow under their head can help
 - Place potty pad under pet

The In-Home Euthanasia Appointment – start to finish

Euthanasia process

- Verify pet is under anesthesia, often showing owners the withdraw reflex is now absent
- Explain final steps of euthanasia
- Prepare for venous access
 - I prefer lateral saphenous on dogs and medial saphenous or cephalic on cats
 - Always shave, even if their hair is really short – offer clipping to owners
 - Use rubbing alcohol to help highlight that vein
 - Use your necklight if you need it



The In-Home Euthanasia Appointment – start to finish

Euthanasia process



"One of the last reflexes that dogs maintain before they are fully asleep is to pull their foot back when you pinch their toes. As you can see, Spike's not doing that anymore. That tells me he's nice and relaxed and not in any pain. He's ready."

"He's ready. Here in a moment, I'm going to place my tourniquet on his leg and shave a bit of fur. Once I'm all set up, I will tell you before I start to give it. I know you aren't ready, but is it ok if I go ahead?"

"This final medicine is the euthanasia solution. It is not at all painful for Spike. It works quickly. When I give it, I'll give it over about 45 seconds, and he will likely have passed about the time I finish giving it. As it takes effect, his breathing pattern might change a bit, taking some deeper or more shallow breaths. Then his breathing will stop, and shortly after his heart will stop beating."

The In-Home Euthanasia Appointment – start to finish

Euthanasia and death

- Position my needle/syringe, remove tourniquet, and let owner know that I am proceeding
- Give euthanasia solution slowly
 - B-euth or “pink juice” is very viscous, diluting with water or saline can ease your push
 - Give the first ¼ volume very slowly until respirations have slowed almost entirely, then give the remaining ¾ a bit faster
- Discretely put your supplies away and hold pressure on vein, or apply small wrap
 - Most owners seem to sense that their pet has passed
 - Give them a quiet moment before verifying death with your stethoscope
 - Give the family time before you do anything else

“Ok, I’m going to give this now.”

“I’m going to take a LONG listen to verify that he’s passed.”

*“His heart is not beating anymore.
He’s passed.”*

The In-Home Euthanasia Appointment – start to finish

Afterwards

If leaving the pet with the owners:

- Make any requested mementos
 - Clay prints
 - Ink prints
 - Hair clippings
 - I offer to help if they have their own supplies
 - Paw photos
- Discuss post-mortem changes, short and long term
- Offer assistance, if they need it



"You may see some small nerve twitches in Spike's skin for several minutes after he's passed. It doesn't always happen, but I know it can be disconcerting to see. Sometimes there is still a little electrical energy built up in those muscles and nerve fibers."

"Is there anything else I can do for you before I go?"

The In-Home Euthanasia Appointment – start to finish

Afterwards

If I'm taking the pet with me:

- Give them time alone with their pet
 - Allows other pets that have been separated to come in without me as a distraction
 - Allows owners a moment of privacy
- Prepare their pet for transport with as much care as possible
 - Ask if they are ready to move pet into bed/stretcher, and if they are ready to take them to the car
 - Don't cover the face unless they want to
- Give them another opportunity to say goodbye at the vehicle



"I'm going to carry my things to my car and give you a bit more time with Spike. I'll come back in with a comfy bed and blanket that we can put him in when you're ready. Is it ok if I let myself back in, in a bit?"

"Are you OK if I tuck him in?"

"I'll take good care of him."

When things don't go as planned... What next?

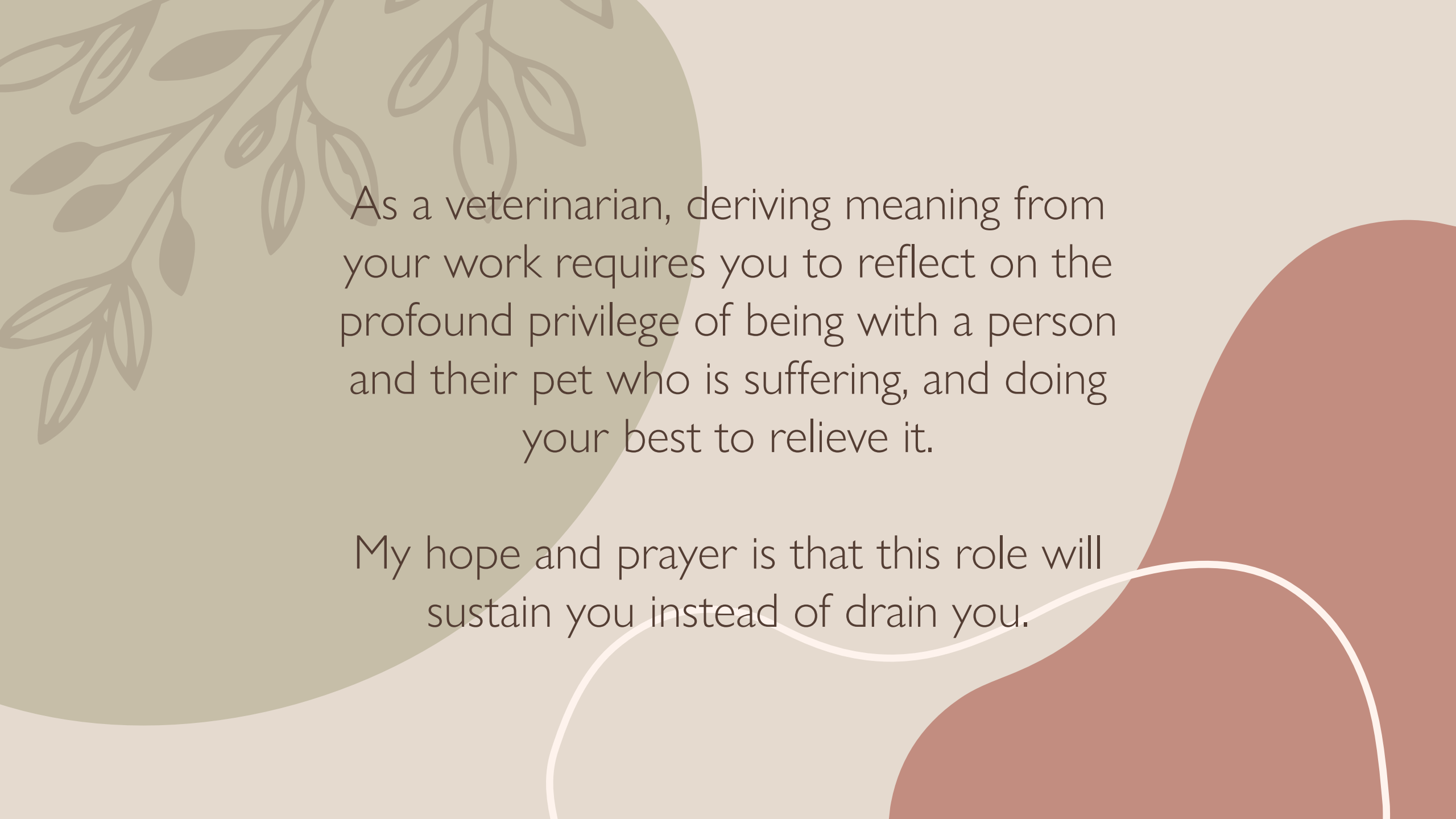
In the moment, stay calm and project confidence to owners

- Sedatives/anesthetics not working the expected way
 - Give them more time
 - Give more of the same drugs
 - Add another drug into the combo – α_2 agonists minimize ataxia
- Cannot attain venous access
 - Try lesser used veins – dorsal pedal
 - Intra-organ administration – **under anesthesia**
 - Cats- intrarenal, double my dose, isolate kidney in my hand and give with a 1 inch needle
 - can be done under a blanket
 - can redirect the needle a few times
 - time to effect is variable – 30 seconds to several minutes
 - Dogs- hepatic is generally the most reliable, double dose, longest needle in your bag 1.5-2”
 - insert needle caudal to xiphoid, aiming cranially
 - redirect needle, you should get negative pressure if in the parenchyma
 - time to effect can be up to 15 minutes, but as short as 1-2 minutes
 - If 15 minutes has elapsed and your patient is still alive
 - give more
 - intra-cardiac injection as last option in front of owners
 - use a blanket to drape your patient behind the shoulders
 - administer in the down side of the chest where the heartbeat palpates strongest



Follow Up

- Contact their regular vet to let them know their patient has passed
- Sympathy cards
 - Insert business card
 - Include an invitation for the owner to send you a photo or written memorial of their pet
- For particularly emotional owners, a follow up text in the days after is usually appreciated
- Christmas or New Year's card
 - I get lots of positive feedback on these
- Thank you notes for referrals



As a veterinarian, deriving meaning from your work requires you to reflect on the profound privilege of being with a person and their pet who is suffering, and doing your best to relieve it.

My hope and prayer is that this role will sustain you instead of drain you.



Thank you!

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