

Pet Nation: The Love Affair that Changed America

TOP 5 TAKEAWAYS

Thank you for joining the Veterinary Virtual Care Association, the Animal Policy Group, and *Clinician's Brief* for this webinar on how pets made their way into the American family. We hope you found the information valuable.

FOLLOWING ARE 5 KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE WEBINAR TO BEAR IN MIND AS YOU CONTINUE TO PRACTICE HIGH-QUALITY MEDICINE.

1

Cats and dogs haven't changed much since they were first domesticated; what's changed is our desire to be around them. Bringing pets into our homes was the catalyst for the growth in pet numbers and pet culture. The ubiquity of pets in mass media and their presence on social media have contributed to the rapid rise of Pet Nation.

2

Research has shown that not only is the human-animal bond a legitimate phenomenon, but it makes people, pets, and communities healthier. Pets are now recognized as valuable therapy animals, and studies have shown that pets rank as the #1 thing that brings people together in communities. Research even shows that non-pet-owning employees are happier working for pet-friendly employers.

3

Veterinary practices need to realize that most of their clients are Millennials and Gen-Xers who own 62% of the pets in the US. These pet owners want the same healthcare for their pets as they receive themselves, and that includes easy access through technology like telemedicine and texting apps—and they are willing to pay for it.

4

A National Pet Policy that provides assistance for the acquisition and care of pets would help remove barriers to pet ownership among low-income families, as well as create incentive for more Americans to experience the health benefits of pet ownership.

5

There are 3 relevant shortages in Pet Nation today: veterinarians, veterinary nurses, and adoptable dogs. Creating a veterinary professional program similar to physician's assistant could help fill the need for more veterinarians and allow them to leverage technician skills more productively. A nationwide certification program for breeders could help resolve the shortage of dogs available for adoption by promoting responsible breeding of healthy dogs.