We are now one whole year into the COVID-19 Pandemic. Veterinary professionals stepped up in ways we never had to before and continue to do so. We changed protocols to adapt to the new unknown world around us. For most, we were considered essential; that meant still going to work, finding ways to school our children from home, adapting to completely curbside, and so forth, with those changes brought on a slew of challenges in themselves. The world was in a struggle, and many were laid off. That meant more people were at home, and now we’re able to bring their pets to the vet finally. Covid-19 restrictions led to higher caseloads and the clients projecting their frustrations onto the staff at the forefront, leading to more burnout, higher turnover rates, and less job satisfaction. It also led to new ways of doing things such as seeing patients/clients curbside and even fewer restrictions in telehealth, which we saw the value in helping pets like never before. So, is this our new normal?... And what does that look like for the foreseeable future?

I have seen that some staff/practices prefer the curbside protocol to the traditional exam room style. It alleviates some of the pressures that are known from clients wanting to over-manage their visit. If your facility parking area is set up for this and you have shelter from the elements, this can be a great stress reliever for staff. Maybe not as practical in the colder winter months in some states.

There have also been advancements made in the telehealth sector. With Lesser restrictions on telehealth, we could see existing patients and help with issues that arose or complete follow-ups, all while the client remained safely at home and keeping staff safe from potential exposure as well. I only see this side of veterinary medicine expanding.

Also, employers saw the success of remote positions. The world and our profession had to adapt to a more digital setting, hence the growth of telehealth. Veterinary Nursing Instructors went from teaching in-person- to online. Customer Support/ Sales and other integral jobs in our profession got a swift kick into the online world. Employers saw that teleworking was successful and that the employee did not necessarily need to be sitting in an office when they were getting the same job done at home. Working from home saved money on office space and could also open up positions in veterinary medicine where the technician/nurse does not have to move across the country to secure their dream job.

I believe that many of the aspects discussed above will continue to grow and expand in one way or another. Each practice, company, facility has to find what works best for them. Many things changed within the last year, but some of those things can carry us into the future.