

# Howard County Clinic Cuts Veterinary Specialist Wait Times

*New partnership offers appointments in days, not weeks, as only four mobile specialty vets serve all of Maryland.*



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[Columbia Animal Care](#) has launched a specialty veterinary partnership that addresses a growing access gap in central Maryland: pet owners needing cardiology, orthopedic surgery, or internal medicine can now be seen within a week, compared with three- to six-week waits at regional referral hospitals.

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Being able to schedule specialty appointments within a week changes the equation for these families.

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*Jordan Klaff, Veterinary  
Hospital Manager*

The partnership with Moves of Maryland brings board-certified specialists directly to Columbia—part of a team of just four mobile specialty veterinarians serving the entire state. For Howard County pet owners, this means access to advanced veterinary care without traveling to Baltimore or Washington, D.C.

## Why Specialty Access Matters Now

Most general practice veterinarians cannot perform cardiac evaluations, orthopedic procedures like TLO surgery for cruciate ligament tears, or complex internal medicine diagnostics. When pets need this level of care, owners are typically referred to large specialty hospitals where appointment backlogs stretch into weeks—sometimes longer for internal medicine specialists, who are particularly scarce across the region.

Industry data shows veterinary visit frequency has declined 15% overall as costs rise, making efficient access to specialty care more critical than ever. Pet owners facing a serious diagnosis often cannot afford to wait weeks while their companion's condition progresses.

"Internal medicine is one of the hardest specialties to get into right now," said Jordan Klaff, veterinary technician at Columbia Animal Care. "We had been referring clients out, and they kept

coming back saying they couldn't get appointments for weeks. Being able to schedule specialty appointments within a week changes the equation for these families."

### The Challenge Facing Maryland Pet Owners

Unlike human healthcare, where specialists are widely available in most communities, veterinary specialty care remains concentrated at a few regional referral hospitals. For pet owners in Howard County and surrounding areas, including Ellicott City, Laurel, Savage, and Clarksville, getting a pet to a cardiologist or orthopedic surgeon has traditionally meant navigating congested traffic to reach facilities in distant suburbs or urban centers.

The mobile specialty model addresses this gap by bringing board-certified veterinarians directly to neighborhood clinics, allowing pets to receive advanced care in a familiar, less stressful environment.

"Our goal has always been to provide comprehensive, neighborhood-level care without sending families across the region," said Dr. Muhammad, owner of Columbia Animal Care. "This partnership means our patients can see board-certified specialists right here, in a familiar environment, without the stress of navigating a large hospital system."

### Services Now Available Locally

The partnership provides on-site access to four specialty areas: orthopedic surgery, including TPLO surgery for cruciate tears and fracture repair; cardiology, including cardiac evaluations and ongoing heart condition monitoring; ultrasonography with advanced diagnostic imaging and same-day results; and internal medicine, including complex diagnostics, disease management, and procedures like endoscopy.

Internal medicine specialists handle cases that exceed the diagnostic capabilities of general practice, providing answers when standard testing cannot identify the underlying problem. This includes managing complex chronic conditions and coordinating care for pets with multiple health challenges.

### A Different Approach to Veterinary Care

Columbia Animal Care operates as an independent, neighborhood veterinary clinic—a distinction that matters in a region where corporate veterinary chains have acquired many local



Dr. Salih Muhammad

practices. Under Dr. Muhammad's ownership, the practice maintains the flexibility to prioritize patient access, including same-day sick pet appointments and Saturday availability.

The clinic also provides care for pocket pets, including ferrets, rabbits, and guinea pigs. This service has become increasingly rare as larger corporate practices narrow their focus to dogs and cats only. Pet owners across Howard and Anne Arundel Counties have found the clinic to be one of the few options for small-animal veterinary care in the region.

The practice serves pet owners throughout central Maryland, including Columbia, Ellicott City, Laurel, Savage, Jessup, Elkridge, Clarksville, and surrounding Howard County communities.

### About Columbia Animal Care

Columbia Animal Care is a full-service neighborhood veterinary clinic located at 6420-B Dobbin Road in Columbia, Maryland. The practice provides comprehensive care for dogs, cats, and pocket pets, including ferrets, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, and gerbils. Services include wellness exams and preventive care; vaccinations; dental cleanings and extractions; in-house diagnostic laboratory testing; digital imaging; soft-tissue and orthopedic surgery; and, now, specialty services through the Moves of Maryland partnership.

Under Dr. Muhammad's ownership, Columbia Animal Care has built a reputation for accessibility and personalized care, offering same-day appointments for sick pets and maintaining Saturday hours to accommodate working families. The clinic works with local animal rescues and provides flexible payment options, including Scratch Pay and CareCredit.

For pet owners seeking a veterinarian who treats every patient like family rather than a number, Columbia Animal Care offers the neighborhood clinic experience that many thought had disappeared from modern veterinary medicine.

To schedule an appointment or learn more about specialty services, visit [www.columbiaanimalcare.com](http://www.columbiaanimalcare.com)

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