FelineVMA Launches Cat Friendly Resource Center for Veterinary Teams

Free, practical resources help veterinary teams reduce feline distress, strengthen caregiver relationships, and improve clinical outcomes

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL, FL, UNITED STATES, September 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- While more cats are entering veterinary practices than ever before, many still receive less routine and preventive care than dogs. To help veterinary teams close this gap, the Feline Veterinary Medical Association (FelineVMA) today launched a free Cat Friendly Resource Center designed to reduce barriers to care, improve the veterinary experience, and support better health outcomes for cats.

The resources are based on FelineVMA's evidence-based Cat Friendly approach, which helps veterinary teams understand how cats experience veterinary visits and provides practical guidance on feline behavior, emotions, handling, the clinical environment, and caregiver communication.

Cats represent one of the fastest-growing opportunities in companion animal medicine. Recent CATalyst Council research has shown that cat ownership is increasing and feline veterinary visits are growing, yet many cats still do not receive the care they need. Many barriers are related to getting cats to the veterinary practice, stress during veterinary visits, and caregiver perceptions about feline healthcare.

"Veterinary teams have a tremendous opportunity to improve feline health outcomes and engage more cats in routine care. Cats are often underserved not due to a lack of care, but because many barriers to care exist throughout the veterinary visit," said Heather O'Steen, CAE, CEO of the FelineVMA. "When veterinary teams understand the experience from the cat's perspective, they can make practical changes that reduce distress, improve care, and strengthen relationships with caregivers. We created this Resource Center to help teams turn that understanding into action."

Research has found measurable differences in practices that use the approach. A study published in the Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery found that practices with the Cat

Friendly Practice® designation averaged more visits per feline patient each year and performed diagnostic testing at 12% more clinical visits. They also identified clinically relevant abnormal findings in more cats, allowing earlier diagnosis and treatment.

“Cats can show fear, pain, and frustration in ways that are easy to miss or misread,” said Hazel Carney, DVM, MS, DABVP (Canine/Feline Emeritus), President of the FelineVMA. “When we look at each step of the visit with the cat’s experience in mind, we often identify opportunities to reduce distress and improve communication. These new resources help teams recognize those signs earlier and make adjustments that decrease fear-anxiety, strengthen caregiver trust, and ultimately provide better care.”

The Resource Center includes bite-sized tips, printable handouts, quick reference materials, and comprehensive guides. It provides practical guidance on:

- Recognizing and describing feline emotions and behaviors.
- Adapting handling and examinations to the individual cat.
- Reducing distress in waiting, examination, and hospitalization areas.
- Making improvements without renovations or major workflow changes.
- Using terminology that promotes unbiased understanding of the underlying emotions motivating feline behavior.
- Preparing caregivers for carrier use, transportation, and returning home after appointments.

“Being Cat Friendly does not require a practice overhaul,” states Ashlie Saffire, DVM, DABVP (Feline), Immediate Past President of the FelineVMA. “Many aspects of the veterinary experience were never intentionally designed with cats’ unique needs in mind. The Cat Friendly approach encourages us to consider the entire healthcare journey through a feline lens. Small, practical changes can reduce barriers to care, improve the quality of veterinary visits, and help more cats receive the routine healthcare they deserve. These new resources give them a practical place to start.”

The Cat Friendly Resource Center is part of the FelineVMA's broader Cat Friendly Campaign, which advances feline healthcare through education, communication, practical implementation resources, and greater awareness of cats' unique needs. Veterinary teams can access the Resource Center at catvets.com/CatFriendly. Those seeking additional training can pursue the role-specific Cat Friendly Certificate Program, while veterinary practices can pursue Cat Friendly Practice® designation at catvets.com/cfp.

For more information about the Cat Friendly approach to veterinary care, FelineVMA is hosting a free webinar, “Elevate the Feline Experience: Implementing Optimal Cat Friendly Care,” presented by Dr. Ashlie Saffire, on October 20, 2026. Registration is available at catvets.com/eLearning.

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