

Using the Right Tool in the Right Situation

While Western medicine can save lives, there are conditions that don't respond well to conventional care. Our newest Game Changer - an expert in integrative modalities - is building bridges with local veterinarians to provide pets with the best care.

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- At Veterinary Holistic Center in Springfield, Virginia, pets get access to multiple integrative modalities all under one roof
- Its founder, Dr. Jordan Kocen, was nominated for a Healthy Pets Game Changer Award by Dave W.
- Veterinary Holistic Center in Springfield offers natural veterinary services, including acupuncture, homeopathy, Chinese herbal medicine, chiropractic, massage and even animal communication — that are lacking in many areas of the U.S.
- What makes the facility unique, aside from its integrative focus, is that it's a home for all types of practitioners to practice and work together to build the best plan of care for each animal
- By putting the pets at the center of their care, they're able to provide solutions for health problems that haven't responded to conventional care

At Veterinary Holistic Center in Springfield, Virginia, pets get access to multiple integrative modalities all under one roof. Its founder, Dr. Jordan Kocen, was nominated for a Healthy Pets Game Changer Award by Dave W., one of many clients whose pets have regained their health when conventional medicine failed them.

Dr. Kocen is quick to point out, however, that he works in tandem with local conventional veterinarians, viewing their work as a partnership of sorts, with the ultimate goal to provide the best care to the animals in our lives.

"I think we get a lot of respect from regular veterinarians because we don't do what they do. But we also don't discount what they do," Dr. Kocen said.

"... We just explain to the clients, things like chronic skin disease and chronic digestive stuff does not respond well to Western medicine. Your vet's done a great job with the tools they have. The problem is those tools just don't work well for those conditions. But it does work well in other cases. So, it's the right tool in the right situation."

An Integrative Approach to Wellness

Veterinary Holistic Center in Springfield offers natural veterinary services, including acupuncture, homeopathy, Chinese herbal medicine, chiropractic, massage and even animal communication — that are lacking in many areas of the U.S. While Dr. Kocen always knew he wanted to be a veterinarian, he gradually moved from conventional care to integrative medicine as he experienced first-hand how powerful the holistic therapies could be.

"I started out as a general practitioner ... Started off for a couple of years, just doing general practice. And I had heard some lectures about acupuncture, and I thought it was intriguing. Then, I had an opportunity to take a course. I started using it.

It worked really well. It turns out I was the first veterinarian in Northern Virginia, or the only vet in Northern Virginia, doing acupuncture. So people started coming from a bigger and bigger circle.

And then I had, again, opportunity to take a course on herbal medicine at a human acupuncture school, which is very interesting. Then a chance to take a course on homeopathy, because it was nearby. You just have to keep the blinders open. These opportunities arise and you just never know. And I got busy enough that 90% of my day was people coming for holistic therapy.

So ... I left to join a specialty hospital, South Paws, that was just opening. And I was the holistic department for 10 years. They expanded and I had an associate, and together we were there for the next 9 years. And six years ago, I decided yet again, the area could support a holistic center where we could offer more services. So I opened up the Veterinary Holistic Center in Springfield, Virginia, which is a suburb of DC."

What makes the facility unique, aside from its integrative focus, is that it's a home for all types of practitioners to practice and work together to build the best plan of care for each animal. "We have two massage therapists that come in as their schedule permits, two chiropractors that come in, we have an animal communicator, we have a Reiki practitioner," Dr. Kocen explained.

Pets' Health Improvements Speak for Themselves

Many clients come to see Dr. Kocen due to word of mouth, but the Center is also receiving more referrals from conventional veterinarians who can see the improvements in their patients' health when they receive holistic care. "We don't do any conventional medicine at our practice by our choice," Dr. Kocen said. He explained:

"Because, again, everyone has a good regular vet for their routine care, blood work, annual exams, whatever they're doing. And the other advantages with that, of course, is it frees us up to do what we do. And the regular vets, the primary care can see the improvements when they do the annual exams, when they do the rechecks, they see the blood values improving.

They see the animals definitely moving better, the skin looks much better. So it's not because I sent them a letter that said it's better. They've seen it themselves. So, that's been a wonderful evolution for our practice."

By putting the pets at the center of their care, they're able to provide solutions for health problems that haven't responded to conventional care. Dr. Kocen works with a network of practitioners offering alternative therapies to help pets both young and old. "I think of all the good we do for those older animals," he said, adding that sometimes pet guardians ask for just another week or two of quality time for their pets, but it turns into years of time instead.

"Next thing you know, we're two years up the road," Dr. Kocen said. "Or they've had just chronic problems back and forth to the veterinarian, maybe with diagnostics, different medications, and it's just not quite getting at it. So, when they come in, we take some time and educate them about the more holistic approach and listen to the story."

Often, after having a couple of treatments at the Center, pets learn that it's a positive place to come to. "We love it when the dogs, and even some of the cats ... are happy to run into the clinic," Dr. Kocen said.

"And the clients say they don't do this at the regular vet usually ... after a visit or two, they feel better, nothing harmful or hurtful happened to them. The receptionist seemed to greet them by name. They seem to know everybody. It's almost like a big party out there sometimes. I got to rope them in to get them in the exam room sometimes, which is great."

An Evolution Toward Better Care for Your Pets

Dr. Kocen describes the addition of alternative therapies as an evolution, not a revolution, in care. And he wants people to understand the immense good that can come from integrating holistic modalities into their pet's care:

"I work really hard ... to tell people what we are doing. These alternative therapies are not anything to be afraid of. We should be integrating medicine because it's all medicine. I love speaking with veterinarians. I love speaking to the general public."

Just to ... put them at ease and explain [the importance of] integrating these therapies into your practice, whether you do it, you hire an associate, open up to the people in your town that are doing some ... I tell holistic vets, please contact the regular vets in your area. Let them know what you're doing. It's not competition."

If you'd like to learn more about the Veterinary Holistic Center in Northern Virginia, you can find them on social media as well as via their website, vhcnova.com.¹

Sources and References

¹ [Veterinary Holistic Center](http://Veterinary.Holistic.Center)
