Hello! Today I’d like to take a few minutes to discuss how we as team members can respond to clients’ most common questions when they call or drop in without a pet to ask, “Look, do I really need to bring ’em in?” This information is especially relevant for our receptionists, who most often answer the phone, and I think we can all learn from this discussion so we can provide a consistent message to our clients. Let’s get started.

15-minute activity: Answering the client question, “Do I need to come in?”
Let’s take the next 15 minutes to review some common medical questions pet owners spring on us every day. You might be surprised at where we disagree about how much to explain, and how, when answering pet owner questions.

[Pass out “Arm receptionists for common medical questions.”] Please divide into pairs. Read the question and answer and share your opinion about whether you’d say it differently. [Give the team 10 minutes to work through the worksheet.] Let’s stop now to share best practices for educating clients. [Call on two to three groups to share.] Thanks, team.

15-minute activity: When the client says, “OK, that makes sense, but do I really, really need to come in?”
It’s time for some role-playing. We’ve read some common client questions. We’ve discussed your typical responses and learned some things. Now let’s practice. [Pass out “Role-play activity.”] Choose a different partner and work through the examples provided. Take turns playing the part of receptionist and pet owner. What happens if you let the client know the situation could be serious and he or she needs to bring in the pet, and they still balk? [Give the team 10 minutes to work through the worksheet.] Let’s stop now to share best practices for educating clients. [Call on two to three groups to share.] Thanks, team.

5-minute activity: Thank your team
If we can pleasantly, authoritatively and convincingly talk our way through client questions and concerns like those, we’re perfectly positioned to handle the toughest client calls. Just remember: Don’t get down on yourself, your particular duties or your clients. Everyone worries about money and time and medical problems, and everyone has bad days. You might have caught one of our clients in a tough moment, and they’re pushing back and making you feel attacked. It’s not you! Explain patiently, kindly and firmly your hospital policy for tackling payment, prescription and treatment questions over the phone or in person.

The world needs doctors and technicians to treat patients, but the world equally needs client service representatives and receptionists to soothe client fears, answer tough client questions and encourage pet owners to do the right thing: Visit our hospital and receive our stellar service for a fair fee for high-quality medicine. Let’s give a round of applause for the excellent work of our receptionists. Thank you for being our first line of communication with our clients!