



THE EQUINE SPORTS WELLNESS NETWORK

GetSound™ FAQ

THE BASICS OF EQUINE TELEHEALTH

What is Telehealth?

Telehealth refers to the overarching term that encompasses all uses of technology geared to remotely deliver health information, education, or care.

Telemedicine is a subcategory of telehealth and refers to a tool, or use of a tool, to augment the practice of veterinary medicine. A phone app which enables the visual assessment of an animal as part of the communication between a professional and client is an example.

Teleconsulting is a subcategory of telehealth that occurs when a primary (local) veterinarian utilizes telehealth tools to communicate with a second (remote) veterinarian for the purpose of gaining insights and advice regarding the medical care of a specific patient.

What are the primary features of a successful equine Telehealth program?

The primary objectives of a successful program are two-fold:

1. To give equestrians what they want with respect to instant professional guidance¹, and
2. To provide veterinary professionals with a platform that enables the convenient, ethical and legal practice of veterinary medicine.

When do veterinarians practice telemedicine?

Anytime a veterinarian provides an opinion regarding a specific animal (no matter how casual that opinion may be) he/ she is practicing medicine. Providing such an opinion from a remote location is the practice of telemedicine. Appropriately, the rules and regulations that govern veterinary medicine also govern veterinary telemedicine.

Do records of telemedical communication(s) need to be maintained?

Actually, your veterinarian is *required by law* to maintain comprehensive, clear and concise records associated with each and every facet of all telemedical communications. A telemedical consultation make only take a few minutes, but your veterinarian must satisfy an entire checklist of “have to’s” that accompany that consultation. GetSound™ has been integral in the development of the current veterinary telemedical protocol and constantly minds this checklist on behalf of the professional.

Why can't I just text or email my vet?

Because communications generated via these methods are not maintained permanently, securely, and off-site. These records could vanish in the event that you lose or break your phone, for instance. Moreover, these modalities do not provide the veterinarian with a medically-compliant way of providing an opinion.

Not only does GetSound™ enable your veterinarian to practice appropriately, but our platform dramatically enhances the overall experience for you:

- Deadlines associated with each consultation service ensure that you will get your answer fast.
- GetSound™ empowers your veterinarian with cutting-edge patent-pending video review tools to create beautiful, informative video commentaries right from a smartphone.

What if my vet is not the best one to answer my question?

No problem! The GetSound™ platform provides your professional with direct access to thousands of other professionals within our global network. Your vet or farrier would simply forward the consultation onto the appropriate individual as needed depending on the nature of the case. This way you get the absolute best answer to your query... every time.

Will I ever have to pay for a farm visit again?

Yes. Your veterinary professional will still need to see your horse on occasion. Intermittent on-site/in-person evaluation is required in order to maintain a viable Veterinary-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR).

It is important to remember that telemedical assessment does not replace hands-on examination. Rather, it is performed in place of doing *nothing* (i.e. no examination at all).

THE VETERINARY-CLIENT-PATIENT-RELATIONSHIP

What is the VCPR?

The VCPR is the Veterinary-Client-Patient-Relationship and MUST be maintained by any veterinarian practicing medicine, even telemedicine. Regular on-site (in person) visits are required to keep a VCPR active and viable.

When is a VCPR required?

A VCPR is required in all cases of telemedical (veterinarian-to-client) communication regarding a specific animal. A VCPR is rarely required by a veterinary specialist, however, who may be solicited by another veterinarian for an accessory opinion (via "teleconsultation"). Farriers do not require a VCPR because they do not practice medicine.

What happens if a veterinarian provides telemedical services to an individual with whom he/she does not maintain a viable VCPR?

The practice of veterinary telemedicine in the absence of a viable VCPR may result in legal ramifications imposed by the state veterinary board and possibly a loss of veterinary licensure.

EQUINE SPORTS WELLNESS

What is Equine Sports Wellness?

Equine Sports Wellness pertains to the preemptive and proactive assessment of the musculoskeletal status of horses with the primary objective of identifying problems at or before their onset. Early identification of lameness translates into expeditious diagnosis and treatment which in turn improves the horses' prognosis for future performance. In the end, the rider stays in the saddle longer and spends less money doing it.

Why do we need Equine Sports Wellness Programs?

Current diagnostic strategies and imaging modalities enable modern veterinarians to obtain very precise and accurate diagnoses in most cases of equine lameness. However, a disproportionate number of these diagnoses are procured after the "effective treatment window" has already passed and tissue damage has become irreversible. Therefore, even though the problem is eventually identified, the horse's prognosis for future performance may be diminished. Establishing equine sports wellness programs furthers our ability to identify and treat pathology promptly, during the period when treatment is still curative or at least highly-effective.

What is the leading shortcoming currently associated with equine sports medicine?

We currently rely on the horse owner or trainer (i.e. those that are best-situated to detect lameness in their horses) to incite professional intervention. Accordingly, most of us equate the owner's recognition of lameness with its onset. In reality, however, these events rarely occur at the same time. Very few equestrians are trained in the skill of lameness recognition² and accordingly do not detect problems unless they are chronic (long-standing) and/or severe in nature. In many cases pathology has been present for weeks, months or even years before it is acknowledged. Indubitably the veterinarian is summoned after the fact, when the opportunity to resolve the problem has depreciated. Successful treatment of long-term problems may become very challenging and in some cases impossible in this setting.

How do we resolve the problem of delayed lameness recognition?

Through regular professional assessment of the horse in motion. This requires that:

- Regular on-site visits are scheduled during which the horse's overall performance is appraised. Unfortunately, restrictions imposed by time, distance and expense make this option impractical for many equestrians and equine professionals.
- An effective form of dialogue is established between the owner and professional that allows for routine visual assessment of the horse. This is most easily and efficiently accomplished through telemedical means, whereby video footage of the horse in motion is submitted to and reviewed by an equine professional remotely. Fortunately, there are a number of distinct visual markers that allow for accurate video assessment of the lame horse.^{3,4} Telemedical review is fast, easy, inexpensive and a practical option for most equestrians.
- The equestrian becomes more adept at evaluating soundness in their horse(s). Client education that features lameness recognition and characterization is an integral component of any equine sports medicine practice.

Ideally, *all three* of the above should be implemented for best results.

Is there a demand for Sports Wellness Programs in equine veterinary medicine?

Yes. A recent survey affirmed that an overwhelming percentage of horse owners and trainers would prefer that their primary veterinary practice or institution offer telemedical consultation services.¹ Ninety-eight percent of the survey participants indicated that they would be willing to pay for such services.

How do you implement an Equine Sports Wellness Program into your practice or institution?

- *Educate your clients.* Offer seminars, wet labs and tutorials intended to improve the equestrian's perception of lameness in the horse.
- *Educate your veterinary staff and/or students.* Instill a curriculum in your practice or institution that is designed to enhance the visual assessment of lame horses.
- *Schedule regular veterinary visits* for the purpose of performing recheck soundness evaluation. The more often the veterinarian is able to personally assess the horse, the better the chances are at staying ahead of problems.
- *Form a connection with your clients* that is both time- and cost-effective, so that veterinary intervention can occur at any time and from anywhere. Offer telemedical services that encourage your clients to submit video footage whenever they suspect that there may be a problem.

THE GETSOUND™ SPORTS WELLNESS NETWORK

What is the "Sports Wellness Network"?

The Network comprises equestrians (horse owners, trainers, etc.) and equine medical professionals (veterinarians, farriers, and veterinary specialists) across the globe. The GetSound™ platform provides instant, seamless communication between these groups of individuals for the purpose of promptly recognizing problems and swiftly administering therapy for all horses.

How does GetSound™ provide instant communication between members?

The FREE GetSound™ App (available in both iOS and Android versions) connects equestrians and their veterinary team from anywhere at anytime... no appointment necessary. "Tap the App" to instantly solicit your equine professional whenever you want.

What if my veterinarian or farrier is not an active member of the network?

Simply tap the "INVITE A NEW PROFESSIONAL" button on your phone or computer and select the desired professional from our enormous database. Alternatively, you can manually enter the details. GetSound™ will do the rest... we will promptly offer the respective professional FREE membership which provides direct and secure access to your consultation package. You can invite a new professional at any point during the process of submission.

What if I want a specialist (someone besides my primary veterinarian or farrier) to perform the review?

Simply make a request to this effect when you prepare your consultation package. Your vet and farrier have direct access to thousands of other professionals in the network (including your desired individual). Since communication between professionals denotes “teleconsultation”, the specialist will most likely not require a VCPR in order to provide an opinion on the case.

What if my veterinarian or farrier is unavailable at the time that I submit a request for consultation?

Professional members of the network have the ability to amend their availability on the fly, so it is possible that you will see a “Currently Unavailable” notice during the submission process. In this event, you can either wait until your professional becomes available or choose another professional within the network to perform your review.

How much does it cost to join the GetSound™ Network?

Membership is FREE for both Regular Members and Professional Members.

If membership is FREE, how does GetSound™ make money?

GetSound™ reserves a small percentage (15%) of the transaction fee associated with each telemedical consultation between equestrians and their professional team.

Is GetSound™ available for small animal veterinarians and/or human physicians?

No. As you now, equestrians and equine professionals (vets and farriers) do not tend to adopt a lifestyle commensurate with people outside of the horse industry. Naturally, telehealth platforms developed for human and/or small animal use are not applicable for those of us in the horse industry.

GetSound™ was developed *by* equine veterinarians exclusively *for* equine veterinarians, farriers and their clients. Development was directly driven by years of equestrian demand for the quick, easy and remote assessment of horses. The GetSound™ platform works for the horse industry because it was specifically designed for the horse industry. We are literally “built from the hoof up”!

What happens when my veterinarian or farrier receives a consultation request?

Upon receiving the invitation, the professional will have the opportunity to review the details that you provided along with your request. Depending on the circumstances, your professional can do one of several things:

- Accept the Invitation and begin consulting.
- Accept the Invitation and forward it to another qualified professional within the Network.
- Accept the Invitation based on specified revisions (such as an adjustment in service price).
- Decline the Invitation.

How do I pay for a consultation?

Payment for services is requested during the submission process and is generally executed via credit card or a PayPal account. The funds are initially deposited into an Escrow Account and secured until the consultation is complete and you have received your official report from the professional. When you are completely satisfied with your service, payment is released to the professional(s) that performed your review.

REFERENCES:

¹Grisel GR. Current horse owner petition for telemedical assessment of equine lameness, in *Proceedings*. 63rd American Association of Equine Practitioners Annual Convention 2017 (San Antonio): 501-505.

²Greve L, Dyson S. The interrelationship of lameness, saddle slip and back shape in the general sports horse population. *Equine Vet J* 2014; 46: 687-694.

³Grisel GR. The use of remote digital motion analysis to assess equine lameness, in *Proceedings*. European Veterinary Conference Voorjaarsdagen 2013; 3-4.

⁴Grisel GR. Recognition and designation of specific gait signatures to aid in the digital assessment of equine lameness, in *Proceedings*. European Veterinary Conference Voorjaarsdagen 2013; 5.