Who Owns Your Vet Clinic?

A quick guide to spotting corporate ownership — and what to do about it.

Private equity firms and corporate consolidators have quietly bought up a significant chunk of veterinary practices across the country — and they're not done. Here's how to know who's actually running your vet clinic, and what questions to ask before your next appointment.

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- **The name changed — but they said it's the same practice.** Corporate buyers often rebrand acquired clinics under umbrella names like VCA, Banfield, BluePearl, or Thrive. Sometimes they keep the original name entirely. Don't assume the sign tells the whole story.

- **There's a new 'practice manager' who isn't a vet.** Independent practices are typically run by the veterinarian who owns them. Corporate practices often install business managers focused on revenue metrics, not patient care.

- **Your vet seems rushed — and keeps changing.** High turnover and time pressure are hallmarks of corporate ownership, where vets are measured by how many clients they see per shift.

- **The bill went up significantly without explanation.** Veterinary costs have risen over 60% in the last decade. Corporate-owned clinics are a major driver. If routine services like vaccines or exams suddenly cost significantly more, ownership may have changed.

- **You're being offered a lot of add-ons.** Corporate practices may pressure vets to recommend additional procedures and services to hit revenue targets. Trust your instincts if something feels like an upsell.

Bark Bits is a newsletter from My Barking Life • mybarkinglife.com

Art, merch, and advocacy for the dogs we love. Want to read the full story on corporate veterinary consolidation? Visit mybarkinglife.com

HOW TO FIND OUT WHO REALLY OWNS YOUR CLINIC

You have every right to know who owns the business providing care for your animal. Here are the most reliable ways to find out:

1. **Search privateequityvet.org**

   This site maintains a searchable database of veterinary practices and their corporate affiliations. It's one of the easiest first stops.

2. **Google the clinic name + 'owner' or 'acquired'**

   Press coverage of acquisitions is often easy to find. A quick search can reveal if your clinic was recently purchased by a larger group.

3. **Look for parent company branding**

   Check the clinic's website footer, paperwork, and signage for parent company names. Phrases like 'a VCA hospital' or 'part of the Thrive network' are clear tells.

4. **Just ask**

   Seriously. You can ask the front desk directly: 'Is this clinic independently owned, or part of a larger group?' You deserve a straight answer.

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR NEXT APPOINTMENT

- Is this practice independently owned, or part of a larger corporate group?
- Will I be seeing the same veterinarian consistently?
- How are treatment decisions made — by the vet, or are there corporate protocols?
- Are there discounts or partnerships available for rescue or shelter animals?
- What is your policy if I have concerns about a recommended procedure or cost?

TIP: You don't have to ask these questions all at once. Even asking one: "Is this practice independently owned?" — tells you a lot about the culture of the clinic before you ever get into an exam room.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR RESCUES AND SHELTERS

Independent veterinary practices have historically been community partners — willing to work with local shelters and rescues on discounted care, waived exam fees for newly adopted animals, and pro bono services for animals in crisis.

Corporate ownership doesn't leave room for that. When a clinic is answerable to quarterly earnings targets, community partnerships are among the first things to go. Rescue organizations across the country are already feeling the impact — **and as vet costs rise, so do animal surrender rates.**

If you adopt from a shelter or rescue: ask them which local independent vets they recommend and trust. Those relationships matter — for the animals, and for your community.