

# Vet Voices: A Conversation with Dr. Audra O'Keefe

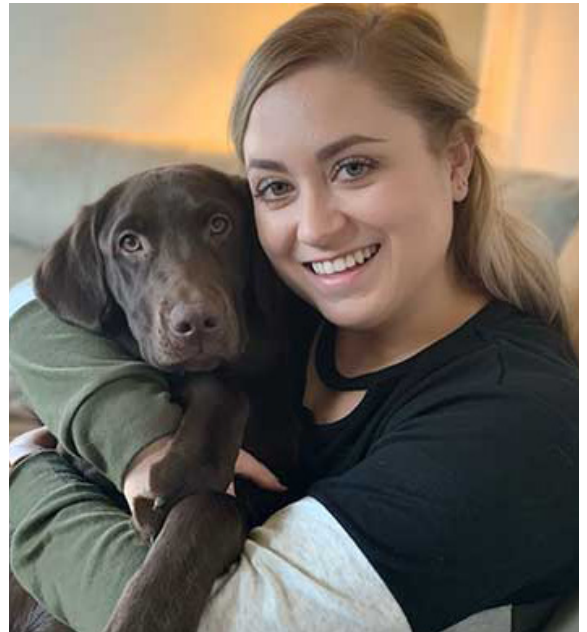
## A VPP Community Spotlight

Dr. O'Keefe is founder and co-owner of Dogwood Trails Animal Hospital, a new hospital opening October 2024. She joined VPP in 2023 working as a relief doctor for Fox Creek Veterinary Hospital.

### **Q: What motivated you to pursue practice ownership? How did VPP help?**

**A:** My journey toward practice ownership was fueled by a longstanding interest, yet the path from aspiration to realization seemed daunting to navigate alone. Having served as a medical director for both smaller and larger practices, I came to a pivotal realization: the significant investment of time and effort I poured into these roles didn't yield the returns I sought. Balancing medical responsibilities and the demands of managing the business side, while another owner or corporation reaped the benefits of my hard work, left me feeling unrewarded for my efforts.

In my search for a partnership, VPP demonstrated that ownership didn't have to mean bearing the burden alone. Their supportive model offered a compelling solution, allowing me to maintain ownership and medical autonomy over my practice, while alleviating the stresses associated with all other aspects of owning and running a successful veterinary hospital.



### **Q: What has been the most rewarding aspect of your partnership with VPP?**

**A:** The most rewarding aspect of my partnership with VPP has undoubtedly been the invaluable opportunity to connect with and get to know the incredible individuals within the company. From Day One, the supportive environment fostered by VPP has been instrumental in every step of establishing my de novo practice. The network of talented professionals within VPP has provided me with guidance, support, and encouragement, enabling me to navigate the complexities of setting up a new clinic with confidence. Their expertise and willingness to assist have truly made all the difference, underscoring the strength of collaboration and teamwork within VPP.

### **Q: What advice would you give to veterinarians seeking pathways to practice ownership?**

**A:** My advice to other veterinarians exploring pathways to practice ownership is to carefully consider all available options. Independently building a practice from the ground up can be overwhelming, and I realized that I was not willing to sacrifice a healthy work-life balance in order to achieve this. I found a partnership in VPP that aligned with my professional goals and provided essential support on the business side, allowing me to prioritize both my work and my family. Their tailored approach to practice ownership was an ideal fit for me, allowing VPP to handle the "hard stuff" involved in building a new practice, while I continue with my everyday life working and being a mom. I found that the de novo process with VPP has surpassed my expectations, offering a perfect blend of independence and support. I would strongly recommend that other veterinarians in a similar place in life consider a partnership with VPP.