

## Suicide in Veterinary Medicine

It's real and it's a huge problem among the veterinary community. Many factors contribute to the problem such as:

- Demands of practice such as long work hours and work overload.
- Practice management responsibilities.
- Cyber bullying
- Client expectations and complaints.
- Knowledge of euthanasia procedures and training to view euthanasia as a normal and acceptable method to relieve suffering
- Ever-increasing educational debt-to-income ratio.
- Poor work-life balance

I urge pet owners and readers to please think and consider before you post or share a comment. It's not just local is global. Veterinarians are often targets of online mobs. Be analytical, think! Every story has two sides.

I want to take this opportunity to honor some of my deceased colleagues, all of them were loved and respected in their communities, all of them gave the best to their patients and clients, all of them suffered in silence.

Dr. Tiffany Margolin DVM  
Dr. Amanda Lumsden DVM  
Dr. Sophia Yin DVM  
Dr. Chien Chih-cheng DVM  
Dr. Shirley Koshi DVM

To all of them... "Every Time"

### *"Every Time"*

*Every time you say vets are money grubbing or 'too expensive' or just in it for the money,*

*Every time you decline all diagnostics, yet demand to know "what's wrong with my pet",*

*Every time at a social function or other completely inappropriate place you find out that someone is a vet you ask them for free advice about your animal,*

*Every time you feel justified posting a s&^\*\*y practice or vet review when everything was done according to the standard of care but your pet died anyway,*

*Every time YOUR lack of preventative care resulted in your pet's early death, yet you blame the veterinarian,*

*Every time she gets in early and stays late and works an 80-hour week because your pet that had been ill for days suddenly becomes an emergency at 5pm on a Friday, and you demand to be seen, claiming these heartless vets won't treat your baby,*

*Every time someone says, "Why didn't you become a real doctor?"*

*Every time someone complains about the cost of veterinary care, comparing human medicine and insurance subsidies to pet ownership,*

*Every time someone doesn't pay their bill and thinks they are entitled not to because pet ownership is their "right",*

*Every time someone walks in to a clinic and threatens to "sue your ass if you make one mistake with my baby",*

*Every time a graduate vet looks at the hundreds of thousands of dollars in crippling debt and listens to clients driving Mercedes and BMWs complain about the cost of a spay using good anesthetic care and adequate pain management,*

*Every time – You are part of the problem.*

*The problem is suicide in veterinarians. Most of us went to veterinary school because we care. We have a calling to care, but there is a dark and expensive cost to compassion.*

*Think before you act or speak.*

Dr. Tamara Vetro Widenhouse DVM