

CLIENT IMPACT CASE STUDY

KENTUCKY • SMALL ANIMAL URGENT CARE



BACKGROUND & CHALLENGES

This rural-based urgent care start-up opened with a focused vision, but quickly found that patient volume wasn't high enough to sustain operations on urgent care alone. With part-time staffing, limited service offerings, and evolving marketing efforts, the hospital needed a strategy to better align services with community needs and long-term financial goals. Through a mix of data-driven planning, creative problem-solving, and partnership with Blue Heron Consulting, the hospital built out new care options, strengthened team structure, and grew from a 2-DVM launch to a 4-DVM practice in under two years.

Practice Type: Small Animal Urgent Care

Location: Southeast Kentucky

DVMs: 4 FTE veterinarians

Staff: 15 staff members

Hours: Monday – Friday (8 am – 9 pm);
Saturday – Sunday (8 am – 6 pm)

SOLUTIONS

EXPAND SERVICES TO INCREASE VOLUME & MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

With patient demand falling short of projections, the hospital broadened its care model to include general practice and wellness services—areas not originally part of the business plan. We helped develop protocols, workflows, and staff training to ensure the team could confidently offer high-quality care beyond urgent cases, setting the hospital up for a more diversified and sustainable caseload.

DEVELOP STAFFING STRATEGY AND LEVERAGE METRICS

The hospital relied heavily on part-time team members from the nearby veterinary college, making consistent staffing and profitability difficult to track. We worked with the team to establish key performance indicators, including a para-hours-per-DVM metric and break-even staffing targets, allowing the leadership team to forecast staffing needs, improve efficiency, and make informed hiring decisions.

REALIGN MARKETING EFFORTS

Initial marketing efforts failed to connect with the right audience. After two provider changes, we helped the hospital bring on a new web designer and rebuild its marketing strategy around clear performance goals. By targeting a wider geographic range, including areas served by a competing emergency clinic, and taking a more proactive approach to outreach, the hospital has seen stronger new client growth and brand awareness.

IMPROVE RECRUITMENT THROUGH ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP

The hospital opened with just two DVMs but needed to scale quickly. Thanks to its proximity to LMU's veterinary school, we helped the team design a mentorship-based internship model to attract new graduates. This approach has already produced two full-time DVMs and positioned the hospital as a sought-after destination for emerging talent.

RESULTS



Cost of Goods Sold

Operational improvements and more consistent staffing helped **decrease COGS from 22% to 18%**.



Net Income

Net income **increased from 10% to 17%** as the hospital became more efficient and financially resilient.



YOY Growth

With stronger service diversification and a clearer marketing strategy, the hospital achieved **23% year-over-year growth**.