

# **Today's Equine Prepurchase Examination**

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## **Introduction:**

- Why perform prepurchase examinations.
- Today = pleasure & performance horses
- NOT today = racing, breeding soundness, auction sales
- Remember: Though some of the approaches we discuss today may not fit your practice needs at present, please consider the logic behind the approaches and how you might adapt them now (or in the future) to meet your particular needs.

## **History of the Prepurchase Examination**

- *“And first, I must caution all purchasers against a very common fault – that of wanting and expecting to find perfection in any horse; there is no such thing either in man or horse.”* George Armatage  
MRCVS, 1893

## **Practitioner Challenges:**

- Client expectations
- Examiner confidence
- Conflicts of interest
- Liability exposure
- Timely, proactive communications
- Effective/efficient delivery of services & perceived value
- Comprehensive, inter-operable medical records

## **AVMA PLIT: Buyer Complaints:**

- Prepurchase examinations represent greater than 20% of all equine claims
- Of these, 80% are from post-sale lameness events or radiography errors

## **Prepurchase Examination Goals:**

- Timely/accurate gathering, sharing and recording of case-related information
- Competent, professional physical examination
- Timely, accurate report to Prospective Buyer
- Positive perception of value by all parties
- Minimal risk exposure
- Comprehensive/accurate/inter-operational records
- Repeat client contact

## **Strategies: Standards of Patient Care:**

- Customize
- Intended use
- History
- General Observations
- Physical Examination
- Ancillary Services

## **Client Touch Points:**

- All possible interactions between the practice and the client-related parties involved in a veterinary service.

- Opportunities to communicate before, during and after a veterinary service is performed.
- Opportunities to observe, listen, learn, share, document and deliver value.

### **Prepurchase Examination Tasks:**

- Veterinarian
- Support staff

### **Part 1: Pre-Examination:**

- Informational handouts
- Incoming contact
- Review of services
- Veterinary Care Plan
- Prospective buyer agreement
- Intended use
- Conflicts of Interest
- Seller agreement

### **Part 2: Physical Examination:**

- Worksheet
- Liability release
- Physical examination
- Ancillary services
- Verbal reporting

### **Part 3: Post-Examination:**

- Written report(s)
- Invoice
- Invitation to discuss

### **Legal Landmines:**

- Failure to communicate accurately, understandably & in a timely way
- Failure to context intended use
- Failure to request/review/report history
- Failure to identify and report surgical scars
- Improper image acquisition/interpretation

### **“Maintenance” Procedures:**

- definition of “maintenance” in equine veterinary context?
- can you defend at sale time in support of medical history of “no lameness”?
- are you comfortable with full disclosure to buyer’s veterinarian?
- are you comfortable with full disclosure to insurance company?

### **Melanoma**

- Always a potential metastatic malignancy that will behave unpredictably.
- Avoid predicting its future or taking it for granted.
- Although there may be a tendency to dismiss one or a few small melanomas at the time of the prepurchase examination as of minimal or no long-term significance, especially in an otherwise excellent prospect, such an approach is both risky and medically untrue.

**Resources:**

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