

# Sano Hospital for Animals Takes Health Seriously

By Penny Randell

Sano Hospital for Animals, located off Highway 285 in Conifer, is continuously recognized and applauded for its confirmed medical ethics and their belief that every pet deserves the very best of care. All clients, even emergencies, are welcomed with acute attentiveness, as the pet is addressed. With a staff of two veterinarians, seven veterinary technicians, two assistants, receptionists, and an office manager they are able to remain open seven days a week. As their business card states, “sano” is an Italian adjective meaning healthy: a healthy animal, and indeed, this hospital means business when it comes to animal health.

Some folks may remember that Dr. Prickett once owned Sano when it was called Conifer Veterinary Clinic. Today Dr. David Palmi, DVM owns the hospital and has since 2003. He said, “It is my job to formulate a health plan that keeps your pet in peak condition.” Sano is dedicated to alternative options that may not have been tried before. He said, “We do what we can to see what works. We can defer to acupuncture, chiropractics, special diets, and even herbs. We care enough to make every effort one can imagine.”

Dr. James Watson, DVM joined the Sano team a year ago this past May. Originally from Iowa, he reports growing up around veterinary medicine and often keeping company with the country vet as he made his daily rounds. He said, “This was the thing to do. I was born to be a vet.” Dr. Watson’s relaxed and engaging demeanor is complementary to Dr. Palmi, for the latter is known to be an excellent surgeon, intense, quiet, and a deep thinker. Both doctors state that they can handle most cases and can save a pet owner a trip down to Denver.

In addition to Sano, Dr. Palmi works one day a week at Intermountain Human Society where he vaccinates and cares for new arrivals. Seemingly never stopping, this doctor has been an Iditarod veterinarian since 2008. Every winter he’s off to Alaska to attend the sled dogs. “I’m one of 40 vets and I absolutely love it. It’s a different world up there. The dogs are so well cared for it’s refreshing to see,” said Dr. Palmi. This winter he has been invited to two separate sled dog races: the Finnmarkslopet in Norway and the Iditarod.

Dr. Watson, who doesn’t shy from heavy commitment, minds the shop while Dr. Palmi is away. In fact, this doctor maintains such a sizable clientele the hospital had to extend their hours once he joined the practice. “When Dr. Watson came he brought a huge following. We went from five days a week to seven. He even has a patient from Durango that travels here to see him,” said Dr. Palmi.

Office manager Sheila Brunson confides that the days continue to get busier. Brunson said, “Once we got Dr. Watson we grew by 50 percent. People love him and his ability to listen and converse. He’s more of a relaxing type, where Dr. Palmi is more focused.” This lady has a huge job by keeping everything in check. She makes all the scheduling for employees, hires and fires, keeps the budget, orders supplies, and talks to clients. She, too, is particularly dedicated and says that her main job is to free the doctors so they can attend to patients.

Should a dog or cat come to Sano with a problem too severe or complicated for these two doctors, they may be referred to the Veterinary Referral Center of Colorado. There one can find a specialist that can effectively approach the problem. Such cases as those needing chemotherapy are referred, for example. However, these doctors do all they can before making a referral. Brunson said, "We never turn anyone away and if we are open we are here for you."

Sano capitalizes on supreme health that enables a longer life for your pet. The hospital offers what they call Animal Wellness Plans. The first is a Puppy/Kitten Wellness Plan, which includes unlimited exams, vaccinations, intestinal parasite screening and deworming, as well as everything included in a spay or neuter procedure. Next is the Adult Wellness Plan that includes all exams, vaccination boosters, parasite screening, and unlimited office visits for the length of the plan.

Third is the Senior Wellness Plan, which observes all the Adult Plan concessions, plus senior wellness lab work. As a pet ages, conditions such as thyroid disease, diabetes, seizure disorder, renal insufficiency, liver disease, and more can become issues. A lab test may detect a problem not otherwise indicated. At this hospital, there is no age threshold and treatment is administered as needed. These Wellness Plans are considered preventative medicine with the goal of keeping your pet healthy longer.

When viewing the Sano Website, one can read about accreditations the hospital and doctors have received. Certain earned certifications enable the doctors to diagnose conditions early on. From practitioners in Vet-Stem Cell Therapy, to identification of hip dysplasia, these veterinarians are on top of their game. They are certified to issue health certificates, whether it's for interstate travel or international. These thoughtful practitioners even have separate waiting rooms for feline patients.

Understanding, compassionate and caring are the words that describe Sano Hospital for Animals. The staff, lead by the two doctors, provides pet care that's hard to beat. From Bailey to Evergreen, they are there to help.