



ABBIE McDONALD

Ross Knutsen answers questions from veterinarian assistant Hailey Eagle-Abing before his dog's checkup.

Pandemic backlog felt at vet, dental and eye offices

Story and photos by Abbey McDonald
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Pet owners used to be able to see the veterinarian at Bayshore Animal Hospital within a few days of calling. Now, they have to wait up to eight weeks.

Even checkups have been squeezed into the spare moments between appointments, with

pets waiting on-deck in the back of the Warrenton clinic.

"We have tons of animals in there," said Dr. Brad Pope, the veterinarian. "You're done with one, you got another few minutes, 'let's look at this one,' and then move on to your next appointment."

Because of the pandemic, it's tough to make an appointment anywhere — for anything — in the region. Veterinarians, dentists

and opticians are among those filling appointments months in advance.

"Everybody's dealing with it in exactly the same way we are," Pope said. "And looking back, I think that the profession had a manpower problem that was kind of on the verge. We were short on veterinarians, we were short on technicians, and COVID just pushed it over the cliff."

The backlog at Bayshore started around the

same time the pandemic did, when the clinic had to cancel three months of dental, spaying, neutering and other minor surgeries to preserve personal protective equipment, including masks, for hospitals.

The animal hospital fell further behind, and didn't take any new clients during summer 2020, in an attempt to catch up.

See Page 9