

Conscientious Care

All Pets Emergency and Referral Services

A contemporary building on Highway 9 in Alpharetta is home to one of the best and most comprehensive pet services of its kind in North Georgia. It is called All Pets Emergency and Referral Center. Opened in October of 2001, it provides very special emergency and medical referral services for pets.

"All Pets was originally established to address the needs of Internal Medicine cases during the day and night," says Dr. R. J. Itkin of All Pets. "Existing emergency facilities did not offer continuity of care. I was looking to address my specific concerns about patients in overnight care and I couldn't really find what I was looking for, so I decided to create my own." All Pets offers a continuity of care that can only be provided by close interaction between Internal Medicine, Surgery and Emergency services."

Even though All Pets was begun in 2001, the services of the facility continue to grow. They offer, among their other services, surgical services through Dr. Curcio, a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons; Dr. Curcio specializes in orthopedic, neurologic (back), and soft tissue surgery. All Pets has added CT to its existing MRI service on-site.

All Pets has also begun to recruit specialists in other disciplines including oncology, ophthalmology, neurology, and cardiology.

Dr. Itkin has an impressive background himself. He is a Board Certified Small Animal Internist and Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine. Dr. Itkin is a graduate of the University of Georgia, with a

Bachelor of Science. He did an internship in Small Animal Medical and Surgery at Louisiana State University. His residency in Small Animal Internal Medicine and post-graduate degree studies were completed at the University of Illinois. While at Illinois, he was a research fellow for the Morris Foundation. In addition, he spent a year in private practice in Lawrenceville.

"Our Mission at All Pets is really two-fold; to offer the highest in veterinary services, and to treat people the way they would like to be treated," says Dr. Itkin. "For example, I will often speak to an owner regarding their pet that I haven't seen in years. At All Pets we strive to be accessible to all of our patients."

Although it might seem that >



their services wouldn't allow for time spent outside the practice, that isn't true. All Pets is committed to active participation in their community. They have recently donated equipment to the Milton Police Department to address their stray animal problems, and are also active in the Forsyth County Humane Society and their functions. They

are involved with children's charities like St. Jude's Hospital as well as projects of the Susan G. Komen Foundation. "And we are active contributors to University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine," adds Dr. Itkin.

Of course, regular readers of *North Georgia Living* know Dr. Itkin as the author of our monthly "North

Georgia Pets" column, one of our most popular (and most informative). At *North Georgia Living*, we are all too aware of the huge effort and time that Dr. Itkin puts into his columns. How, we ask, do you assure that they are so well done? "I try to think what the readers would want and need to know regarding different medical problems that may face their pet."

Our Experience with All Pets Emergency and Referral Center

by Katherine Cook, Editor, North Georgia Living

Everybody who reads *North Georgia Living* knows how much we love our cats. I have written a "North Georgia Diary" about how we acquired so many ("The House at the End of the Road" in June of 2006) and I have introduced everyone to Nina, our office cat. As owners of lots of pets, we have had the awful experience of losing our pets to illness and old age, or having them be dreadfully and seriously ill.

Our beautiful black cat Sissy took an antibiotic in 2005 that she didn't react to well. It caused her to be sick, and not just once. Again and again she was sick, first from the medicine, then from food—eventually of any kind—and finally from just drinking water.

Her weight fell, her coat began to dry and fall out, and she became seriously lethargic. More than once, we took her to our regular vet, and as things progressively grew worse, he became concerned—concerned enough

to recommend us to a specialist.

He sent us to All Pets Emergency and Referral Center in Alpharetta, where we spoke to Dr. R. J. Itkin. Dr. Itkin told us on our first visit that he thought Sissy might have IBD (Inflammatory Bowel Disease) and that he could run some tests to diagnose her problem at the Center. He was wonderful to talk to; he has a marvelous sense of humor and through it, is able to put you at ease. Although he was not giving us the happiest news, to two people worried about a beloved pet, he put our minds to rest as much as he could.

The facilities at All Pets were fantastic. They discovered exactly what was wrong with Sissy and were able to treat her completely there as well.

The procedure he used to diagnose what was wrong with Sissy was exactly what you or I would have had (or any human); it was a procedure involving an endoscope, that is, a tiny drivable cam-

era attached to tube that was gently fed down Sissy's throat into her stomach, to see exactly what her problem was.

The staff at All Pets were wonderful, and very kind. They allowed us to come and get Sissy when they were done, even though it was "after hours." They prepared us fully for everything we could expect; no "pet family" could have been any happier about how the human family members were treated than we were.

As for our pet family member, Sissy, gratefully, did have IBD; she responded almost immediately to treatment. In fact, she is lying beside me right now while I type this on my laptop, in the fully entitled method of all cats... and particularly spoiled ones.

Dr. Itkin and his staff will always have our undying gratitude, since we are fully aware that if things continued as they had, without the help of Dr. Itkin and All Pets, we would not have Sissy with us today. ♦♦♦

