Acquiring a Healthcare Practice: Dental, Veterinary & Beyond

By BVC Research Team | February 2026 | 12 min read

Healthcare practices — dental offices, veterinary clinics, optometry practices, physical therapy clinics — represent some of the most stable and recession-resistant acquisition targets available. People don't stop going to the dentist during a recession. Pets still need veterinary care. This essential demand creates a foundation of stability that few other industries can match.

Why Healthcare Practices Command Premium Multiples

Healthcare practices consistently sell at higher multiples than most Main Street businesses for several compelling reasons.

- **High barriers to entry:** Licensing, regulation, and capital requirements prevent new competitors from easily entering the market
- **Recurring patient base:** Patients typically stay with a practice for years, creating predictable revenue
- **Insurance contracts:** Contracts with insurance providers create reliable reimbursement streams
- **Aging population:** Demographic trends are driving increased healthcare demand across all specialties

Valuation by Practice Type

Practice Type	SDE Multiple Range
General Dentistry	3.5x – 5.0x
Specialty Dental	4.0x – 6.0x
Veterinary	4.0x – 7.0x
Optometry	3.0x – 4.5x
Physical Therapy	3.0x – 4.5x

Med Spa / Aesthetics	3.0x – 5.0x

KEY INSIGHT: Veterinary practices have seen the most significant multiple expansion in recent years, driven by aggressive PE roll-up activity (Mars, NVA, VCA). This creates both an opportunity (strong exit multiples) and a risk (corporate competition driving up acquisition prices).

The Practitioner Dependency Challenge

The biggest risk in healthcare acquisitions is practitioner dependency. If the selling dentist, vet, or therapist IS the reason patients come, their departure can trigger significant patient attrition. Mitigating this requires an extended transition period (minimum 6-12 months), associate practitioners who can absorb the departing owner's patients, strong staff who maintain patient relationships regardless of who provides care, and systematic patient communication about the transition.

Healthcare-Specific Due Diligence

- Insurance panel contracts and reimbursement rate trends
- Patient retention rates and active patient count (patients seen in last 18 months)
- Equipment age and replacement schedule (dental chairs, imaging equipment, etc.)
- Compliance history and any regulatory actions
- Staff credentials and license verification
- Malpractice claim history and insurance costs

Growth Strategies Post-Acquisition

Healthcare practices have significant untapped potential in extended hours and weekend availability, adding complementary services (a dental practice adding orthodontics or implants), modernizing patient communication (online booking, automated reminders), expanding insurance participation, and leveraging AI for patient outreach, appointment optimization, and administrative automation.

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