

I was first exposed to complementary medicine when I found a small animal rehabilitation center close to my undergraduate college. I was immediately impressed with this side of veterinary medicine I had never heard of before and how animals in different circumstances all benefited from a rehabilitation program. From that day to now, four years later, I have been inspired to become a small animal veterinary rehabilitation therapist to help dogs recover from their injuries, regain functionality lost due to neurological conditions, and improve their overall physical health.

I have seen first-hand how therapeutic modalities make an outstanding impact on a patient's recovery. One case that stands out is a young French Bulldog that came in after her IVDD surgery with extremely limited movement in her hindlimbs, yet after weeks dedicated to her rehabilitation program, she eventually was able to regain full function of her hindlimbs and able to run around again. I do not think she would have recovered the same amount of function and achieved the same quality of life without her rehabilitation appointments. Some of the integrative modalities I have witnessed or practiced include laser therapy, underwater treadmill therapy, acupuncture, therapeutic exercises, chiropractic adjustments, manual massage, and ESTIM/TENS. I truly believe that these holistic modalities are underutilized in patient recovery and that we need more veterinarians who are well informed about integrative medicine.

During veterinary school, I have taken the initiative of joining our school's Integrative Medicine Club as the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association (AHVMA). I was grateful to be a recipient of a scholarship through the AHVMA that granted me the opportunity to attend the 2024 AHVMA Conference. At the conference, I took the opportunity to learn more about integrative medicine – both in areas I had never been previously exposed to and in areas I had observed. I was further convinced of the endless options veterinarians can learn about and utilize for their patients.

This NYCAVMA Tiekert Educational Scholarship will lessen the burden I face in completing my rehabilitation therapist certification. I have had to pay for my education alone throughout undergraduate college and in veterinary school. Due to this, I have had to work multiple jobs at a time, rely heavily on any scholarships and grants I could get, and taking out loans for the rest of the tuition I could not afford. Despite wanting to complete the rehabilitation certification during veterinary school to be better prepared after graduation, I have not been able to complete it due to the lack of financial assistance offered to pursue a veterinary certification. If I were to be selected for this scholarship, I would be able to confidently pursue the career path I dream of going into with a lessened burden of worrying about how to pay for it and balancing paying off my loans. I appreciate your consideration of me for this scholarship and am grateful to have the opportunity to apply and improve the lives of my future patients with rehabilitation and integrative medicine.