



PRESS RELEASE

PARTNERSHIP FOR PREVENTIVE PET HEALTHCARE ESTABLISHED TO ADDRESS DECLINING HEALTH OF OUR NATION'S PETS

—Veterinary professionals, academia and industry leaders come together to ensure pets receive the preventive healthcare they deserve through regular visits to a veterinarian—

St. Louis, MO (July 18, 2011) — Responding to the alarming fact that the health of our pets is at risk, a unique alliance of professional veterinary associations and leaders in the animal health industry today officially announced the establishment of the **Partnership for Preventive Pet Healthcare**. This new Partnership has specifically been created to address the decline in our pets' health due to an increase in the prevalence of some preventable health conditions including a dramatic double-digit rise in the prevalence of diabetes and internal parasites in dogs and cats.¹ This comes in the midst of a decrease in the number of pet visits to the veterinarian, in contrast with a growing pet population. The Partnership was announced today to the veterinary profession at the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Convention in St. Louis.

Coming Together As A Profession To Take Action

The goal of the Partnership for Preventive Pet Healthcare, an organization chaired by AVMA CEO Dr. Ron DeHaven and managed through an Executive Committee, Board of Directors and supported by various advisory councils, is to provide guidance and ensure that veterinary visits lead to early detection and prevention so that pet owners and their pets can enjoy a longer and healthier life together. "People have a special relationship with their pets. Visiting a veterinarian regularly and practicing active preventive healthcare is a great way to enhance that relationship," said Dr. DeHaven.

Members of the Partnership include the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) and animal health industry leaders including Abbott Animal Health, Banfield Pet Hospital, Bayer HealthCare LLC Animal Health Division, Boehringer-Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc., Butler Schein Animal Health, Elanco Animal Health, Hill's Pet Nutrition, Merck Animal Health, Merial, MWI Veterinary Supply, Novartis Animal Health US Inc., Pfizer Animal Health and Veterinary Pet Insurance who have sponsored the initiative at various levels.

The Health of Our Nation's Pets Is At Risk

Experts agree that the decrease in regular veterinary visits can be linked to an increase in preventable and treatable illnesses in dogs and cats. This includes diabetes (+16% in cats and +32% in dogs), ear infections (+34% in cats and +9.4% in dogs), internal parasites (+13% in cats and +30% in dogs), and dental disease, which is the leading health condition that now affects almost 80% of dogs and 70% of cats over 3 years of age.¹

In addition, veterinary visits have been on the decline for almost a decade. While the economy has accelerated the trend, this problem started long before the recession, and is not the primary reason for the decline. The issue can also be linked to the lack of understanding of the importance and benefit of preventive healthcare for pets.

Recent market research from a study conducted by Bayer Animal Health, Brakke Consulting and NCVEI supports previous work indicating that the veterinary profession could be doing more to communicate the benefits of preventive pet healthcare to pet owners. In many cases, pet owners do not have an understanding of the vital role that veterinarians and veterinary healthcare teams provide for the long-term health of their pets – they instead turn to other sources, such as the Internet, for critical information. “It is important that we recognize that, as a profession, we have to be better at educating pet owners regarding the importance of preventive care and of the unique role that veterinarians play in enhancing the relationship between pet owners and their best friends,” said Dr. Michael Moyer, President of AAHA.

The Importance of Education About Preventive Pet Healthcare

A Task Force assembled by AAHA and AVMA has developed and approved concise, easy to understand yet comprehensive Preventive Healthcare Guidelines for dogs and cats. This is the first time that these two organizations have collaborated to produce jointly authored clinical practice guidelines. These guidelines are in the publication process in the *Journal of The American Veterinary*

Medical Association (JAVMA) and the *Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association (JAAHA)* and will be widely disseminated by the Partnership in early Fall.

The Partnership has also just launched the first phase of its website (www.PetHealthPartnership.org) and has started robust planning to develop initiatives aimed at improving preventive pet healthcare. Initial plans include creating tools for veterinarians to better communicate the critical value of optimal preventive care to pet owners. Particular attention is planned toward enhancing the optimal treatment of cats and helping to make the visit less stressful for both cats and their owners. Educational and awareness initiatives directed toward pet owners are also planned, with launch anticipated in 2012. In addition, it is the goal of the Partnership to encourage the veterinary profession to adopt and widely communicate the Preventive Healthcare Guidelines to pet owners through multiple communication channels including newsletters and websites.

About the Partnership For Preventive Pet Healthcare

The Partnership for Preventive Pet Healthcare was established in July 2011 and is comprised of 16 leading veterinary associations and animal health companies, and membership is open to others. The Partnership was created to ensure that pets receive regular preventive care that can lead to disease prevention and early detection, so that pet owners and their pets can enjoy a longer and healthier life together. For additional information about the Partnership, visit our website at www.PetHealthPartnership.org

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Reference:

1. Banfield Pet Hospital State of Pet Health 2011 Report Volume 1