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New Research Reveals that Changes in Everyday Practice Can Positively Impact Declining Pet Healthcare Visits

Orlando, FL (January 15, 2012) —During the “Enhancing Preventive Pet Healthcare in Everyday Practice” press conference today at the North American Veterinary Conference (NAVC), the Partnership for Preventive Pet Healthcare™ presented data from a 2011 on-line survey of veterinary professionals. The results revealed that declining pet healthcare visits are recognized as a problem and are impacting the frequency of preventive care visits by pet owners. Although almost all respondents blamed factors like the current economic downturn and increased pet owner reliance on the Internet, 88% also rated communication issues and the education of the value of preventive care to pet owners—a factor that veterinary professionals can strongly influence. The research presented shows that there are opportunities to increase preventive care visits with enhancements in everyday practice.

Although the data indicated that nearly 8 out of 10 veterinary professions perceive a decline in industry-wide pet owner visits, only about half of those surveyed perceive this problem as one affecting their practice. When asked about their influence on pet owner perceptions of preventive pet healthcare, 77% of veterinary professionals agree they can have a positive impact. Almost the same number (72%) agreed that they should spend more time talking to pet owners about preventive care. Conversely, the Bayer Veterinary Care Usage Study recently reported that almost half of pet owners surveyed said their veterinarians do not always explain preventive care in language they can understand.

To better understand pet owner and veterinarians beliefs and opinions regarding preventive healthcare, the Partnership conducted in-depth interviews among pet owners and veterinarians. These interviews also revealed that discussions regarding preventive care needs and communicating its values can be difficult with pet owners, especially in these tough economic times.

Based on the findings of the research and interviews with both veterinary professionals and pet owners, there is a significant opportunity for veterinary healthcare teams to enhance communication of the value and benefit of preventive care even more effectively than they do currently. To support the profession with this goal, the Partnership for Preventive Pet Healthcare™ has implemented a number of initiatives that will help veterinary professionals determine the best ways to enhance preventive pet healthcare in their practices. The Partnership is developing practical programs and tools that can be used to quickly and easily enhance the effectiveness of preventive pet healthcare discussions and services.

To offer veterinary teams a foundation for communicating with pet owners, the Partnership sponsored the task force that produced the AAHA-AVMA Canine and Feline Preventive Healthcare Guidelines, published in September 2011. To help ensure veterinary professionals are familiar with the Guidelines and can apply them effectively in their practices, the Partnership has created a variety of support materials including a single-page reprint of the Guidelines, an in-office poster format, the AAHA webcast of the Guidelines, and scientific programs at various 2012 veterinary conventions.



In the coming months, the Partnership will launch a unique program called “The Opportunity” for veterinary practices, which utilizes on-line, in-practice surveys to capture client and staff feedback about preventive care experiences. The goal of the program is to use survey responses to uncover areas of opportunity for practice enhancement and provide insights into the best action plan for the practices. “The Opportunity” initiative is one of many tools and resources that the Partnership for Preventive Pet Healthcare has planned to achieve its vision of improving the overall health of pets.

About the Partnership for Preventive Pet Healthcare™

The Partnership for Preventive Pet Healthcare was established in July 2011 and is composed of more than 20 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 www.PetHealthPartnership.org.