

# FAQs FOR PARTICIPATING OPHTHALMOLOGISTS AND STAFF



ACVO, Merial and participating veterinary ophthalmologists have joined forces to provide eye screening exams to certified service dogs, working or in training. This is an effort to make a collective impact to assist these animals and to promote veterinary ophthalmology.

We have attempted to clarify that to qualify these Service Dogs must have been formally trained and/or have certification or paperwork attesting to their training through a national, regional or local organization. We understand that there are many trainer-owned animals who have self-trained but have not gone through a formal program. The intent of the event is to care for working Service Dogs. While we recognize that many assistance dogs are privately trained, we have had to draw the line at certification to ensure the event isn't abused. If your clinic wishes to treat these dogs and has the time to do so, please do.

## **Date of Event...**

The event will run **May 1 - May 30, 2010**. The program has been expanded to one month to allow more flexibility for our doctors and increase participation time to better allow press coverage. You may schedule your appointments internally any way you wish within that month. Please make sure clients know about available dates and times.

## **What groups of animals are invited?**

Certified dogs (or those in training) from the following Service Dog groups are being invited to participate: guide dogs, handicapped assistance dogs, detection dogs (drug, etc.), military, police, and search and rescue. Some doctors may choose to exclude retired working dogs, that is up to the individual office. Dogs need to be formally trained in a program that provided documented proof of the certification. Whether your office asks for proof of this paperwork is up to each individual clinic. Availability is advertised as a first-come, first-served registration process. Once your registration slots are full you may certainly redirect clients to other participating ophthalmologists. Accepting late applicants is at your discretion.

## **Locating an ophthalmologist's office for an appointment...**

Here is what you need to know about how clients will locate your clinic information.

1. The client must register through [www.ACVOeyeexam.org](http://www.ACVOeyeexam.org) web site. They will receive a registration confirmation with a registration number that they will be asked to bring to their appointment. Once registered the web site will push them through to a searchable database where they can search for participating ophthalmologist clinics by state. Once located, the client will call the clinic and make an appointment directly with staff.
2. The client will see you for the eye exam. A simple exam form will be printed off the web site, available 1-2 weeks prior to the event. Your clinic will keep one copy, and the client will take one back to primary care veterinarian.
3. The eye exam will be the only medical services administered through this program this year.
4. After the event has concluded, if at all possible please mail or fax a copy of the exam forms to us for data collection. Data will eventually be compiled in an anonymous format for future research use.

## **When should appointment times be allotted?**

You may schedule these exams for any day/time that you wish. The event is being promoted for the entire month of May, corresponding with AVMA's Pet Health Week. Your clinic's general contact information will be provided to the customer via this web site, they will call your office to schedule the appointment and should identify themselves as participating in this program. Registration will take place from April 1st to May 15th. Please be clear that the client knows the appropriate dates and times.

## **What cost is involved?**

Clinics are not asked to contribute funding toward this program, nor is the client. If services beyond the screening exam are offered, specific pricing should be discussed. The eye exam screening should be no cost to the client. We acknowledge that the clinic is making a donation in the form of time, staff and supplies. Thank you for contributing!

## **Can we perform billable services beyond eye screening exams?**

Clients have been told that the complimentary exam is of a screening nature only. Should other medical concerns need addressing, tests run, blood draws needed, follow-up exams, etc. these would all be at your normal billable rates and/or you may refer them back to their primary care physician. Of course the client would need to be clearly notified if billable services are offered at the time of the exam.

## **Client information is being collected, are there HIPPA concerns?**

No. Generic data will be collected nationwide, both on dogs examined and the value of services generated. ACVO has established a database for epidemiological work in the future. Information will not be used for other purposes or given to vendors. Please plan to mail or fax us your forms after you event is completed.

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### **Where can I find the exam forms?**

ACVO will upload new forms for the 2010 event by early April. Please use this updated form. You may print as many copies as needed. Either color or black/white is fine. We ask that when possible, one form be provided to the client and a duplicate form be saved and ultimately sent to the ACVO office at the conclusion of the event for data compilation.

### **Are residents and/or board-eligible veterinarians invited to participate?**

This event is intended to promote the importance of referring to boarded veterinary specialists for care. While supervised residents and board-eligible doctors are qualified to conduct screening exams, ACVO would like to focus on the boarded doctors for PR purposes.

Should press contact your clinic for an interview, please make certain that a Diplomate of the College conducts the interview. As long as press contact is with a Diplomate, the ACVO sees no problem with veterinary ophthalmology residents or board-eligible DVMs conducting the screening exams as long as they are under the supervision of a boarded Diplomate of the ACVO.

### **What about press coverage?**

Links to a standard press release, a suggested release that a clinic may edit and use, and link to video will be provided to all participating veterinary ophthalmologists. You are then encouraged to forward this information to your local press to gain coverage of the overall event and for your local clinic. National and veterinary contacts are being handled by the ACVO office through Fetching Communications.

Media will be invited to take photos or conduct interviews during exams. As a result of our public relations efforts, the media MAY contact you directly to arrange a visit. If you prefer NOT to be contacted by the media, please contact Fetching Communications at 727-709-5252 or [kelly@fetchingcommunications.com](mailto:kelly@fetchingcommunications.com) or the ACVO at 208-466-7624 or [office09@acvo.org](mailto:office09@acvo.org).

If your clinic receives press coverage, please forward a copy of the article or link to the article/video to the ACVO if at all possible for archival purposes. We would like to be able to quantify the reach of this program to the public and to referring veterinarians if possible. While we realize this is an additional step in the process, it would go a long way to develop future promotion for PR events for your clinic and the College.

### **Your clinic information...**

In order for people to attend this event and receive the complimentary screening they SHOULD HAVE REGISTERED ON THE SERVICE DOG WEBSITE prior to calling your clinic. This is just about guaranteed because we're only offering the clinic information via the registration form. Potential participants will be able to view the participating clinics (docs are not listed by name per the overwhelming request of all of you) after they register...they are then pushed to a page to search for your clinic by state. If your clinic allows non-registered dogs to participate, please encourage them to complete the online form after the event. After the event has concluded, we will make the list of clinics available for everyone to view.

### **BLOOD WORK NOT OCCURRING THIS YEAR**

The follow-up blood panel with the general practice veterinarian will not occur this year. The event is purely the eye exam. Clients should be referred back to their GP DVM for general health and encouraged to take a copy of the exam form with them for the GP's files. We are trying to strengthen the Diplomate/GP relationship as much as possible. It would be advantageous for Diplomates to stress the importance of the "teamwork" approach between GPs and Diplomates.

### **Sponsorship...**

Merial stepped up again to serve as the primary sponsor. If you see/contact the representatives from Merial, please thank them for their support. Excess sponsor funds from 2009 were used to initiate the 2010 event. Any excess sponsor funds from this event will be used to promote a future event and future PR events.

### **Photographs...**

If you take any pictures at this year's event, please send them to our office. We would love to use them for future events or to provide to press upon request.

### **Questions...**

If you have questions regarding the event, please contact the ACVO office at 208-466-7624 or email to [office09@acvo.org](mailto:office09@acvo.org).

**If you would like to use the Service Dog logo or would like a banner for your website,  
email Jennifer at [office09@acvo.org](mailto:office09@acvo.org).**