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Veterinarians support service animals—guide, detection and search and rescue dogs—by giving free eye exams in May

Schaumburg, IL—American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO) is offering free eye exams to service dogs for the entire month of May.

"The program had been a big success in the past two years," says Stacey Daniel, executive director of the ACVO. "So we expanded the weeklong program to a full month."

During the third annual ACVO/Merial National Service Dog Eye Exam Event, more than 180 board-certified veterinary ophthalmologists will donate their skills to provide free screening eye examinations to service dogs across the United States and Canada. Service dog owners can register their animals for free eye exams on the ACVO Web page: www.acvoeyexam.org through early May.

"The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) is proud to support this important program," explains Dr. Larry R. Corry, AVMA president. "One of the goals of the month-long event is to provide exams to as many service dogs as possible so that any vision problems can be detected early. Early detection will help veterinarians protect and preserve the sight of these heroic animals."

The AVMA is helping promote the program and also put together an informative podcast available on its media site, www.avmamedia.org, called **ACVO/Merial National Service Dog Eye Exam Event**. The podcast includes an interview with Dr. Brady Beale, a veterinary ophthalmologist at the Veterinary Referral Center in Malvern, Pa., one of the veterinarians who will take part in the program.

The animals eligible include guide dogs, handicapped assistance dogs, detection dogs, search and rescue dogs, military animals and police dogs. To qualify for the free exams, service animals must be active working dogs that have been certified by a formal training program or organization or are currently enrolled in a formal training program. More specific information is available at www.acvoeyexam.org.

For more information about veterinary medicine, please visit www.avma.org.

The AVMA, founded in 1863, is one of the oldest and largest veterinary medical organizations in the world. More than 80,000 member veterinarians worldwide are engaged in a wide variety of professional activities. AVMA members are dedicated to advancing the science and art of veterinary medicine, including its relationship to public health and agriculture. Visit the AVMA Web site at www.avma.org to learn more about veterinary medicine and animal care and to access up-to-date information on the association's issues, policies and activities.



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