

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Protect Your Pets: Prevent Heartworm Disease

NAPPS Educates Pet Parents on Preventing the Dangers of Heartworm Disease

MT. LAUREL, NJ—June 25, 2013— The National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS) has joined forces with the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA) in an effort to raise awareness about the dangers of mosquito-borne diseases that can be harmful to the health of not only humans—but their animal companions as well.

Estimates claim that over 1 million dogs in the United States have been infected with the potentially fatal heartworm disease—an infection transmitted by the mosquito. Although once linked to mainly the southern and eastern coastal regions, heartworm disease occurs in dogs and cats in all 50 states.

“Mosquitoes act as hosts for the development of immature worms that cause heartworm disease, but the worms are not directly transmitted through an initial mosquito bite,” said Joseph Conlon, Technical Advisor of the AMCA. “The worm larvae leave the mosquito in a fluidic substance that is deposited in the animal’s skin. The worms then burrow into the skin through the hole made by the mosquito bite.”

According to Conlon, heartworm disease is completely preventable. “Pet parents can be proactive and administer approved medications to their pets to help lessen the chances of heartworm disease,” added Conlon. “There are also several things you can do to eliminate mosquitoes around your home.”

To lessen your pets’ exposure to mosquitoes, NAPPS and the AMCA suggest the following:

- Get rid of water-holding containers (old tires, tin cans, buckets, drums and bottles) that have accumulated in your yard. Mosquitoes breed in standing water and will multiply wherever it’s available.
- Cover trash containers to keep out rainwater
- Keep drains, ditches and culverts free of weeds and trash so water drains properly
- Change the water in bird baths and plant pots or drip trays at least once weekly
- Repair leaky pipes and dripping outside faucets
- Ensure door and window screens fit tightly, and repair any holes
- Maintain short grass and well-trimmed shrubbery around the house, so adult mosquitoes will not hide in these places

“Taking precautions to prevent heartworm disease is another step in keeping your pet healthy,” said Sherry L. Suhosky, president of NAPPS. “Have your pet tested for the disease and always consult your veterinarian to determine which preventative medications will work best.”

About AMCA: Celebrating 78 years of protecting public health, the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA) is an international not-for-profit public service association. With over 1,600

members worldwide, AMCA membership extends to more than 50 countries, and includes individuals and public agencies engaged in mosquito control, mosquito research and related activities. Please visit AMCA online at www.mosquito.org and follow AMCA on Twitter @AMCAupdates.

About NAPPS: NAPPS is the only national non-profit trade association dedicated to serving the needs of professional pet sitters. The Association aims to help the pet owning public, those interested in pet sitting, and professionals engaged in the in-home pet care industry by fulfilling its vision statement, serving as “the most respected authority in professional pet sitting.” It does so by providing the tools and support to foster the success of its members. Additionally, pet parents can benefit from NAPPS’ free resources including a disaster preparedness guide, tips on how to select a pet sitter, and a nationwide referral service,. To find a pet sitter in your area, check out NAPPS’ nationwide “Pet Sitter Locator” at www.petsitters.org. For more information on NAPPS, please follow [@TheNAPPS](https://twitter.com/TheNAPPS) on Twitter or join us on Facebook at facebook.com/TheNAPPS.

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