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Mosquito Control Experts, Professional Pet Sitters Partner to Protect Pets *AMCA and NAPPS join forces to notify pet parents about heartworm disease risks*

MOUNT LAUREL, N.J. June 21, 2010--To raise awareness that animals, like humans, are susceptible to mosquito-borne diseases, the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA) is teaming up with the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS) this summer. It has been estimated that more than one million dogs in all 50 states are infected with the potentially-fatal heartworm disease – and about 70 species of mosquitoes in the United States have been found capable of transmitting the filarial worms.

“Humans have been infected in a few cases, but heartworm is not recognized as a human health problem. Foxes, raccoon and wolves can serve as sources of infection – and there is some evidence that skunks, possums and muskrats can harbor the disease,” said Joseph Conlon, AMCA Technical Advisor. “Cats are rarely found with the worms. Some studies have suggested that heartworms are usually rendered sterile in families other than canids.”

Although the mosquito host is essential for the development of the immature worms, it does not transmit them directly to pets through the bite. (Mosquitoes tend to feed on the underside of dogs, in addition to the ears and muzzle.) Immature worms leave the mosquito in a fluidic substance that is deposited on the dog’s skin. The worms then invade the hole in the skin made through the act of feeding.

“Heartworm is easily preventable in dogs by giving them heartworm preventatives provided by veterinarians,” said NAPPS President Monica Leighton. “Pets that remain outdoors for long periods of time are more likely to be exposed to heartworms. Pet parents are encouraged to be cautious about the length of time dogs are left outside, and consult with your veterinarian for advice on which repellent products to use.”

AMCA and NAPPS advise pet parents take additional measures to reduce the amount of mosquito breeding around their property:

- Get rid of water-holding containers (old tires, tin cans, buckets, drums and bottles)
- 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

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- Maintain short grass and well-trimmed shrubbery around the house, so adult mosquitoes will not hide in these places

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About the American Mosquito Control Association

Celebrating 75 years of protecting public health in 2010, the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA) is an international not-for-profit public service association. With 1,600 members worldwide, AMCA services are provided mainly to public agencies and their principal staff members engaged in mosquito control, mosquito research and related activities. The 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](https://twitter.com/AMCAupdates).

About the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters

NAPPS is a national non-profit trade association dedicated to promoting the welfare of animals. 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, “To be 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, nationwide referral service, and quarterly teleconferences aimed to educate the pet owning public. 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 find NAPPS on Facebook at facebook.com/TheNAPPS.