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(SCHAUMBURG, Illinois) September 1, 2011—The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) today announced the publication of new health guidelines for dogs and cats.

The guidelines were developed in response to startling statistics that indicate visits to veterinarians are declining while preventable diseases in pets are increasing. The guidelines are designed to provide the foundation for the veterinary practice team to promote preventive veterinary medicine.

“These new guidelines, which were created by veterinary experts brought together by the AVMA and AAHA, are the first of their kind and will be the foundation of the newly formed [Partnership for Preventive Pet Healthcare](#),” says Dr. René Carlson, AVMA president. “The guidelines are extremely important because we know that fewer and fewer pet owners are bringing their cats and dogs in for regular preventive care. Experts agree that regular visits are essential in preventing health problems such as ear infections, dental disease and obesity.”

The guidelines are a tool to help ensure complete checkups by providing a springboard for veterinarians to explain to their clients the importance of each step in the preventive care checkup, without being overly prescriptive.

"We're seeing some evidence in some data sets of increasing disease prevalence, and these diseases are the kind of things that are very easily prevented," says Dr. Michael R. Moyer, AAHA president. "We know that we have tremendous value to offer our patients, but we have more to do as a profession to communicate that value, the importance of those preventive care visits and what we do during these visits, to pet owners."

The AAHA-AVMA Canine Preventive Healthcare Guidelines are available at: [avma journals](http://avma.journals), www.jaaha.org or www.aahanet.org/Library/Guidelines.aspx.

For more information, please visit www.avma.org or www.aahanet.org.

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The AVMA, founded in 1863, is one of the oldest and largest veterinary medical organizations in the world. More than 81,500 member veterinarians worldwide are engaged in a wide variety of professional activities.

Established in 1933, AAHA is well-known among veterinary profession for its leadership, high standards for veterinary practices and pet health care, and most importantly, its accreditation of companion animal practices. For more information about AAHA, visit the Association online at www.aahanet.org.