

AAHA Releases Comprehensive Cancer Care Resource for Veterinary Practices

New 2026 Oncology Guidelines Prepare Primary Care Teams to Diagnose, Treat, and Support Pets and Families Through Cancer Journey

LAKEWOOD, CO, UNITED STATES, January 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The American Animal Hospital Association ([AAHA](#)) today announced the release of the 2026 AAHA [Oncology Guidelines for Dogs and Cats](#), a comprehensive resource designed to

provide primary care veterinary teams with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate cancer cases from initial detection through diagnosis, treatment, and referral.



Cancer remains an unfortunate reality for companion animals, and general practitioners are typically the first to encounter it. These new guidelines address that critical frontline role, helping veterinary teams support pets and their families from the moment of suspicion through the decision-making process that follows diagnosis.

"AAHA is thrilled about this much-needed update of the Oncology Guidelines," said Jessica Vogelsang, DVM, AAHA Chief Medical Officer. "Primary care veterinarians are often the first to recognize cancer in pets, and these guidelines equip primary care veterinary teams with the knowledge and tools to navigate oncology cases, from diagnosis to client communication, to referral and treatment. The field of oncology has seen incredible advances over the past several years, and our Oncology Guidelines help practitioners make sense of it all, in addition to providing pragmatic and accessible guidance on the very important role primary care veterinarians play in creating the best possible outcomes for pets and families."

The guidelines emphasize that a suspicion or diagnosis of cancer should be the beginning, not the end, of the diagnostic process. Understanding common cancer types, achieving accurate cytologic or histopathologic diagnosis, determining tumor stage and grade, and developing optimal treatment plans are essential steps for ensuring the best possible outcomes.

Comprehensive Resource for Primary Care Teams

The 2026 AAHA Oncology Guidelines provide veterinary teams with extensive, practice-ready information, including:

Tables describing common cancers in cats and dogs for early detection and recognition

Diagnosis and staging protocols to assess prognosis and guide treatment planning

Principles of surgical biopsies for accurate tissue sampling

Updates on new drugs and treatments reflecting recent advances in veterinary oncology

Clarification of cancer drug approval processes, including conditional versus full approval and USDA versus FDA oversight

Staff and patient safety recommendations for handling chemotherapy and oncology cases

Early interventions for supportive care to maintain quality of life

Client communication strategies to prepare families for side effects and treatment expectations

"The field of veterinary oncology continues to rapidly evolve and at the same rate, the human-animal bond grows stronger," said Jaci Christensen, BAS, LVT, VTS (Oncology), cochair of the AAHA Oncology Guidelines. "These guidelines are designed to support the veterinarian through the complexity of oncologic care and in doing so, contribute to the well-being of our companion animals."

The guidelines underscore that the primary goal of chemotherapy is to maintain the best possible quality of life for pets while effectively managing their cancer. Most veterinary chemotherapy protocols are well tolerated, with side effects that are typically mild and manageable when veterinary teams and clients work together.

The 2026 AAHA Oncology Guidelines for Dogs and Cats are available now at aaha.org/oncology-guidelines.

The guidelines are generously supported by CareCredit, Hill's Pet Nutrition, Merck Animal Health, and Zoetis.

About the American Animal Hospital Association

Since 1933, the American Animal Hospital Association has been the only organization to accredit veterinary hospitals across the United States and Canada based on standards linked to high-quality medicine and compassionate care. With accreditation partners in South Korea, Japan, and China, this initiative is expanding internationally. Our mission is to simplify the path to excellence in veterinary practices. In veterinary medicine, accreditation is optional. The AAHA-accredited logo serves as the most reliable sign that a practice has undergone evaluation by an independent party. Look for the AAHA logo at your local animal hospital or use the accredited hospital locator on aaha.org to find one.

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