

## Health Committee Report – March 2018

Members are Helen Ingher, Chair; Laura Liscum, Assistant Chair; Shelley Barclay, Karen Clugston, Peggy Evanich, Stephanie Holoubek, Pat Koprovic, Linda Murray, and Veronica Scheer.

The past month, the Health Committee (HC) focused on the following issues:

1. **Reimbursement for PBGV ophthalmology exams.** Eye problems are the most common afflictions cited by PBGV owners on our health surveys. The 2010 survey showed that 11.6% of our dogs had some eye problem, such as persistent pupillary membranes, cataracts, or glaucoma. In the past, the Foundation has funded eye clinics at National Specialties. Local ophthalmologists were recruited to conduct eye exams as well as gonioscopy and tonometry. Typically, fewer than a dozen dogs participate each year and fees to the ophthalmologist total \$1,000 or higher. The results of the eye exams are not made public unless the owner submits them to OFA. In addition, it is never easy to engage local ophthalmologists to conduct the eye exams, but the past few years have been exceedingly difficult. The clinicians give up an afternoon of their clinic time and want a minimum payment no matter how many dogs are examined.

The HC proposes that the Foundation offer a reimbursement to PBGV owners who have their dogs examined by any board-certified veterinary ophthalmologist. The owner would be responsible for paying for the eye test and submitting results to OFA. When the process is complete, they would send in a copy of the ophthalmology bill along with proof of OFA submission to a designated member of the Foundation Board. This would increase participation for owners who are not able to bring their dogs to National Specialties.

The HC suggests that up to \$75 be reimbursed to PBGVCA club members (full and associate) per dog per year for dogs who are from 1 to 7 years of age. Reimbursement is contingent upon exam results being submitted to OFA database.

This recommendation will go to the Foundation for their discussion and decision. If reimbursement goes forward, we suggest that it be announced in *Saber Tails*, on Facebook, and by email blast to the Club membership. The announcement should also remind PBGV owners of the need to have their dogs POAG tested and that the cost of the POAG test is partially supported by the Foundation.

2. **POAG clinical trial.** Helen and Laura have had email discussions with Dr. Andreas Komáromy at Michigan State, who has an ongoing clinical trial treating POAG affected Beagles with gene therapy. Dr. Komáromy hopes to begin treating POAG affected PBGVs sometime in 2019. Veronica has put together a list of POAG affected dogs and owner contact information. In the meantime, Dr. Komáromy will begin to plan the trial and recruit potential candidates. Helen and Laura will have a telephone conference with Dr. Komáromy in the next few weeks to discuss these details as well as how the trial will be funded.

3. **Breed sustainability.** The AKC is concerned about the decline in registration numbers in many breeds over the past decade. AKC delegates are beginning to take steps to help low registration breed clubs with this issue of breed sustainability. Mr. Mark Dunn will speak at the Reno National Specialty about low registration breeds.