

## Health Committee Annual Report to Membership – April 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. You can learn more about the HC members in the October 2017 *Saber Tails* article, “Meet the Health Committee”.

Over the past year, the Health Committee (HC) has focused on the following issues:

**Measure Clinic.** This clinic was held at the Charlotte National Specialty in response to a request by the Animal Health Trust. They were testing the hypothesis that PBGVs with the ADAMTS17 mutation (POAG affected) will have shorter stature than those without the mutation (POAG clear). Early round of data sent to AHT supported the hypothesis. AHT asked for additional participation in Fall 2017 (see the article in the October *Saber Tails*).

**AKC Canine Health Foundation Parent Club Conference.** This Aug 2017 conference was held in St. Louis. The Club sent Coady Egan and the Foundation sent Laura. A report appeared in the Jan 2018 issue of *Saber Tails*.

**Clinical Health Information Form.** Veronica launched the form in September on HC webpage. Members are asked to complete a form whenever a dog has a NEW diagnosed condition. The form can be completed online, but a paper copy is in the January 2018 *Saber Tails*.

**Survey of Breeder Health Concerns.** This survey, written by Pat, was sent to all North American PBGV breeders asking them to name their top health concerns. The top two concerns were epilepsy/seizures and POAG, followed by cancer and neck pain. You can read an update on POAG in the October 2017 *Saber Tails*. An article on the survey by Helen will appear in the Spring 2018 *Saber Tails*.

**Breeder education.** Helen is working on a breeder mentoring program, with help from Pat and Karen. Established PBGV breeders who wish to mentor new breeders would be identified and given a packet of information, which will allow them to counsel those who are considering breeding or who are newly established as a breeder. We hope this may counter the declining number of PBGV breeders and its long-term effect on the health of our breed.

**HC reference center.** This is a new section of our website, with links to health articles in *Saber Tails* and from the internet. There are also resources for specific health issues. If you know of a helpful article or link that should be added, let us know.

**Discussions with Dr. Komáromy.** Dr. Andreas Komáromy at Michigan State and Dr. Rachel Allbaugh at Univ of Iowa are discussing gene therapy for POAG affected dogs. Dr. K has developed a virus that expresses the canine gene encoding the ADAMTS17 protein, which is deficient in POAG. He has treated some POAG affected, pre-symptomatic Beagles and one Beagle with increased pressure. His results so far are encouraging. He is monitoring for side effects in the Beagles, but already reports that pressure is decreased in the one symptomatic Beagle. He proposes to treat one pre-symptomatic PBGV in one eye and monitor side effects for 6 months. If all looks okay, both eyes of PBGVs that are pre-symptomatic or that have low increased pressure could be treated. PBGVs would not have to travel since the injection could be performed by any veterinary ophthalmologist. Dr. K hopes to attend 2019 National in Texas.

Veronica has put together a list of POAG affected dogs and owner contact information. Once more details of the treatment are known, we will make preliminary contact to see which dogs might be eligible for the trial at this time. There are many remaining questions, not least of which is the cost to treat the dogs and who will pay.

**Events at National Specialty.** The HC organized the DNA blood draw. We also lined up two health speakers. They are Dr. Danika Bannasch (UC Davis), who will speak on “Population Health & Reproduction”, and Mr. Mark Dunn (AKC Senior VP Registrations and Customer Development), who will speak on “Data to Understand the Vulnerability of Specific Breeds”. Mr. Dunn will describe steps the AKC delegates are beginning to take to help low registration breed clubs with the issue of breed sustainability.