

Health Committee Report – October 2017

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

During September, the Health Committee (HC) took the following actions:

1. Clinical Health Information Form. The form that was previously reviewed by the Board has now been reviewed and approved by the HC. Veronica launched the form on the Club's Health Committee webpage. Forms can be filled out online or by downloading a form and mailing it in. Announcements went out on Facebook, in *Saber Tails*, on PBGV-L, and by broadcast email to PBGVCA members on Sept 27. The first completed form came in the same day!

2. Survey of Breeder Health Concerns. Pat is writing a request to be sent to all North American PBGV breeders asking them to name their top 3 or 4 health concerns, aside from POAG. Veronica has a spreadsheet with a list of 97 breeders, which she pulled from the AKC stud book. We hope that survey results will guide our future actions.

3. Health Survey through OFA. The HC discussed a future online health survey, to be written with the help of OFA and administered by them free-of-charge. The survey will likely be a 'snapshot' survey open for one year documenting the health status of all dogs owned for the past five years. We will draft a survey over the course of the coming year and are considering a launch in 2019. By then, members will be accustomed to reporting specific health issues on the Clinical Health Information Form and will (hopefully) see the survey as a separate method of assessing overall healthiness of the breed.

4. Measure clinic. Helen organized a measure clinic 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). Recently, Helen received word that the AHT needs additional measurements and they welcome individuals conducting their own measurements. Measurements are needed from POAG clear, carrier and affected dogs. The carrier dogs may have the height of clear dogs if the mutation is recessive, or the height of affected dogs if the mutation is dominant. That is not currently known. Announcements along with instructions went out on Facebook, on PBGV-L, and by broadcast email to PBGVCA members.

5. *Saber Tails*. Two articles were written by Laura and submitted to *Saber Tails*. They are "Meet the Health Committee" and "POAG Update". A report on the August Canine Health Foundation conference is being written by Laura and Coady Egan.

6. Roles and responsibilities of the HC. A draft document written by Jo was reviewed and edited by the HC. The document is appended to this report.

7. Rubric for Health Testing. Jo asked the HC to develop a rubric that we could use to decide when to recommend that PBGVs be subject to a specific genetic test. Such a rubric would take into consideration the frequency of the condition within the breed, its effect on quality of life, reliability and cost of the test. Upon much discussion, we concluded that an effective rubric could not be written. Most health issues are not black and white. Instead, we think that each testable health issue that arises in the PBGV population should be evaluated at the time the test becomes available in consultation with leading canine clinicians and geneticists. The experience of other breed clubs that have faced similar health issues should be taken into consideration. With POAG, we had a black and white health issue. There is a reasonably priced genetic test that predicts outcome in 100% of the cases for a disease that causes pain and suffering. A decision to test can't get any clearer than that. But we cannot create a rubric that would take into account all possibilities. For example, someday there may be a \$500 test for idiopathic epilepsy that is not PBGV specific. The test may detect a marker that is linked to epilepsy (but not

causative) and indicate that a dog has a 5-fold higher chance of getting seizures than the overall dog population. A breeder with seizures in his/her line may decide to use the test on a stud dog. However, we would not recommend all PBGVs have the test. As another example, next week, a 'fly-by-night' company might advertise a cheaper POAG test. Upon advice from experts in the field, we might decide not to accept results from that test company. There are not likely to be many genetic tests for simple inherited disorders in the PBGV in the near future. The HC recommends that we not try to anticipate every possibility at this point, but instead confront each as they arise.

8. National Specialty. Dr. Bannasch has confirmed her availability to speak in Reno on Friday April 27. There will be a blood draw for OFA, organized by the HC. Helen has been in touch with Kristina Kriek about hiring a vet tech for the blood draw, and with Julie Shannon about scheduling an ophthalmologist.

9. Blood draws at events in addition to the National Specialty. To boost participation in the CHIC DNA Repository, the HC considered sponsoring blood draws at hunts and Specialty shows. However, there are numerous logistical issues to carrying out several blood draws per year. We decided instead to focus on increasing individual submission of samples, for which the Foundation reimburses costs up to \$75 per dog.

Budget for 2018

Dr. Bannasch's seminar will incur costs for her honorarium, travel, meals, and hotel (one night).

Blood draw for OFA will incur costs for a vet tech, fees to OFA, blood draw supplies, and shipping of blood tubes on ice.

For the eye clinic, we typically have to commit funds for a minimum of 10 dogs to secure ophthalmologist. We cover half of fees for OFA Eye Certification, tonometry and gonioscopy.

Total estimated costs are \$2000.

Health Committee of PBGVCA

The primary roles of the PBGVCA Health Committee are as follows:

- To assess the health status of the breed by:
 1. Reviewing developments in canine health with particular attention to health concerns in PBGVs,
 2. Periodically surveying breeders and owners to determine the occurrence and frequency of health issues, and
 3. Developing a recommended protocol for testing based on the evidence gathered in these surveys, studies, etc.
 - 4.
- To disseminate health information relevant to PBGVs by:
 1. Maintaining a health and wellness information center with articles, studies, etc. that relate to health concerns and that cite vetted sources of information,
 2. Maintaining a pedigree database that includes the results of health screenings, genetic testing, and health histories provided by breeders and owners,
 3. In conjunction with show committees, identifying topics for health seminars at National Specialties and providing guidance and support for presenting these seminars,
 4. Identifying topics for inclusion in *Saber Tails* and coordinating the writing of these articles,
 5. Calling attention to health studies and opportunities via broadcast emails to the membership, and
 6. Developing and distributing educational materials relevant to owners and breeders specifically.
 - 7.
- To provide health testing clinics and DNA collection at National Specialties.
- To identify opportunities for PBGVCA to participate in research opportunities both financially and by assisting in identifying subjects and by data collection.
- To the extent possible, to provide breeder mentoring when requested.

The composition of the Health Committee should reflect the experiential diversity of the Club membership. To the extent possible, the Committee should include members with the necessary skills for the committee to function most effectively. These include the following:

- Canine health expertise and related science and technology skills,
- Breeder representation to capture concerns of genetics in lineage,
- Database and computer systems skills to effectively design surveys, collect and analyze information, and
- Communications skills to effectively disseminate information across a broad venue to members.