

PBGVCA Health Committee Report, August 2013

The mission of the PBGVCA Health Committee is to have the most current information readily available for providing optimal health care and for making wise choices in managing breed-specific health care issues.

A primary goal is to develop and maintain educational information targeted to general health care of the PBGV. Toward that end, the following occurred in 2012/2013:

- The PBGVCA and PBGV Health & Rescue Foundation Facebook pages are an important source of information on breed-specific health care and general canine issues. Peggy Evanich and Helen Ingher diligently searched the internet for relevant articles and sent links to Gina Lindsey and Laura Liscum for posting on the PBGVCA and PBGV Health & Rescue Foundation Facebook pages, respectively.
- Julie Shannon invited Andras Komaromy, DVM, to speak at the PBGV Nationals in Houston, TX. Dr. Komaromy is Associate Professor of Small Animal Sciences at Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine. His laboratory studies inherited eye diseases in dogs. He is collaborating with Cathryn Mellersh, PhD, head of Canine Genetics at the Animal Health Trust, to clone the gene responsible for primary open-angle glaucoma in PBGVs. Dr. Komaromy gave an excellent seminar on glaucoma; in addition, he performed eye exams on dogs and collected blood for the CHIC DNA bank and the glaucoma study. The blood draw was organized by Rebecca Belflower.
- Laura Liscum wrote articles for Saber Tails entitled "Living with Idiopathic Epilepsy", "A Survey of PBGV Health", and "Bitten by a Tick".

A second goal of the Committee is to develop and maintain a knowledgebase of medical problems specific to the PBGV including clinical resources to assist with diagnoses, treatment and management of breed specific health issues. To accomplish that goal, Julie Shannon developed a 'Short Form Health Survey' to collect general PBGV health information in a simple format. Participation in the survey was requested in Saber Tails, by PBGVCA emails, on the PBGV-L Listserv, via Facebook and by direct mailing. Lauren Kovaleff collected the surveys over the course of 18 months and entered the data into a spreadsheet. One hundred forty-four individuals provided health information on 302 currently living dogs. The good news was that the PBGV is a healthy breed. Of the 302 PBGVs surveyed, 134 (44.4%) had no health conditions. For the dogs with health issues, the majority of conditions reported were either relatively minor or managed so that quality of life was well maintained. The most frequent issues were endocrine/hormonal, dermatologic, bone/joint, eye, and gastrointestinal. Next came reproductive, ear issues, cardiovascular and urinary. The Health Committee will repeat this snapshot survey at periodic intervals in order to track the health of our breed.

A third goal is to have the resources available to assist PBGV breeders and owners in making decisions for the health and welfare of the breed. Laura Liscum and Linda Murray are creating a knowledgebase of PBGV-specific care and health information that will cover the life cycle of the dog. This knowledgebase will be posted on the PBGVCA Health Committee website.