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## **American Animal Hospital Association Announces the Development of Nutrition Guidelines**

DENVER, Colo., (Jan. 18, 2010) – Today, the [American Animal Hospital Association \(AAHA\)](#) announced plans to develop official AAHA Nutrition Guidelines which will serve as a set of protocols that veterinarians can use in their practices to help them ensure that every pet receives a nutritional assessment and recommendation with every hospital visit.

“It’s our belief that every pet needs and deserves a nutritional assessment and recommendation from their veterinarian with each visit,” said John Tait, D.V.M., AAHA president. “AAHA is proud to lead the efforts to make this a reality.”

With the announcement of the new guidelines, AAHA also extends an invitation to the veterinary community to support efforts to elevate the role of nutrition and to put the nutritional expertise and recommendations into the hands of the local veterinarian.

“AAHA will be the founding member of what we envision will be a consortium of organizations and professional associations aimed at ensuring that nutrition becomes truly integrated into all phases of pet care,” said Dr. Tait.

“Presently, pet owners are inundated with advice from a variety of sources on what constitutes proper quality of care and treatment of their pets. Unfortunately, many of these sources are not credible,” Dr. Tait commented. “Furthermore, we know from the [AAHA Compliance Study](#) that only seven percent of pets that could benefit from a therapeutic food were actually on such a regimen. These dynamics are affecting how we as a profession must communicate and too often affect how pets are ultimately treated.”

For years, AAHA has served as the leader in developing formalized standards referring to nutrition. Current AAHA standards call for clinical nutrition to serve as a foundation of all therapeutic and wellness care. The development of specific nutritional guidelines will serve to add depth, clarity and consistency to these veterinary care standards.

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## AAHA Announces Development of Nutritional Guidelines

[Hill's Pet Nutrition Inc.](#) has joined AAHA in their efforts to elevate the importance of nutrition. Hill's has provided funding to help bring together the task force that will develop the guidelines and has committed to future plans to help the profession implement the guidelines once published.

“What’s important is that nutrition be a part of the discussion between the veterinarian and the pet owner,” said Neil Thompson, president and CEO of Hill’s. “Only then, can it properly be assessed, and only then can an appropriate recommendation be provided and ultimately accepted by the pet owner.”

In recent years, the veterinary profession has seen a groundswell of awareness in terms of compliance, particularly as a driver of quality care. Practices now accept greater responsibility for compliance and understand that the actions of veterinary health care team members can significantly affect pet owner behaviors.<sup>1</sup>

The finalized nutritional guidelines are on pace to be completed for publishing in the [Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association](#) this summer.

Previous AAHA guidelines cover such issues as pain management, dental care, senior care, and most recently feline life stages among others. For more information on the existing AAHA Standards and other AAHA Guidelines, visit [AAHANet.org](#).

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<sup>1</sup> *AAHA Compliance Study Executive Summary*. Compliance: Taking Quality Care to the Next Level. Copyright ©2009.