



**Veterinarian-Client
Communication Initiative**

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**Pfizer Introduces *Frank*TM,
the New Veterinarian-Client Communication Initiative**

**Program Helps Veterinarians Leverage Pet Owners' Appetite for Information
to Enhance Communication and Compliance, Improve Outcomes
and Increase Client Loyalty**

Las Vegas, February 20—Just a year ago, drawing on robust survey research data, the AVMA-Pfizer Business Practices Study reconfirmed the need for veterinarians to invest more attention in client relations as a pillar of practice development. Now, in a period of growing consumer empowerment, veterinarians and their practice teams across the country will be offered significant assistance in a key area of client relations—enhancing client communication about pet health concerns, including treatment benefit and risk information.

To support the profession's communication needs, here at the Western Veterinary Conference, Pfizer Animal Health is announcing today a comprehensive new program—the *Frank*TM Veterinarian-Client Communication Initiative. The initiative offers veterinarians expert guidance on enriching the veterinarian-client-patient interaction at the very heart of successful clinical practice.

"Over the last several years, Pfizer has received frequent feedback from veterinarians and pet owners underscoring the need for enhanced treatment information communication," said Robert DiMarzo, president, U.S. Operations, Pfizer Animal Health. "When discussions with leaders in the veterinary profession and targeted quantitative research confirmed this need, we decided to undertake the *Frank* Veterinarian-Client Communication Initiative as a sustained effort on behalf of improved healthcare for animals, a meaningful contribution to the practice of veterinary medicine, and the long-term interests of our business."

DiMarzo said the initiative builds on veterinarians' tradition of close relationships with clients on behalf of better companion-animal health. To that end, the program focuses on three central activities:

- *Frank* will provide companion -animal veterinarians a range of practical information on *why* enhanced veterinarian-client communication can be helpful not only to improving compliance and clinical outcomes, but also to building stronger, more loyal client relationships, setting the foundation for a more productive and effective practice.
- *Frank* will also show veterinarians and their practice teams *how* to address successfully some of the leading client communication challenges through clear, easy-to-learn techniques presented by two of the national leaders in communication at a series of intensive workshops scheduled later this year at regional sites.
- *Frank* will also give veterinarians convenient client-friendly benefit/risk information on the widest spectrum of Pfizer veterinary vaccines and prescription medications ever available.

DiMarzo added that Pfizer will today introduce *Frank* to veterinarians in a one-hour program here at the Western Veterinary Conference and, on March 18 at the annual American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) convention in Long Beach, Calif. A *Frank* presentation is also scheduled at the annual American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) meeting in Honolulu in July.

"Clear and accurate communication is a cornerstone of effective medical care," said American Veterinary Medical Association President Henry Childers, DVM, Dipl. ABVP. "Our successful partnership with Pfizer, which resulted in the Business Practices Study last year, has proven beneficial for the veterinary profession. Now, we welcome Pfizer's efforts to expand upon those findings to help our members enhance their client communication and meet the public's growing appetite for healthcare information."

"AAHA studies have shown that veterinarians and their practice teams must communicate clearly and responsively to clients in order to gain high levels of compliance," said John Albers, DVM, executive director of the American Animal Hospital Association. "We welcome the *Frank* initiative as an important resource to improve communication, to the benefit of pets, their owners, and veterinary practice teams."

Beginning this summer, *Frank* will present full-day workshops exploring key aspects of the veterinarian-client communications process. Jane Shaw, DVM, PhD, director of the Argus Institute for Families and Veterinary Medicine at the Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences Veterinary Teaching Hospital, and Suzanne Kurtz, PhD, clinical professor and director of clinical communication, at the Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine, will lead the programs' communication modules, drawing on extensive research on the most common client-communication challenges and opportunities.

"Although communication skills are not inborn personality traits, most veterinarians and their practice teams receive limited communication training," said Dr. Kurtz. "Research data clearly indicate that such skills are learned behaviors. The *Frank* workshops are designed to show veterinarians how to enhance their communication abilities beyond

routine client education practices to a more effective and mutually rewarding, interactive approach.” She added that, from a practice development perspective, these heightened communication skills, while requiring effort and time to master, can lead directly to time savings, avoidance of communication-related problems, improved outcomes of care, and increased satisfaction for client, clinician and practice team.

At the workshops, practice management consultants and attorneys experienced in the liability implications of professional communication will also present. Additionally, Pfizer will make available to veterinarians new client-oriented benefit/risk information on a variety of the company’s leading companion-animal products.

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