



Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine

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Contact: Tom Keppeler—(508) 839-7910 OR tom.keppeler@tufts.edu

Cummings School Wins Third-Annual Rabies Symposium *Strength of Student AVMA's anti-rabies efforts led to selection*

North Grafton, Mass., March 11, 2010 – The Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University has been selected as the host organization for the third-annual Merial Rabies Day Symposium, based on the rabies education, vaccination, and fundraising efforts of its largest student group.

The Alliance for Rabies Control (ARC) selected Tufts University's student chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association to host the event for having the highest percentage of its student body participate in World Rabies Day 2009. The event is sponsored by the ARC and Merial, and is tentatively scheduled for September 25, 2010.

In the last year, Cummings School students have helped to raise awareness—and combat the incidence—of rabies through a six-site free rabies clinic for residents of low-income housing in Worcester, Mass. The effort, begun by V11 students Karen Ann Alroy and Amy C. Vlazny, vaccinated 200 animals. In celebration of World Rabies Day last September 28, students also coordinated a poster presentation, luncheon and faculty-led summit about the state of rabies in Massachusetts, Tufts' efforts to combat the disease throughout the world, and tips on prevention.

Every year, rabies kills more than 55,000 people worldwide and the costs associated with rabies are estimated to be more than \$300 million, according to the Alliance for Rabies Control.

Four Cummings School Doctor of Veterinary Medicine candidates—Mehnaz Chumkee Aziz, Colin A. Basler, Jessica A. Martinez and Matthew J. Gordon, all second-year students—will lead Tufts' efforts.

“We are honored to have been selected to host the Merial Rabies Day Symposium this year,” said Cummings School V12 student Mehnaz Chumkee Aziz. “Our goal is to pull together a diverse audience for this year's event and encourage them to take action to eradicate rabies throughout the world.”

The Cummings School also led the Cape Cod Oral Rabies Vaccination Program, a 15-year-long effort to eradicate rabies from Cape Cod. Faculty from the school, including Assistant Professor Gretchen Kaufman, have worked to combat rabies in the third world—most notably, Kaufman's work to control rabies in stray dogs in Nepal.

In addition to their work during the school year, Aziz and Basler worked last summer with Dr. Kaufman to assess various aspects of dog population and rabies control methods in Nepal with funding from the Morris Animal Foundation and the US Army, respectively. All four students are also helping to coordinate a second free rabies clinic later this month in Worcester in coordination with the Worcester Housing Authority and Worcester Animal Rescue League.

Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University

Founded in 1978 in North Grafton, Mass., Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University is internationally esteemed for academic programs that impact society and the practice of veterinary medicine; three hospitals and two clinics that combined treat more than 80,000 animals each year; and groundbreaking research that benefits animal, public, and environmental health.

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