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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 10, 2023

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CVMA Reminds Pet Owners that August is National Pet Immunization Awareness Month *Chicago Veterinary Medical Assoc. emphasizes their importance in keeping pets healthy*

For many pet owners, their pets aren't just like family, they *are* family, which is a great reason to give them immunizations that can help them enjoy a long and happy life. Immunizations can protect pets from diseases that can not only impact their health long-term, but that also could be fatal.

Since August is National Pet Immunization Awareness Month, Chicago Veterinary Medical Association wants to remind pet owners of the integral nature of immunizations and pet health.

Deadly viruses can originate from various places, including your own yard by way of insects or other animals, and even inside your own home. While you can't control everything that your pet may encounter, immunizations can help greatly minimize the risks.

When a puppy receives the distemper vaccine, it's helping keep them safe from a virus that is incurable and fatal. Kittens can contract chlamydia, which can be transmitted to humans, so that immunization not only keeps felines healthy, but their humans as well. Rabies – regardless of feline or canine status – is always fatal and can be easily addressed with the administering of a rabies vaccine. Of course, some immunizations need to be given on a regular basis – typically annually – to ensure continued protection for your pet.

Beyond vaccinations, monthly preventative medications like those that keep fleas, ticks, and heartworm at bay, also are essential for pet health. Now is a good time to renew your pet's prescription.

"It's important to recognize that taking preventative measures like making sure your pet's immunizations are up to date, is worth the time and effort," explained Dr. Marina Jaworsky, CVMA Board President. "Preventing

disease or a significant health issue through vaccination is much more prudent than rolling the dice with a chance of contracting a serious illness. This decision could come with the risk of losing your beloved companion.”

If you have questions about the immunizations your pet is scheduled to receive, be sure to ask your veterinary provider. They can provide a detailed explanation to help you understand the purpose and importance of each vaccination.

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About the Chicago Veterinary Medical Association: Chicago Veterinary Medical Association is a professional network with a longstanding tradition that connects more than 1,000 veterinarians with comprehensive resources that support their continued development as champions of animal health while encouraging the fostering of the human-animal bond.

About the Chicago Veterinary Medical Foundation: The CVMF, established in 2009, is a 501^(c)(3) charity that works with Chicagoland veterinarians to provide financial assistance to pet families in need by helping with the costs of their pet’s urgent, unexpected medical and surgical bills. The Foundation’s work plays a vital role in strengthening the human-animal bond by helping sick and suffering pets get well again.