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CVMA Recognizes World Suicide Prevention Day on Sunday, September 10th *Chicago Veterinary Medical Association highlights veterinarians as particularly vulnerable*

For 20 years, since 2003, World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD), has been recognized around the world on September 10th; this day of acknowledgement was established by the International Association for Suicide Prevention. The Chicago Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) is compelled to bring awareness of this global initiative to prevent suicide and provide individuals with the resources to cope with this pervasive public health crisis.

This year's World Suicide Prevention Day will be recognized on Sunday, September 10th.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), which endorses WSPD, an estimated 800,000 people across the world die annually due to suicide, which equates to approximately one death every 40 seconds. There are many more individuals who attempt suicide or experience suicidal ideation.

Although it is not widely known, the veterinary profession has one of the highest suicide rates compared to many other industries or career paths due to job-related stress. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), female veterinarians are 3.5 times as likely with male veterinarians being 2.1 times as likely to die from suicide compared to the general population.

"CVMA recognizes the unwavering commitment by veterinarians, vet techs and others in what is a tough industry because it continually tugs on your heartstrings," said Dr. Marina Jaworsky, CVMA Board President. "As an association that supports these professionals as much as we possibly can, we're challenged with identifying and implementing meaningful ways to encourage veterinary professionals to practice self-care and seek help when work and life stresses become overwhelming."

Fortunately, earlier in 2023, CVMA staff and board created and implemented a program for its members designed to provide additional mental health support.

“Earlier this year, CVMA implemented “Pawsitive Minds” – a new benefit that provides our members with easily navigable and confidential access to a vast network of mental health providers that helps them seek care quickly,” explained Ray McGury, CVMA Executive Director. “It’s certainly a starting point for us to help provide the support systems that the professionals in our industry so desperately need in order to help them accomplish the work they’re inspired to do.”

Resources for helping shine a light on World Suicide Prevention Day can be found on the International Association for Suicide Prevention’s website at: www.iasp.info.

If you or someone you know is struggling with thoughts of suicide, call, text, or chat 988 to reach the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for free, immediate and confidential support.

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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[©]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.