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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CVMA Provides Chicagoland Pet Families with Free Grief Resources** *Chicago Veterinary Medical Association offers helpline and pet loss support group*

The loss of a beloved animal companion can be profoundly impactful. In recognition of this fact, the Chicago Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) provides free grief resources for Chicagoland pet owners and families, including its Pet Loss Helpline and its support group, "Wings."

The Pet Loss Helpline is operated by trained, compassionate volunteers who retrieve messages from grieving families and return their call to offer a comforting ear, helpline packets of information, and many other resources. Pet owners can contact the helpline and leave a message by calling, 630-325-1600.

The Human-Animal Bond Committee was formed in 1992 to create a resource for people grieving for the loss of their pets. It was the brainchild of Dr. Mary Baukert to form The CVMA Pet Loss Helpline with veterinary association members. Dr. Emil Baukert has been coordinator of the Helpline since the beginning when they took their first call on July 1st, 1993. The Human-Animal Bond Committee members aided in forming the University of Illinois Careline, and their framework was used to develop the guidelines for starting helplines for the AVMA.

CVMA mourns the passing of Dr. Mary Baukert, the beloved founder of Pet Loss Helpline. The CVMA will pay tribute to Dr. Mary Baukert by posthumously awarding the President's Service Award in recognition of her dedicated service, compassion, and contribution to the advancement of the veterinary profession.

The “Wings” Pet Loss Support Group, which was started in 2001 as an extension of the helpline, meets via Zoom the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm. The group is led by a licensed psychologist who guides participants in working through their grief. While there is no fee for the service, donations, which are tax-deductible, are appreciated and gladly accepted. Interested support group participants need to contact Dr. Linda Harper at [linda@drlindaharper.com](mailto:linda@drlindaharper.com) for more details about joining the group.

“Your veterinary caregivers observe the depth of the bond between pets and their people and are keenly aware of the pain that families experience upon the loss or anticipated death of a beloved animal,” explained Dr. Marina Jaworsky, CVMA Board President. “CVMA is honored to help grieving pet families by providing helpful resources for them to work through the understandable sorrow that unfortunately comes with the loss of a pet.”

“Coping with the loss of a beloved animal companion can be incredibly challenging. I would encourage anyone who is struggling with pet loss to take advantage of the supportive resources that CVMA provides,” said Ray McGury, CVMA Executive Director. “The first-rate, complimentary resources that CVMA offers can provide immeasurable help and essential coping mechanisms for people experiencing one of the saddest moments in their lives.”

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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<sup>c</sup>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.