

**ATTACHMENT G: PRESS RELEASE FROM THE
AMERICAN VETERINARY ASSOCIATION**



PRESS RELEASE

AVMA Offers Tips to Prevent Dog Bites During National Dog Bite Prevention Week May 16-22

SCHAUMBURG, IL -- Responsible pet ownership and safe behavior are critical to preventing a major public health problem of our children -- dog bites.

Each year more than 4.7 million people are bitten by dogs, and approximately 60% of those bitten are children. Almost a million people seek medical treatment, while about 10 to 20 people each year die as a result of dog bites.

"Dog bites can result in serious, life-threatening injury to victims and can leave survivors scarred and disfigured. This is a important issue for all of us," said Dr. Richard C. Swanson, president of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). "Fortunately, it is also a problem that largely can be controlled."

May 16-22 marks National Dog Bite Prevention Week, a campaign developed by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). The AVMA signed on with the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons, National Animal Control, the United States Postal Service, and State Farm Insurance as cosponsors of this year's event.

Dog Bite Prevention Campaign

Since May 1998, AVMA and State Farm Insurance have distributed more than seven million free brochures, posters, and children's activity books providing information on responsible pet ownership and safe behavior around dogs.

"We want to provide information so that dog owners can socialize their pets and help them become friendly companions," said Dan Hattaway, State Farm Insurance. "At the same time, we want to teach people how to avoid being bitten."

These are also the goals of a multidisciplinary task force established by the AVMA. Immediately after National Dog Bite Prevention Week, the AVMA Task Force on Canine Aggression and Human-Canine Interactions will hold its second meeting during which it will continue developing a multifaceted, community-oriented model program for addressing the dog bite problem.

Members of the 15-person task force include representatives from the AVMA, the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Emergency Physicians, the AVMA's Professional Liability Insurance Trust, the insurance industry, the American Medical Association, national humane organizations, the National Animal Control Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the legal profession.

"The dog bite problem can only be effectively controlled with complete community

support. It is hoped that our model program will provide community leaders with the tools they need to control dog bite injuries within their jurisdictions," said Dr. Bonnie Beaver, a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, an AVMA Executive Board member, and chair of the task force. "Educational efforts, such as National Dog Bite Prevention Week, will be an important part of that program," Dr. Beaver added.

Tips to Prevent Dog Bites

To reduce the chance of your dog biting someone, consider the following:

- Socialize your dog so it feels at ease around people and other animals.
- Don't put your dog in situations where it may feel threatened or teased.
- Obey leash laws. Don't let your dog roam free.
- Train your dog to obey basic commands such as "stay," "sit," and "come."
- Keep your dog healthy with proper vaccinations. Control parasites.

If you are approached by a dog, these tips may reduce your chances of being attacked:

- Don't run away.
- Stay still until the dog leaves, or back away slowly until the dog is out of sight.
- Avoid eye contact. Remain calm.
- If you fall to the ground or are knocked down, curl into a ball, placing your hands over your head and neck. Protect your face.

For more information, visit AVMA's [Dog Bite](#) page or State Farm Insurance at www.statefarm.com.

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