

### PVSEC'S CELEBRITY PATIENT GOES HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

"Cassius", the 8 year-old boxer mix who was treated at PVSEC for complications resulting from a copperhead snake bite has finally returned to his family in Colorado. Cassius was brought to PVSEC in August 2009 when swelling of his head, torso and front legs and marked lethargy were noticed by his owner after hiking with "Cassius" outside her mother's home in West Virginia. After he survived the initial crisis and first bout of sepsis, he underwent many skin grafts and was deemed not well enough to travel back to Colorado with his family. During the next three months, "Cassius" underwent treatments and dressing changes, and became a mascot-of-sorts for PVSEC and a housemate of Dr. Tracey Jackson, the internist who was chiefly involved in his care. Every day, "Cassius" would ride to work with Dr. Jackson and could often be seen visiting other PVSEC doctors and staff throughout the hospital. The doctors and staff of PVSEC also threw "Cassius" a farewell party, complete with balloons and chicken-treats for "Cassius" and cake for the human party-goers.



"Cassius" was not able to participate in Halloween festivities this year with his family—last year he was clad as the "Tin-Man" with mom and three young children dressed as the "Wicked Witch", "Dorothy", "Scarecrow" and the "Cowardly Lion"—but getting home for Thanksgiving was still possible. The goal of returning him to his family in time for Thanksgiving was attained: Dr. Jackson's husband drove "Cassius" 15 hours to Kansas on November 25, where "Cassius'" owners were waiting to pick him up and drive him the rest of the way home to Colorado.

### PVSEC CONTINUING EDUCATION IN 2010

The doctors and management of PVSEC are very pleased with the great feedback we have received from the greater Pittsburgh veterinary community regarding the educational programs we have conducted at our hospital. Our commitment to serving as a regional resource center remains strong, however we will be spacing the programs differently, beginning in spring 2010. There will be no scheduled continuing education event in March or April but the speakers' series will resume in May and will continue on a bimonthly basis thereafter.

Technician CE programs will continue to be offered in 2010 at PVSEC. Dr. Jay Zachman of Hills Pet Nutrition will be offering a full-day workshop to 20 vet techs on January 27, 2010. The focus of the seminar will be deciphering nutritional content from pet food labels and will include one-on-one instruction. Participants will receive 8 hours of RACE credit and plenty of hands-on practice. Please contact Dr. Zachman directly at (330) 697-2660 to RSVP for the "Veterinary Technical Nutritional Counselor Program".

Due to the overwhelming interest in Dr. Mendoza's fall veterinary technician dental continuing education talk, we will offer another session of the "Veterinary Dentistry for Technicians" talk on February 17, 2010. Technicians should contact Andie Furda by email ([afurda@pvs-ec.com](mailto:afurda@pvs-ec.com)) or phone (412)348-2564 to register

In addition, many veterinary specialty hospitals which provide educational programs also respectfully suggest financial contributions to the charitable organizations associated with their hospitals. You will notice that invitations to future PVSEC Continuing Education events will include information about the Animal Care & Assistance Fund (ACAF), which is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of animal welfare. Contributions made to ACAF are tax-deductible, can be allocated to any of the ACAF funds, and may be made online at [www.animalcarefund.org](http://www.animalcarefund.org) or by check, made payable to "Animal Care & Assistance Fund. Donations made by check can either be mailed to ACAF at 4514 Plummer Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15237 or given in person, while at PVSEC for continuing education events. Please contact Andie Furda at [afurda@pvs-ec.com](mailto:afurda@pvs-ec.com) or 412-348-2564 with any questions or suggestions regarding continuing education events at PVSEC.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**January 13, 2010 7:00 – 9:00 PM**

"Corneal Disease" Rachel Keller, DVM, DACVO—PVSEC Ophthalmology (2 hours veterinarian CE credit)

**January 27, 2010 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM**

"Veterinary Technical Nutritional Counselor Program" Jay Zachman, DVM—Hills Pet Nutrition (8 hours vet tech RACE Credit)

**February 11, 2010 7:00 – 9:00 PM**

"Canine Osteosarcoma" Rebecca Newman, DVM, MS, DACVIM (Oncology)—PVSEC Oncology (2 hours veterinarian CE Credit)

**February 17, 2010 7:00 – 9:00 PM**

"Veterinary Dentistry for Technicians" Krista Mendoza, DVM, DAVDC —PVSEC Dentistry (2 hours vet tech CE credit)



### REFERRAL DISPATCH

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#### **Contributors**

##### What is a Referral

##### Liaison?

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Administrator)

##### Referrals Made Easy

John T. Payne, DVM,  
DACVS (PVSEC Surgery)

##### ACAF Animal Blood Bank

Michele Bozic (ACAF  
Program Director)

##### PVSEC's Celebrity Patient

##### Goes Home

Tracey Jackson, DVM,  
DACVIM (PVSEC Internal  
Medicine)

## WHAT IS A REFERRAL LIAISON?

Karen Seger, LVT, has recently expanded upon the educational and marketing work she has overseen for PetsDx Veterinary Imaging. Prior to November 2009, Karen had visited many western PA veterinary practices and presented informational talks regarding the MRI and CT imaging services provided by PetsDx. When Karen became a member of the PVSEC administrative team in November, her role at the hospital changed. She will continue to present lunch and learn seminars for PetsDx, and is currently working with the PVSEC practice owners to develop new content to present to referring veterinary hospitals. The aim of these presentations is to aid in the education of referring veterinarians and their staff. They will also benefit referring practices by increasing the awareness of our specialty departments and the many advanced diagnostic, treatment, and surgical options offered at PVSEC.

According to Ken Spokane, PVSEC Hospital Administrator, another important goal for Karen as a Referral Liaison is the improvement of communication between referring veterinarians and PVSEC and PetsDx doctors. By gaining an in-depth understanding of the PVSEC referral process and familiarity with the medical procedures performed by the doctors and staff at PVSEC, Karen is able to address questions raised by referring veterinarians and help to resolve any problems that arise. During her visits to tri-state area veterinary hospitals and her attendance at public symposiums and veterinary continuing education events, Karen will be able to inform about changes to our hospital, collect feedback and help to promote and maintain the positive relationships that PVSEC/PetsDx strives for with referring veterinary professionals.

## THE REFERRAL PROCESS MADE EASY!

1. If you have a critical or emergency referral, please call us and fax the referral sheet to alert us that the referral is time-sensitive. We will make every effort to get your patient into our clinic as soon as possible.
2. For emergency referrals, you are welcome to send patients through the emergency department and they will be assessed, triaged, and transferred to the appropriate specialty service as needed. Please send all pertinent medical records, lab results, and radiographs with the patient or FAX them to our office with the referral form.
3. For radiographic consults on potential referrals, please call ahead to alert us if it is a time-critical problem. This will ensure that we are looking for the radiographs and will respond in a timely fashion. Please send radiographs to the attention of a specific specialty service.
4. Routine referrals are scheduled as soon as possible within the client's schedule. To accommodate urgent cases, appointments for stable or asymptomatic patients may involve a longer delay. We maintain cancellation lists for owners who would like to come in sooner and are available on short notice.
5. We are happy to provide a cost estimate to either you or your clients before referral. We will discuss a more detailed and accurate estimate with the client at the time of consultation. This may differ from the preliminary estimate if the patient's condition is different from our expectations. Providing a detailed case summary, laboratory results, and medical records with the referral makes it easier to provide an accurate initial estimate and reduces calls for additional information the day of the appointment.
6. Please call us promptly with feedback . . . particularly if we are not meeting your expectations.

## PETS GIVING PETS THE GIFT OF LIFE—ACAF ANIMAL BLOOD BANK

Thanks in part to Antech Diagnostics and financial donations to the Animal Care & Assistance Fund (ACAF), the ACAF Animal Blood Bank will be soon be operational. The volunteer blood bank will provide safe, humane and local source of canine and feline blood products for life-saving transfusions performed at PVSEC.

In order to ensure the safety of both potential blood donors and transfusion recipients, Blood Donor Heroes must meet eligibility requirements and pass health screenings:



### ANIMAL CARE & ASSISTANCE FUND

Once the pet is determined to be a healthy, eligible blood donor, the procedure may continue. The pet's owner may call PVSEC to schedule a blood donation appointment. In preparation for the appointment, canine blood donors should be fasted for 10-12 hours. A consent form must be signed by the owner when the pet is dropped off at PVSEC and the donor hero may be picked up in a few hours.

In addition to the treats and TLC given by PVSEC staff after blood donation, donors are given a free physical exam and blood testing to establish their eligibility, an ID tag, Blood Donor Hero bandana and free blood products, should they ever require a transfusion, themselves. In order to make the blood testing—provided to donors free of charge—cost-effective, 3-4 donations per year are required of all blood donors.

Prior to the founding of the ACAF Animal Blood Bank, the emergency and critical care departments at PVSEC administered canine and feline blood transfusions and maintained a supply of packed red blood cells, fresh frozen plasma and also arranged for occasional emergency blood donations from doctor and staff pets to hospitalized patients. "Daisy" is one of the patients saved by the availability of canine blood products.

"In September 2008, our beloved pug puppy, Daisy, ingested rat poison which caused her to hemorrhage internally and very nearly die. The team at Pittsburgh Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Center saved her life. Without the ready supply of canine blood, they would not have been able to save her. We will be forever thankful to the wonderful staff and their caring and dedication for ensuring that we will enjoy many more years with Daisy."

- Nadine and Sean



An important feature of the ACAF Animal Blood Bank is the fact that blood is only accepted from volunteer donors. This is a testament to the ACAF belief that the quality of life for one animal should not be enhanced at the expense of another. To register an animal for blood donation, call the ACAF Animal Blood bank at 412-348-2589. For more information on making a tax-deductible financial donation to the Animal Care & Assistance Fund, call Michele Bozic at 412-348-2588 or visit the ACAF website at [www.animalcarefund.org](http://www.animalcarefund.org).