

Free eye exams for service and working animals offered in May by Cummings Veterinary Medical Center at Tufts University



An eye exam is performed on a dog at Cummings Veterinary Medical Center at Tufts University.
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NORTH GRAFTON, Mass. (April 12, 2018)—Service animals—from guide dogs to military and search and rescue animals, and many others in important roles—selflessly help their humans each day, depending on their vision to perform vital tasks that their owners or other humans often cannot. In May 2018, Cummings Veterinary Medical Center at Tufts University will join the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO) to support these animals during the 11th annual ACVO/StokesRx National Service Animal Eye Exam event.

As part of this initiative, Tufts board-certified veterinary ophthalmologists will offer free ocular screening exams for service animals to take place at the Henry and Lois Foster Hospital for Small Animals (<http://vetmed.tufts.edu/foster-hospital-small-animals/>) in North Grafton, MA, as well as at Tufts Veterinary

Emergency Treatment & Specialties (Tufts VETS) (<http://tuftsvets.org>) in Walpole, MA. These exams will be offered to service animals during day-long events at Foster Hospital in North Grafton on Saturday, May 5, and Tuesday, May 22. In Walpole, Tufts VETS will offer appointments spaced throughout the month.

“Service animals do so much for their people,” says Stephanie Pumphrey, DVM, DACVO, a veterinary ophthalmologist at Foster Hospital in North Grafton. “It’s important to protect their vision and make sure they can perform at their best.”

Criteria and registration

All animals must be formally trained service, working or therapy animals who are currently working and must have written proof of training and/or active registration for therapy only. Those who are interested in scheduling an exam for their service animal should check the criteria and register online at www.ACVOeyeexam.org (<http://www.ACVOeyeexam.org>) in order to receive a registration number. Appointments may then be scheduled at Tufts by calling (508) 887-4839 for appointments at Foster Hospital in North Grafton (<http://news.vet.tufts.edu/2018/03/national-service-animal-eye-exam-event/>) and (508) 668-5454 for appointments at Tufts VETS in Walpole. Registration ends April 30. Owners are asked to bring their service animal’s paperwork with them to the appointment.

What to expect

During the eye exams, Tufts board-certified veterinary ophthalmologists will look for evidence of ocular disease that could lead to visual impairment or otherwise affect the animal’s ability to work— this includes cataracts and other retinal disorders.

“The best part of this event is getting to help these animals who play such an important role in the lives of their owners,” says Federica Maggio, DVM, DACVO, a veterinary ophthalmologist at Tufts VETS who has participated in past years. “We witness firsthand the important bond they share.”

Cats and other small service animals also can register to receive free sight-saving exams.

The American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists is an approved veterinary specialty organization of the American Board of Veterinary Specialties that board certifies veterinarians as ophthalmologists. The organization developed the ACVO/StokesRX National Service Animal Eye Exam event in 2008, and since its inception, nearly 60,000 Service and Working Animals have received free screening eye exams— including approximately 7,500 in 2017 during the 10th Anniversary event.

Editors, producers and reporters:

If you wish to take photographs or film a patient appointment, you may work with Tufts Public Relations to do so at the May 22 event at Foster Hospital or at available times at Tufts VETS in Walpole. High-resolution photography will also be available to media following the May 22 event.

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About Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University

Founded in 1978 in North Grafton, Mass., Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University is internationally esteemed for academic programs that impact society and the practice of veterinary medicine; seven teaching hospitals and clinics that combined log more than 80,000 animal cases each year; and

groundbreaking research that benefits animal, human, and environmental health.

Related Links

Additional information on ACVO/StokesRX National Service Animal Eye Exam event