

For Immediate Release

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**Norwalk Veterinary Medical Center Chosen as the American Animal
Hospital Association Accredited Practice of the Year**

LAKEWOOD, Colorado, U.S.A. (March 29, 2011) - The American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) honored the Norwalk Veterinary Medical Center of Norwalk, Ohio, U.S.A. as the winner of the 2011 AAHA-Accredited Practice of the Year award, during the AAHA/OVMA Conference in Toronto, Canada.

The goal of these awards is to recognize and celebrate the outstanding achievements of accredited practice teams. The Norwalk Veterinary Medical Center was chosen from five finalists.

Each entry was evaluated on their most recent accreditation score, mission and vision statements, AAHA branding, practice design, practice team composition, continuing education and training, community service, and compliance improvement efforts.

“AAHA believes that the success of a veterinary practice depends on the entire team working together to provide quality pet care,” said Dr. Michael Cavanaugh, DVM, DABVP, AAHA Executive Director. “This practice epitomizes the word team and demonstrates a passionate commitment to veterinary excellence.”

“Accreditation increases our commitment to each other as team members by holding us accountable to 900 quality standards that help us achieve our mission of creating a welcoming environment, providing quality care, and encouraging our clients to become part of their pet’s healthcare team,” said Dr. Ronald Hendrikson, Hospital Director of The Norwalk Veterinary Medical Center.

For example, Norwalk Veterinary Medical Center demonstrates a commitment to continuing education and training by providing frequent practice team training activities. This is reflected in their annual goal of 100 hours per team member of continuing education and team building.

Maintaining the standards of accreditation is paramount to the mission of this practice. Olathe Animal Hospital of Olathe, Kansas took second place honors. Third place went to Paws Integrative Veterinary Center of Tucson, Ariz. The two honorable mentions went to Animal Care Clinic of San Luis Obispo, California and Coal Creek Veterinary Hospital of Centennial, Colorado.

This year, the AAHA Accredited Referral Practice of the Year Award was introduced as well. Upstate Veterinary Specialists of Greenville, S.C. took home this prestigious inaugural honor. Upstate maintains its relationships with referring veterinarians and clients by providing numerous avenues of communication and opportunities to elicit feedback. This practice has earned accreditation in three specialties including surgery, small animal internal medicine, and oncology .

AAHA will profile each winner in upcoming issues of the Association’s Trends magazine.

About AAHA

Established in 1933, The American Animal Hospital Association is the only organization that accredits veterinary practices throughout the U.S. and Canada for dedication to high standards of veterinary care. Approximately 3,200 AAHA accredited practices pass regular reviews of AAHA's stringent accreditation standards that cover patient care, client service and medical protocols.