

OCSA VOP Talking & Discussion Points

If you accept an interview, you might keep these talking points in mind. We want to ensure that the overall goals and initiatives of OCSA's Veterinary Outreach Program are relayed accurately, so review these. Please contact our publicist at kelly@wisecarverpr.com if you have any questions at all about how to handle an upcoming interview.

What is the Veterinary Outreach Program?

The Chicago-based Ovarian Cancer Symptom Awareness organization, OCSA, invited the Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association (ISVMA) and its members to partner with them in a unique awareness campaign surrounding the silent and often-missed symptoms of ovarian cancer. This partnership was announced in November 2012 and launched in January 2013.

The OCSA Veterinary Outreach Program (VOP) mission is "fighting ovarian cancer with animal passion," and seeks to engage and collaborate with the veterinary community members who have immediate access to individuals already inclined to discuss health issues in their presence.

Do pet owners really speak to their veterinarian about personal health issues?

According to Peter Weber, executive director, Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association, ISVMA members report pet owners talking about their pet's health often feel comfortable talking to the veterinarian about their own health concerns. This provides that veterinarian a platform that offers an easy transition into difficult concerns and conversations.

Why veterinarians?

You may not know that veterinarians' medical discipline is charged with promoting and protecting public health, and ensuring an environment free from animal-borne diseases in addition to caring for the animals they serve.

We embrace this charge and welcome the opportunity to help not only our pets but our pets' owners and family members by being aware, sharing information and encouraging pet owners to take care of themselves.

In addition, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association, over 80 percent of veterinarians graduating today are female. This increases the possibility of a personal connection to the disease and a viable tie to the purpose of this program.

What are the silent symptoms of the disease that you'll share?

Four symptoms common to the disease, bloating, pelvic pain, difficulty eating and frequent or urgent urination, are often ignored warning signs by women. As a result, ovarian cancer often goes undetected until it reaches advanced stages.

Why is this important?

Each year, over 22,000 women in the U.S. are diagnosed with ovarian cancer each year, and approximately 15,000 women die from the disease.

The collaboration and exchange of information can ultimately help save lives.

To further show their support of the veterinary community, OCSA has also established a veterinary scholarship in the name of OCSA co-founder, Susan M. Roman, who lost her life to the disease in early 2012. The OCSA Veterinary Scholarship is designed to award three \$5,000 scholarships each year to veterinary discipline students whose lives have been influenced by ovarian cancer.

What will clients see when they enter a VOP clinic?

The OCSA VOP members will have a counter display in which they'll offer an ovarian cancer fact brochure from OCSA, and an appealing photo card and poster featuring the ambassador dog, Sharrah's Champion Khalin. Khalin is a certified therapy dog and retired champion Afghan Hound owned by OCSA's executive director, Vallie Szymanski.

Who has guided the medical information for training?

Dr. Julian Schink from Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Prentice Women's Hospital is the lead gynecological cancer specialist on the OCSA board of directors and guiding the medical leadership.

Our entire staff reviews the educational presentations or material, and our team is instructed to listen to their clients. If a pet owner shares information about having symptoms that could be experienced by those with ovarian cancer, they will be advised to see their doctor, preferably a gynecologist. It's all about early detection and saving lives.

Where are VOP veterinary clinics located?

Right now, OCSA is welcoming veterinary clinics around the state, and with continued education to veterinary students nationwide, and an increasing awareness about the program, this will become a nationally-recognized awareness initiative that's supported by clinics everywhere.

What other partners are involved?

A host of partners have joined the campaign and information regarding the growing support network can be found at www.ovariancancersymptomawareness.org.

One important organization that illustrates how the veterinary community and medical community can work together is the One Health Commission. One Health has partnered with OCSA and the VOP and is the collaborative effort of multiple health science professions, together with their related disciplines and institutions working locally, nationally, and globally to attain optimal health for people, domestic animals, wildlife, plants, and our environment. Visit www.onehealthcommission.com for information.