



## US Pet Insurance Founder Reflects on 30th Anniversary of Pet Insurance Industry

*Dr. Jack Stephens, the veterinarian who founded the first US pet insurance company and issued the first pet insurance policy to TV dog Lassie in California in the 1980s looks back on 30 years of helping pet owners afford the best vet care.*



Boise, ID- April 19, 2012- The month of April marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary since Dr. Jack Stephens, who's considered the "founder" of pet health insurance in North America, issued the first pet insurance policy to esteemed celebrity dog Lassie.

Dr. Stephens said it amazes him to think back on how the US pet insurance industry came to be.

"In 1979 a client and her daughter brought their dog 'Buffy' into my practice," Dr. Stephens said.

"Ultimately, the mother decided she couldn't afford the dog's treatment and requested euthanasia."

Dr. Stephens said he complied with a heavy heart. A few weeks later he ran into the mother and her daughter at the local grocery store.

"When her mother asked her daughter if she remembered me, she replied, 'Yes, you're the man who killed my dog.'"

Dr. Stephens said this encounter shook him to the core and ultimately resulted in his decision to find a better solution than euthanasia being administered only because of treatment cost. Shortly after, he founded the first US pet insurance company and then issued the famous TV dog with the first pet insurance policy written in the US.

Having founded not one but two pet insurance companies in the past 30 years, Dr. Stephens said his mission when creating Pets Best Insurance in 2005 was to continually improve upon the strides he had already made in the industry and make pet insurance better by paying a flat percentage of veterinary costs.

"When I started Pets Best Insurance, I wanted to make pet insurance even better and more predictable for pet owners than it was. Pets Best Insurance and pet insurance as a whole continue to grow."

According to Packaged Facts, the pet insurance market in the US is marked for continued strong annual growth.



“In 2009 alone industry revenues reached over \$300 million which was up 16% over the year prior in a down economy,” Dr. Stephens said. “This is another indication of how strong our bond is with pets and the need for pet health insurance.”

Packaged Facts predicts the industry in North America alone will reach \$881 million by 2014—an annual growth rate of 20%.

Dr. Stephens said the North American market for pet insurance has never before seen so many viable competitors—but with brawny market share, there are two primary things that have and will continue set Pets Best Insurance apart.

“We are both pet focused and devotedly passionate about living up to our name of Pets Best,” Dr. Stephens said.

Dr. Jack Stephens is available for interviews.

Pet insurance plans offered and administered by Pets Best Insurance are underwritten by Independence American Insurance Company, a Delaware Insurance company. Independence American Insurance Company is a member of The IHC Group, an insurance organization composed of Independence Holding Company, a public company traded on the New York Stock Exchange, and its operating subsidiaries. The IHC Group has been providing life, health and stop loss insurance solutions for nearly 30 years. For information on The IHC Group, visit: [www.ihcgroup.com](http://www.ihcgroup.com). In states in which Independence American Insurance Company’s new policy form has not yet received regulatory approval, Aetna Insurance Company of Connecticut will underwrite policies. To determine the underwriter in your state, please call Pets Best at 1-866-929-3807

For more information, visit Pets Best Insurance at [www.petsbest.com](http://www.petsbest.com) or phone 877-PetsBest (738-7237). You may also follow them on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/petsbestinsurance](http://www.facebook.com/petsbestinsurance).

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