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CONTACT: Jamie Baxter  
775.322.4022

[jamie@theimpetusagency.com](mailto:jamie@theimpetusagency.com)

**Veterans Day Virtual Lecture:  
Efficacy of Service Dogs for Veterans Living with Post-traumatic Stress**

*IDEXX Sponsored Lecture Highlights Research on the Human-Animal Bond for Our Nation's Veterans and the Importance of Veterinary Medicine*

**WASHINGTON, DC (November 11, 2020)** – The Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI) and IDEXX held a virtual lecture on the health benefits of psychiatric service dogs for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This is the first lecture of the IDEXX Human-Animal Bond Lecture Series, which highlights impactful scientific research on the health benefits of the human-animal bond and the importance of veterinary medicine in strengthening human-animal bonds.

The Veterans Day lecture, titled *The Efficacy of Service Dogs for Veterans with PTSD*, featured a conversation with Marguerite E. O'Haire, PhD, Associate Professor of Human-Animal Interaction, Center for the Human-Animal Bond at Purdue University. Dr. O'Haire discussed findings and implications of her groundbreaking HABRI-funded study, *Preliminary efficacy of service dogs as a complementary, therapeutic treatment for post-traumatic stress in military members, veterans and their families*.

"IDEXX is proud to sponsor this lecture series which will serve as a valuable educational resource for both the general public and for the veterinary community about the science of the human-animal bond," said Kerry Bennett, Corporate Vice President, IDEXX. "We know pet owners rely on their veterinarians to deliver scientific information about the health benefits of their pets, and when veterinarians and animal health professionals effectively communicate the science of the human-animal bond, they can strengthen bonds by encouraging compliance and improving animal care and welfare."

Published in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* in 2018, Dr. O'Haire's proof-of-concept study assessed the efficacy of service dogs as a complementary treatment for military members and veterans living with PTSD. Results indicate that those with a service dog exhibited significantly lower overall PTSD symptom severity, including increased overall psychological well-being; a better ability to cope with flashbacks and anxiety attacks; a lower frequency of nightmares and less overall sleep disturbance; lower overall anxiety, depression, and anger; higher levels of companionship and social reintegration; and lower levels of social isolation, in comparison to those on the waitlist to receive a service dog. The success of this study led to a large-scale National Institutes of Health (NIH) clinical trial, which is ongoing and expected to be completed in 2021.

“This virtual lecture was an exciting opportunity to share the important findings that demonstrate the efficacy of service dogs for reducing PTSD symptomology in war veterans, who deserve the healing support of service dogs,” said Steven Feldman, Executive Director of HABRI. “HABRI is grateful for IDEXX for making this lecture series possible, so that veterinary health professionals and pet owners can learn more about the many ways in which the science of the human-animal bond benefits our collective health and wellness.”

The lecture remains available for viewing on-demand at <http://www.habri.org/HAB-Lectures>.

### **About HABRI**

HABRI is a not-for-profit organization that maintains the world’s largest online library of human-animal bond research and information; funds innovative research projects to scientifically document the health benefits of companion animals; and informs the public about human-animal bond research and the beneficial role of companion animals in society. For more information, please visit <https://www.habri.org/>

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