



# Frequently Asked Questions

## Introduction

You will find answers to the most commonly asked questions about the AKC Canine Health Foundation here. If you have any additional questions or would like more information about any of these topics please contact us!

<http://www.akcchf.org/about-us/contact-us.html>

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: What does the AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) do?**

**A:** CHF raises money to support canine health research. We make grants to investigators that are looking for:

- The cause(s) of disease
- Earlier, more accurate diagnosis
- Accurate, positive prognosis
- Effective, efficient treatment

CHF also supports educational programs that bring scientists together to discuss their work and develop new collaborations to further advance canine health.

### **Q: How is CHF associated with the American Kennel Club (AKC)?**

**A:** The AKC created CHF in 1995 as a 501(c)3 charitable organization with the mission of raising funds to support canine health research. CHF is currently located in the Raleigh, North Carolina offices of the AKC, and they provide us with office space and other services. This in-kind donation allows CHF to keep operating expenses low and apply a greater percentage of donations directly to canine health research. In addition, AKC generously contributes financial support for health research. However, CHF is a separate organization with our own Board of Directors, staff and accounting system.

### **Q: Why is canine health research so important?**

**A:** The American Pet Products Association estimates that more than \$45.4 billion was spent on our pets in 2009. That translates into the fact that people's dogs have become part of the family, and we want them to live for a long time. CHF supports health research that will benefit dogs so that they can live longer, healthier lives. The genetic research helps breeders produce healthier puppies, and the clinical research helps all dogs that visit the veterinarian.



### **Q: How do I find out more about the research CHF is funding for a particular disease?**

**A:** Visit our searchable grants database to see research for a specific disease.

### **Q: Why haven't you done anything for MY breed?**

**A:** Each year, CHF asks Parent Clubs to determine their top five health concerns. This list is compiled and publicized to investigators through the Request for Pre-proposal and on the website. Not all Parent Clubs respond to this request, and there aren't always research projects going on to benefit every breed. CHF does make a concerted effort, however, to assist breed clubs in finding research that will be of benefit. And don't forget that just because a research project isn't "breed-specific" doesn't mean it won't help your breed! Often, genetic research done in one breed will benefit another breed. Since many breeds are related and share conserved parts of the genome, genetic findings in one breed provide scientists with a place to start looking in another. Additionally, clinical research (diagnosis, prognosis and treatment) helps everyone!

### **Q: Does CHF have researchers on staff?**

**A:** CHF is a grant-making organization. We give money to research institutions to perform investigations that will benefit canine health. We do not conduct the research ourselves.

CHF has a Chief Scientific Officer who oversees the entire grants management program. The Director works closely

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with our Grants Committee, which is made up primarily of veterinarians, human medical doctors and individuals with a background in science (often with PhDs). These individuals review ACORN applications (small, pilot studies) for funding. OAK applications (large, longer term projects) are sent out for review by other experts in the field addressed by the proposal.

### **Q:** [How do you decide what research to fund?](#)

**A:** CHF's grant process is distinctive in that it gathers information about canine health priorities from AKC Parent Clubs. We listen to the concerns of the dog owners/breeders and encourage our investigators to submit applications to the Foundation based on this closely monitored feedback. The unique alliance with the Parent Clubs also allows us to work together to fund the research and provide samples for faster, more efficient research.

We impact the health of your dogs through two types of research grants, OAKs and ACORNs. OAKs are traditional grants that are funded on an annual cycle. Major goals of our OAKs, which generally last more than a year and are \$12,000 or more, are to target our "three pronged" approach: prevention, treatment and cure.

ACORNs, or seed research projects, are designed to allow researchers to complete small, relatively short timeframe projects and generate preliminary data for possible future OAK proposals. Generally lasting for less than a year and only funded up to \$12,000, the Foundation's Grants Committee will review and fund these projects throughout the year. This is a program unique to CHF and has received positive feedback from investigators who are able to begin research without the delays usually associated with traditional grant cycles.

Our grants review process is rigorous and stringent. Applications are reviewed by experts in the application's field of study and funding decisions are approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors. We go to great lengths to guarantee that funded research is of the highest quality and thereby ensure that the results are significant and add to the body of research which will benefit canines and ultimately humans.

### **Q:** [Have there been any major breakthroughs as a result of CHF funding?](#)

**A:** Yes! CHF-funded researchers have made significant discoveries since 1995. In 2004, the first draft of the genome was fully sequenced by the Broad Institute (this information was published in Science in December of 2005). However, character-

ization of the genome started years earlier and continues on today. CHF has supported research projects that contributed to mapping the full genome. Identification of microsatellites and SNPs (Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms) across the genome led to the tools which enabled researchers to scan the entire genome for mutations. CHF funded research also created canine mRNA arrays to study gene expression and canine miRNA arrays. These tools are the foundation of canine genetic research.

## Discoveries which developed genetic tests made possible by CHF:

- Neonatal Encephalopathy in the Standard Poodle
- Exercised-Induced Collapse in the Labrador Retriever
- Degenerative Myelopathy in the Pembroke Welsh Corgi
- X-Linked Progressive Retinal Atrophy (XL-PRA) in the Samoyeds and Siberian Huskies
- Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) in the Miniature Schnauzers, Miniature Poodles, and Toy Poodles
- Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) in the English Springer Spaniels
- Juvenile Hereditary Cataracts in the Staffordshire Bull Terrier and Boston Terrier
- Cystinuria in the Newfoundlands
- Mucopolysaccharidosis (MPS) Type VI in the Miniature Pinschers
- von Willebrand's Disease Type I
- Congenital Stationary Night Blindness in the Briards
- Fanconi Syndrome in the Basenjis
- Hyperparathyroidism in the Keeshond
- Coat Color for the Briards, English Setters, Miniature Schnauzers, and the Pug Dog
- Ridgelessness in the Rhodesian Ridgeback
- Leonberger Polyneuropathy (LPN1)
- Neuronal Ceroid Lipofuscinosis
- Primary Lens Luxation

## Other Research

CHF supports the work of Dr. Cynthia Otto at the University of Pennsylvania to follow the health of the Search and Rescue dogs that were deployed after 911. They are happy to report that after seven years, researchers have no increase in respiratory problems or can-



cer in the dogs that were deployed compared to a control group of Search and Rescue dogs.

CHF has also supported research that has improved treatments for a variety of diseases including various types of cancer and heart diseases. Please read about our many other success stories.

**Q: [How are the results of this research used and disseminated?](#)**

**A:** CHF funded researchers are encouraged to publish their results in peer-reviewed journals. Through these publications and through presentations at scientific conferences, research results are shared with fellow researchers and veterinary practitioners. Ultimately, treatment advances appear in your local vet clinic. Additionally, CHF has the revised abstracts of completed grants in our searchable grants database. News releases are sent when discoveries are made to notify our constituents of these advancements.

**Q: [How much has CHF raised for research programs?](#)**

**A:** CHF allocates approximately \$1.5 million per year to new canine health research projects. Since its inception in 1995, over \$29 million has been approved.

**Q: [Where does the funding come from?](#)**

**A:** The American Kennel Club, Nestlé Purina PetCare Company and Pfizer Animal Health provide significant support. CHF receives contributions from Parent Clubs and Parent Club Foundations, All Breed Clubs and Specialty Clubs. CHF has formed alliances with organizations like the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals who make contributions in support of research. And of course, individuals, clubs and organizations contribute the balance!

**Q: [How can I help advance canine health?](#)**

**A:** There are many ways to help. If you have an AKC registered dog, submit her DNA sample (cheek swab or blood sample) to the Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) DNA databank. Encourage regular health testing by breeders (and set an example for others if you are a breeder). Get involved with your local dog club and support efforts to host health education programs. And, of course, we need your donations!

**Q: [Why are unrestricted funds important to the AKC Canine Health Foundation?](#)**

**A:** Unrestricted funds help CHF pay for overhead costs. Currently, we receive in-kind donations of space and services from the American Kennel Club which total more than \$150,000 annually. Our alliances with Nestlé Purina PetCare Company and Pfizer Animal Health also provide us with unrestricted dollars. However, these are not enough to cover the expenses

we incur by providing educational programs, visiting clubs for presentations, and all the other things it takes to keep CHF running. We are proud of our record of keeping our operating expenses low so more of your donations can go to help dogs live longer, healthier lives!

~ See more at: <http://www.akcchf.org/about-us/frequently-asked-questions.html#FAQ1>

*This article is provided by the AKC Canine Health Foundation whose mission is to advance the health of all dogs and their owners by funding sound, scientific research and supporting the dissemination of health information to prevent, treat, and cure canine disease. For more information or to support their work please visit [www.akcchf.org](http://www.akcchf.org).*

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