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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Ray McGury, Executive Director, Chicago Veterinary Medical Association, 630-461-0095, [rmcgury@chicagovma.org](mailto:rmcgury@chicagovma.org)

### **CVMA Celebrates Assistance Dogs During International Assistance Dog Week**

*Chicago Veterinary Medical Assoc. highlights unique roles of service and emotional support dogs*

International Assistance Dog Week (IADW), which was established in 2009, is celebrated annually beginning the first Sunday in August. It was founded to bring to light the importance of assistance dogs and the essential roles they play in the lives of the humans they serve, in addition to recognizing the people who raise and train these animals to perform their unique and heroic responsibilities.

This year's IADW will run from Sunday, August 6-Saturday, August 12 and the Chicago Veterinary Medical Association is pleased to join in the celebration.

While the term "Assistance Dog" is a broad category, it includes two specific types of helping animals: service dogs and emotional support canines. Service dogs, which are not considered to be pets, are highly trained animals who assist their handlers with certain specialized tasks based on the individual's needs or disability. Dogs can be trained to perform specific tasks like turning on a light, opening a cabinet or alerting their owner that it's time to take their medication. By virtue of their extensive training, service dogs have access to public places, including transportation networks, so they can support their handlers in navigating errands, appointments, and daily life.

Conversely, emotional support dogs are pets that typically do not have special training, but they can provide helpful assistance for their owners in navigating highly emotional situations like panic attacks and daily assistance for their owners in coping with mental depression and anxiety.

"Both service dogs and emotional support dogs serve very important purposes for the people they serve," explained Dr. Marina Jaworsky, CVMA Board President. "CVMA is pleased to recognize all of the great animals that

play an essential part in people's everyday lives in addition to all of the humans who are responsible for the development and care of these amazing, furry heroes that we love and trust – sometimes with our lives.”

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**About the Chicago Veterinary Medical Association:** Chicago Veterinary Medical Association is a professional network with a longstanding tradition that connects more than 1,000 veterinarians with comprehensive resources that support their continued development as champions of animal health while encouraging the fostering of the human-animal bond.

**About the Chicago Veterinary Medical Foundation:** The CVMF, established in 2009, is a 501<sup>(c)</sup>(3) charity that works with Chicagoland veterinarians to provide financial assistance to pet families in need by helping with the costs of their pet's urgent, unexpected medical and surgical bills. The Foundation's work plays a vital role in strengthening the human-animal bond by helping sick and suffering pets get well again.