



For Immediate Release
DATE: 02-08-2018
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First of Its Kind Study from Purdue University Connects Service Dogs to Decreased PTSD Symptoms Among War Veterans

(Ponte Vedra, Fla.) - Purdue University's College of Veterinary Medicine partnered with K9s For Warriors in a **ground-breaking study** which assessed the efficacy of service dogs in lowering Post-traumatic Stress symptoms among veterans. **Results published in the [Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology](#) reveal that veterans suffering from PTSD exhibited better mental health and well-being on several measures if they had a service dog, including:**

- Lower overall symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress
- Lower levels of depression
- Higher levels of life satisfaction
- Higher overall psychological well-being
- Lower levels of social isolation and greater ability to participate in social activities
- Higher levels of resilience
- Higher levels of companionship
- Less absenteeism from work due to health among those who were employed

The only areas measured in which there was no significant difference between the two groups were physical functioning and employment status.

Rory Diamond, CEO, K9s For Warriors, said "As far as formal science is concerned, there was no documented link between PTSD and how service dogs can effectively address aspects of the disability. This ground-breaking study begins to fill that research gap."

Measurements of various aspects of PTSD symptoms, quality of life, and social functioning were analyzed and compared between the research participants. Dr. Maggie O'Haire, assistant professor of human-animal interaction at Purdue, led this preliminary research study, which establishes a strong foundation for a longer-term study (enabled by a grant from the National Institutes of Health). "This innovative study applied rigorous research methodology to an area that has historically been characterized by a reliance on anecdotal accounts and intuition rather than evidence-based science," O'Haire said.

K9s For Warriors is a 501(c)3 dedicated to our American Warriors who have sacrificed their tomorrows for our todays.

The pilot study recruited 304 individuals between November 2015 and February 2016 who were accepted into the K9s For Warriors program to receive a service dog trained to mitigate PTSD symptoms. The individuals were divided into two groups: those on a waitlist to receive a dog, and those already with a service dog. The resulting research provides scientific data of mental health benefits experienced by veterans with the trained service dogs.

The study was also co-funded by the Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI) and Bayer Animal Health, a long-time sponsor of K9s For Warriors. Bayer Animal Health Vice President for Companion Animal Product Marketing David Van Brunt said the lifetime bonds that these service dogs form with their veterans are built on mutual love, care and devotion. “The results of this study demonstrate not only the impact of this unbreakable bond, but that these service dogs are so much more than service dogs; they are able to bring the joy of living back into veterans’ lives. Bayer is committed to ensuring that these service dogs receive the proper and routine care they need to support their veteran on a daily basis,” Van Brunt said.

“Pairing service dogs with our nation’s veterans should be recognized as a significant complementary method of treatment,” says HABRI Executive Director Steven Feldman. “For years, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has cited a lack of scientific research supporting service dogs for PTSD. This study is a significant step in providing scientific documentation, and I hope the promising results will prompt a renewed focus on the benefits the service dogs provide.”

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To schedule an interview with a K9s For Warriors representative, please contact Tahoma Guiry at Tahoma@K9sForWarriors.org, or call (904) 686-1956.

About K9s For Warriors

K9s For Warriors is the nation’s largest provider of service dogs to military veterans suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and/or military sexual trauma (MST) as a result of military service post-9/11. The service dog program is unique and offers an innovative approach to recovering from the invisible wounds of war. Two lives are transformed with each pairing. The veteran reduces his/her risk of suicide while the rescue dog receives a newfound purpose. Find more information at www.k9sforwarriors.org | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

The Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine pursues the advancement of global animal and human health and well-being through excellence in learning, discovery and engagement while serving as a major referral center for the diagnosis and treatment of animal diseases. Faculty research both animal and human health, with an emphasis on animal welfare science and the human-animal bond; infectious

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diseases and immunology; cancer; neuroscience; and musculoskeletal biology and orthopedics. The college is home to the **Center for the Human Animal Bond** (<http://vet.purdue.edu/chab/index.php>), which seeks to expand knowledge of the interrelationships between people, animals, and their environment. A key component of the center is the **Organization for Human-Animal Interaction Research (OHAIRE)** (<http://vet.purdue.edu/chab/ohaire/>)-- a research group led by Dr. Marguerite O'Haire that includes national and international collaborators, students, and community members working together to conduct rigorous, scientific research on the unique and pervasive effects of interacting with animals. For more information about Purdue Veterinary Medicine visit www.vet.purdue.edu.

The Human Animal Bond Research Institute (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 about the HABRI Foundation, please visit www.habri.org.

Bayer Animal Health – Science For a Better Life: the Bayer business unit Animal Health is a global leader in animal health, supporting the health of animals, as well as the farmers, veterinarians and pet owners that care for them through its offering of innovative therapies and solutions. Responsible relationships between humans, companion animals, as well as farm animals mean taking care of their health and well-being. Bayer has secured a leadership position in researching and developing products for animal health and pest control since 1919, and is constantly developing new, better products and improved forms of administration for the benefit of the animals in our lives. For more information, go to <http://animalhealth.bayer.com/>.

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