Notice from the GRCA Health & Genetics Committee

The Vector Borne Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at the NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine is recruiting cases for a funded research project, which is investigating the potential role of selected flea- and tick-borne bacteria as co-factors in the development of lymphoma in Golden Retrievers. This two-year study is being funded exclusively by the Golden Retriever Foundation and the Canine Health Foundation.

The 1998 Golden Retriever Health Survey showed a statistically significant decrease in lymphoma among Golden Retrievers that had been treated with flea and tick prevention products. This research project will examine one mechanism by which these data might be explained - that infection with *Bartonella*, *Ehrlichia*, and/or *Anaplasma* species bacteria may predispose susceptible dogs to develop lymphoma.

The purpose of this study is to search for evidence of *Bartonella*, *Ehrlichia*, and/or *Anaplasma* infection in Golden Retriever dogs with lymphoma, as compared to age- and sex-matched Golden Retrievers from the same geographic region. Obtaining identical samples from healthy control dogs will be critical to the scientific evaluation of data obtained from Golden Retrievers with lymphoma.

Dr. Ed Breitschwerdt is the principal investigator and Ashlee Duncan is the graduate student responsible for the project.

The entry criteria for a case include: Golden Retrievers with a new diagnosis of lymphoma that have not received any antibiotics within 14 days prior to sample collection (or 30 days for azithromycin). Samples should be collected prior to induction of chemotherapeutic agents.

The minimum entry criteria for a control include: Golden Retrievers residing within 100 miles of the case dog and lacking clinical evidence of lymphadenopathy, making the possibility of undetected lymphoma unlikely. Additionally, these control dogs must not have received any antibiotics within 14 days prior to sample collection (or 30 days for azithromycin). For each case, two to three control dogs will be utilized. If possible, these healthy dogs should be similar in age (± 18 months) and sex as the case dog. Healthy dogs may be identified by the owner of the case dog, selected by the case's attending veterinarian, or recruited through the Golden Retriever Club of America.

Cases and controls recruited will receive free serological and molecular testing for *Bartonella*, *Ehrlichia*, and *Anaplasma* (a $360.00 value based on current serology/PCR testing costs in our laboratory). Samples to be collected for this research include whole blood, serum, lymph node aspirate(s), and buccal swab(s).

Please contact us at 919-513-8279 or awduncan@ncsu.edu for further information.