Canine Influenza Cases Confirmed in CT: Vaccine Available for At Risk Dogs from Pond Point Animal Hospital Milford

(Milford, CT) The winter months are approaching and, just as in the human population, the canine community faces the threat of influenza. According to State Veterinarian Mary J. Lis, cases of Canine Influenza have already been confirmed in Connecticut this season, traced to a West Hartford kennel where employees had noted an increase in respiratory problems.

First emerging in racing Greyhounds, Canine Influenza A, H3N8, is now present in 30 states, with a constant enzootic presence in east coast regions such as New York, New Jersey, and Florida.

The disease shows up 2 to 4 days post exposure and prominent symptoms include cough, sneezing, runny nose, and sometimes fever. Almost all dogs make a full recovery, but about 10% have respiratory complications such as pneumonia, and about 5% of cases are fatal. The illness can last 2-3 weeks or longer.

In May 2009 the USDA approved the first Canine Influenza vaccine.

According to K. Paul Rumble, DVM, Director of Pond Point Animal Hospital in Milford, CT, "Canine Influenza is highly contagious, with dogs in close groups at the most risk. Shelters, kennels, grooming parlors, dog day care and play groups are all hot beds for flu transmission. Show dogs, racing greyhounds, and pet shop dogs are more at risk than the average companion animal. Diabetic and older dogs are at much greater risk for fatal complications of the flu."

Dr. Rumble continued, "We offer the Canine Influenza vaccine at Pond Point Animal Hospital in Milford. The vaccine is very well tolerated and reduces both the length and severity of illness when dogs are exposed. This is especially important for older dogs, those in group settings, or with chronic health problems that make complications like pneumonia especially dangerous."

Treatment of Canine Influenza is symptomatic including rest, providing lots of fluid, and sometimes treatment with antibiotics, steroids, and IV fluids for infections and complications. Shortness of breath and high fever are serious symptoms that can require veterinary intensive care.

About the Practice

Founded in 1973, Pond Point Animal Hospital in Milford CT specializes in veterinary services for companion animals. With a focus on preventive pet health care, Pond Point offers routine exams, vaccinations, hospitalization, drop off services, boarding, emergency care, dentistry and geriatric medicine for dogs and cats. For more information, visit www.pondpoint.com, call (203) 878-4646, or email the practice at ppah@pondpoint.com.