

## HOPE ANIMAL CANCER CLINIC



Dr. Wendy Lavalley developed a passion for oncology when her own dog, Nickita, a golden retriever, was diagnosed with malignant melanoma. At that time the treatment options were not as effective as they are today. It gave her a passion to engage in clinical trials to optimize the treatment for her patients. Each patient's unique needs help develop treatment protocols to ensure a good quality of life. Your pet is part of our HACC family.

### CANCER IN COMPANION ANIMALS

Cancer is one of the most common diseases in animals over 10 years of age. Certain breeds are predisposed to multiple types of cancers. However, mixed breeds develop certain types of cancer, and warning signs should never be ignored. Companion animals should see their veterinarian at least every six months as they age in order to diagnose and treat diseases as early as possible.

### WARNING SIGNS OF CANCER

Signs of cancer are variable and can include any of the following:

- \*New "lumps and bumps" on or under the skin, changes in the size or shape of existing "lumps or bumps"
- \*Lethargy or decreased activity
- \*Decreased appetite
- \*Pain -which can manifest as panting, restlessness, limping, crying, hiding or any atypical behavior

- \* Difficulty with urination and/or defecation, changes in the color or blood tinged urine or feces;
- \*Coughing
- \*Or any unusual behavior.

## **A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE IS OUR MOST IMPORTANT GOAL**

Treatment for your family member is about quality of life, and treatment is tailored for each patient to suit the patient's and family members' individual needs.

Treatment for cancer includes surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, small molecule inhibitors and immunotherapy. The type of therapy depends upon the type of cancer as well as each individual patient's needs.

Chemotherapy is very different in dogs and cats compared to people. Dogs and cats tolerate chemotherapy much better. Lower doses are used and there is more time in between treatments. Approximately less than 15% of animals experience short-lived side effects that can include a day of nausea, soft stool or diarrhea. Less than 5% of patient's receiving chemotherapy may have side effects that rarely require hospitalization. An anti-nausea medication is started on the first day of chemotherapy and continued for 5 days to reduce the potential for nausea and vomiting. If side effects occur they may start the second or third day, are easily managed with supportive medications and are short lived.

## **YOUR APPOINTMENT AND FUTURE TREATMENTS**

Our mobile clinic can come to your house or meet you at a central location. At your first appointment your dog or cat will have a physical examination and any records from your family veterinarian will have already been reviewed. Additional tests may be recommended based on the type of cancer and how well your animal is feeling. Time will be taken to discuss the type of cancer, treatment, expectations from treatment and prognosis. All of your questions will be answered, but many clients walk away and think of many more questions. An email will be sent explaining everything in detail and you and your family are encouraged to text my cell phone with concerns. Future chemotherapy treatments may take anywhere from one to two hours depending upon the medications and treatment protocol, the status of your pet's cancer and how your animal is feeling.

## **MONITORING PROGRESS**

Changes are made when needed if there are unacceptable side effects or if the response is not adequate. Cancer is a scary word to most people and many people

have loved ones who have had cancer. The top priority is that they are feeling well and continuing to enjoy their normal activities while receiving chemotherapy.

## **HOSPICE CARE**

One of the hardest decisions is to know when to say goodbye. There are certain medications that can help patients feel better when they become too ill for further chemotherapy. Again, this is another very hard time for everyone and our staff is here to guide you and help you make difficult decisions.