

## Pet Owners Drive Increase in Vet Specialists

**Vet association reveals increasing demand for veterinary specialists and advanced care.**

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The American Veterinary Medical Association has revealed its most recent membership data, indicating a number of trends in veterinary medicine and pet care.

For example, new data shows that veterinarians are increasingly seeking board certification as specialists, a trend that is in response to a demand for a higher level of care by pet owners. There were 9,826 active board-certified diplomates in 2009, a 15.5 percent increase in veterinary specialists from 2006, according to statistics from specialty colleges.

In addition, the number of specialists in the internal medicine specialty increased by more than 11 percent in one year, from 2008 to 2009, the AVMA says. The increasing demand for veterinary specialists is something that the association has known was happening for some time, says Dr. Larry Corry, AVMA president, "but this data helps us understand and track this trend."

"As the human-animal bond continues to grow, veterinarians are being asked by pet owners to provide increasingly advanced treatments, and this is driving them into specialties like internal medicine, neurology and oncology," he says.

The latest data shows that there are now 80,825 members of the AVMA, more than ever before, and that, for the first time in history, there are more female than male veterinarians.

In 2008, men outnumbered women in the profession, the AVMA says. However, the tipping point came in 2009, when, according to AVMA data, female veterinarians (44,802) surpassed the total number of male veterinarians (43,196).