

## American Heartworm Society Conducts Survey

**Results to benefit cat owners by increasing overall awareness about the disease.**

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The American Heartworm Society will distribute surveys to more than 40,000 veterinary clinics and hospitals this summer to record canine heartworm disease cases in the United States. The society will compile the results and produce an updated, online heartworm incidence map.

The last survey recorded cases of heartworm disease in 2004. Although the survey is only recording the number of dogs diagnosed with heartworm, cat owners will also benefit from the results, said Sheldon Rubin, DVM, president of the society.

Outdoor cats are at greater risk of being infected, but a high percentage of indoor cats can also become infected. Overall, the distribution of feline heartworm infection in the United States seems to parallel that of dogs but with lower total numbers, according to the society.

“We hope conveying the severity of this disease through actual numbers will help veterinarians encourage year-round prevention with pet owners and eventually move towards eradicating this easily preventable disease,” Rubin said.

The society also plans to increase its outreach and teaching capabilities, such as continuing to target pet owners and veterinarians via a multi-media website and its sponsored awareness campaigns such as KNOW Heartworms, a partnership with the American Association of Feline Practitioners and Pfizer Animal Health.