



**News Release**  
**For Immediate Release**

## **AKC Canine Health Foundation Makes Strides in Tick-Borne Disease Research to Benefit Dogs**

RALEIGH, N.C. (September 20, 2016) – The AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to prevent, treat and cure diseases in all dogs, is pleased to announce ongoing progress through its [Tick-Borne Disease Initiative](#).

Launched in February 2016, this comprehensive Initiative addresses important health concerns that include Lyme disease, bartonellosis, and ehrlichiosis, through much-needed research in diagnostics, disease pathogenesis and prevalence. Tick-borne diseases are an important group of emerging infectious diseases that impact both dogs and their people. As the geographic range of ticks continues to expand, all dogs can be affected by these diseases, year-round.

Through a \$100,000 leadership gift from Kiki Courtelis, a longtime friend to animal health, and a combined \$50,000 gift from the English Springer Spaniel Foundation and English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association, as well as generous gifts from many individuals, dog clubs, and foundations, the donations raised toward the Initiative, and matched by the American Kennel Club, are driving further progress in this important research for dogs.

“When my veterinarian tells me that he diagnoses Lyme disease at least three times a week, I thought it was worthwhile to find an organization truly attacking these diseases to improve testing, treatment and cures,” said Kiki Courtelis. “It means the world to me that I’m blessed to participate in CHF’s initiative, and be a part of improving the health of the dogs we love so much.”

To date, donations to the Initiative have resulted in the Foundation awarding a first round of [five grants](#) to improve diagnostics and enhance practical understanding of tick-borne diseases, including effects of these infections on blood cells, the canine blood donor population, disease prevalence in dogs, and treatment recommendations.

According to Mark Haglin, English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association president, “We have had many encounters over the years with tick-borne disease in our Springer Spaniels and we are very proud to play a role in this Initiative. Being closely associated with friends who are dealing with the devastating effects of Lyme disease, I hope these grants will bring some crossover results on the human side of treatment as well.”

"The Foundation chose this area of research important to canine health because we believe we can have an immediate and long-lasting impact on these diseases in dogs and their human companions," said Dr. Diane Brown, CHF CEO. "Since launching the Initiative, many of CHF's supporters have shared stories of a beloved dog being diagnosed with a tick-borne disease like babesiosis, anaplasmosis, or bartonellosis, or a human family member or friend with a diagnosis of Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis or Rocky Mountain spotted fever. The stories remind us of the urgent need to address these diseases that afflict dogs and people."

To learn more about CHF's Tick-Borne Disease Initiative, including research outcomes, free educational resources, and additional RFP announcements, visit [www.akcchf.org/ticks](http://www.akcchf.org/ticks). "Tick-borne diseases can surprise you, and the need for accurate diagnosis, proper treatment and prevention is critical," said Brown.

Funding for CHF grants comes from a number of sources, including: corporations, dog clubs and foundations, and individuals who are committed to the betterment of canine health through scientific research. During 2016, donations from new and lapsed donors (last donation 12/31/2013), will be generously matched for research dollar-for-dollar by the American Kennel Club. [Make an impact and double your donation today!](#)

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#### **About CHF**

For more than 20 years, the Raleigh, NC-based AKC Canine Health Foundation has leveraged the power of science and research to improve the lives of dogs and their people. The Foundation works to prevent, treat, and cure diseases that impact all dogs, while providing professional information and resources for a new breed of dog owner. Take action because you care; find out more online at [www.akcchf.org](http://www.akcchf.org).