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Casting for Genes



Veterinarians at the Cornell University Hospital for Animals are looking for healthy Labrador retrievers to undergo a free comprehensive health screening.

The test results will be shared with the referring veterinarian, and the dogs' DNA will go to the hospital's DNA bank, which holds more than 6,000 samples from animals with various conditions. The DNA will provide a control group of healthy dogs for gene discovery of multiple diseases of interest.

The screening will include a general physical exam, behavioral assessment, body measurements, blood and urine analyses, a nutritional consultation, environmental factor screening for conditions that predispose to cancer, as well as orthopedic, oncological, ophthalmological, neurological and cardiological assessments.

To be eligible, dogs must be at least eight years old, AKC-registered (or have a pedigree available), available to spend the day at the hospital and certified as healthy by their veterinarian.

"The DNA obtained from the dogs in the screening program will be used in research that links health conditions to genetic abnormalities," said Marta Castelhana, research associate and principal investigator for the project. "Multiple researchers will be able to use the DNA collected for genetic studies that may be investigating anything from novel treatments to cures. The animals that participate in this program will be helping to improve the quality of life for future generations of Labradors."

For more information, contact vetbiobank@cornell.edu or call 607-253-3060 and ask for Dr. Marta Castelhana.