

## Popularity of Dog Insurance Increases

**The \$250 million pet insurance industry is expected to accelerate in 2008 and double by 2012.**

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An increasing number of pet owners are purchasing health insurance policies for their canine and feline companions, according to pet insurance company, PetFirst Healthcare, and the trend is expected to accelerate in 2008.

By 2012, PetFirst officials said they expect the \$250 million industry to double. CEO Brent Hinton said he projects the largest area of growth will be from companies that offer pet insurance to their employees.

"We're hearing that, in recent months, pet insurance has become the most-requested benefit by companies' HR and benefits managers," he said.

In addition, the pet obesity epidemic may be contributing to the growth of the industry. PetFirst reported a 19 percent increase in obesity-related claims in 2007, including cardiac arrest, hypertension, and hypothyroidism.

"Fortunately, we're seeing pets live longer and better lives because of advances in care and treatment," Hinton said. "But that also means more visits to the vet and more costs associated with those vet visits, which is why we believe people are exploring pet insurance."