

UC Davis Launches Dog Blood Donor Program

The program will include a group of 200 to 400 pet dogs and canine law enforcement officers.

Posted: March 1, 2008, 5 a.m. EST

The University of California, Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine has launched a community-based canine blood donor program.

The program, which will be housed with the new U.C. Davis Animal Blood Bank at the William R. Pritchard Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, will allow the school to expand its source of blood products for its canine patients.

About 1,200 pet dogs and canine law-enforcement officers will be screened to develop a group of 200 to 400 regular donors. These dogs will then come in two to three times a year.

“Each year, the teaching hospital provides 200 to 300 transfusions for dogs to treat conditions ranging from surgical complications to kidney failure,” said Sean Owens, DVM, the blood bank’s medical director and head of the veterinary hospital’s Transfusion Medicine Section. “This new donor program will allow us to develop a large, reliable source of blood products for our patients, without maintaining a colony of donor dogs here at the hospital.”

Previously, the hospital has obtained blood from a group of about 30 blood-donor dogs that live for a few years at the hospital and then are adopted out.

The program also plans to establish a mobile blood bank that can be taken to dog shows and other canine events to help make donating more convenient.

To learn more about the program or to schedule a health-screening appointment for a dog, contact the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital at 530-752-1393 ext. 421. Members of the public who are interested in adopting a retired canine blood donor can e-mail caninebloodbank@gmail.com.