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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Mild Winter Increases Heartworm Risk for Pets**

### **Great Plains SPCA Notices Spike in Heartworm Positive Dogs**

Merriam, KS (March 16, 2017) — The medical team at Great Plains SPCA is urging pet owners to stay up-to-date with their animal's preventatives. Due to a mild winter, they now face an increased risk of becoming heartworm positive.

Prevention is simple, but eliminating heartworms from an infected animal can cost anywhere from \$600 to \$1,200 per pet. Treatment lasts 60 days and typically includes courses of antibiotics, steroids and injections.

In recent weeks, the Great Plains SPCA Intake Center has seen a spike in homeless dogs coming to the shelter with heartworms. Donations are needed to help cover these pets' costly expenses.

Interviews with a veterinarian, along with video opportunities will be made available in the afternoon at our Merriam location.

**Background on Heartworms:** Heartworms is a serious disease caused by parasitic worms, called *Dirofilaria immitis*. It is often spread through a mosquito bite. Common symptoms are coughing, vomiting and lethargy.

#### **About Great Plains SPCA:**

Great Plains SPCA is the Kansas City Metro's most comprehensive resource for pets and their human companions, serving more than 35,000 pets annually – more than any other animal welfare agency in the area. Great Plains SPCA, a No Kill shelter, works to save, protect and improve the lives of animals, while strengthening the relationship between pets and their human companions by providing humane sheltering, adoptions, and affordable spay/neuter and veterinary wellness services. Great Plains SPCA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and not the ASPCA but a local organization focused on being a society for the prevention of cruelty of animals. For more information, please visit [www.GreatPlainsSPCA.org](http://www.GreatPlainsSPCA.org)

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