

PET HEALTH

Staying A Step Ahead Of Veterinary Costs

(NAPSA)—According to the American Pet Products Association, Americans spent \$12.8 billion on veterinary care in 2010.

With dog and cat owners spending an average of \$578 and \$278 respectively on nonroutine veterinary procedures annually, quality care for both preventative and unplanned visits is essential.

“One of the most important things pet owners can do is to find a veterinarian who makes them and their pet feel comfortable, provides the best care and offers options that make payment easy,” says Judith Gass, veterinary marketing director for CareCredit, a health care credit card offering financing options for pet care and every member of the family. “The right veterinarian can help to solve behavioral problems, vaccinate against diseases and catch potential problems before they become serious.”

How can you provide the care your pet needs when it's needed and stay within your budget? It may be easier than you think with these tips:

- **Stay in tune with your pet's needs.** Sometimes, pets can act moody or do something that's out of character. But if you notice prolonged signs of discontent or strange behavior, call your veterinarian for advice. Your pet can't tell you what's wrong or ask for help. Treating an illness or condition in the early stage may save money—and most importantly, it may save your dog's or cat's life.

- **Get to know your veterinarian.** During routine visits, take the opportunity to develop a



A pet can't tell you what's wrong or ask for help when it is sick, so ask a veterinarian about any unusual behavior.

relationship with your veterinarian. Asking questions and establishing a rapport can ease the strain if there's an emergency or unexpected situation, when anxiety often runs high. Your pet is a family member, so it's important that you feel comfortable enough with your veterinarian to tell him or her about any concerns you have and to ask for suggestions.

- **Be prepared with payment options.** Along with recommendations for the best care, ask your veterinarian to explain the clinic's payment policy. Many veterinarians now offer reliable payment options like CareCredit®, which has been available for nearly 25 years and allows monthly payments on pet care—everything from routine checkups to emergency care. This type of flexible financing is a convenient way to spread out payments with deferred interest or extended payment plan options.

To find out more, you can visit www.carecredit.com.