



OVARIAN CANCER SYMPTOM AWARENESS™

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## **THE OVARIAN CANCER SYMPTOM AWARENESS ORGANIZATION LAUNCHES AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAM ENGAGING THE VETERINARY COMMUNITY**

**CHICAGO, Ill. – November 6, 2012** – The Ovarian Cancer Symptom Awareness Organization (OCSA) launched an innovative new awareness program at the 130<sup>th</sup> Annual Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association Convention in Lombard, IL on Sunday, November 4. The OCSA Veterinary Outreach Program (VOP) mission is “fighting ovarian cancer with animal passion,” and seeks to engage and collaborate with the veterinary community members who have immediate access to individuals already inclined to discuss health issues in their presence. The program will focus on raising awareness about the often-missed symptoms of ovarian cancer. In addition, OCSA also announced a new veterinary medicine scholarship program that will award three \$5,000 scholarships beginning in 2013.

“It has been noted through our ISVMA members that pet parents talking about their pet’s health often feel comfortable talking to the veterinarian about their own health concerns. This provides that veterinarian a platform that offers an easy transition into difficult concerns and conversations. Raising awareness about this silent killer and saving lives will be the goal of the VOP. The collaboration and exchange of information can ultimately help save lives,” said Peter Weber, executive director, Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, over 80 percent of veterinarians graduating today are female. This increases the possibility of a personal connection to the disease and a viable tie to the purpose of this program. Even so, ovarian cancer is not just a woman’s disease. Everyone in the family is affected when a woman is diagnosed with the disease, and men can carry the gene and pass that along to their own children. The OCSA VOP’s goal is to raise awareness through veterinarians, and ultimately their clients, about the silent symptoms of ovarian cancer.

Four symptoms common to the disease, bloating, pelvic pain, difficulty eating and frequent or urgent urination, are often ignored warning signs by women. As a result, ovarian cancer often goes undetected until it reaches advanced stages. Each year, over 20,000 women in the U.S. are diagnosed with ovarian cancer each year, and approximately 14,000 women die from the disease.

“This program makes it viable to educate veterinarians in both urban and rural areas about ovarian cancer, its symptoms, and ways to address potential client concerns,” says Vallie Szymanski, executive director of OCSA. “Our organization is dedicated to educating these professionals, going so far as to establish an ongoing educational scholarship in the name of OCSA co-founder, Susan M. Roman who lost her life to the disease in March 2012.”

OCSA was founded by Chicagoans Rick and Susan Roman and Vallie Szymanski after Susan was diagnosed with Stage III ovarian cancer in August of 2009.

The scholarship will be awarded annually after an application process which will be available on the OCSA website by December 1, 2012. For more information about this new program, or ovarian cancer awareness materials, visit [www.ovariancancersymptomawareness.org](http://www.ovariancancersymptomawareness.org).

**About the Ovarian Cancer Symptom Awareness Organization (OCSA)**

OCSA is a Section 501 (c) (3) charitable organization founded in 2010 to educate women and their families about the silent symptoms of ovarian cancer and the need for early detection and treatment. Donations to OCSA are deductible as a charitable gift. For questions concerning tax deductibility, please consult a tax advisor. Follow the accomplishments and find key information about this cause on Facebook, on Twitter @ocsachicagoorg, or visit [www.ovariancancersymptomawareness.org](http://www.ovariancancersymptomawareness.org).

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