Petplan Pet Insurance Sees Increase in Claims – and Costs – for Cancer Treatment

As cancer claims increase and treatments advance, so do veterinary costs, according to America’s No.1 pet insurance provider

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (PRWEB) March 14, 2012 -- While it is commonplace for human hospitals to offer treatments like chemotherapy and radiation to fight cancer, such treatments are also increasingly sought after in another place – the veterinary hospital. And with No. 1-rated Petplan pet insurance reporting a rise in claims for cancerous conditions among four-legged family members, it’s a trend that will continue to spread.

Petplan's 2011 claims data reveals that cancers remain near the top of the list of the most-claimed conditions, and incidents for many types of cancer-related conditions are up dramatically. Lymphoma, the most commonly identified form of cancer in dogs, and Petplan’s fifth most-claimed for condition, has seen a 40% escalation in claims since 2010. Claims for melanoma are up 837%, claims for carcinomas rose 380% and mast cell tumors increased by 76%.

While a cancer diagnosis may once have meant a death sentence for pets, advanced treatments that allow the possibility of extended quality life or even a cure have become increasingly available to pets. However, costs can add up quickly. Treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation and even bone marrow transplant, which were once only options for human patients, are now being used to help pets get back on their paws. In fact, the veterinary industry is actually leading the pack in some treatments – a vaccine for treatment of malignant melanoma in dogs is now available and is the only cancer vaccine in any species!

“It’s important to note that, when talking about ‘increases’ in a particular type of cancer, in the vast majority of cases, we’re talking about an increase in the early identification and treatment of certain types of cancer,” says Dr. Jules Benson, Vice President of Veterinary Services at Petplan. “When we cite a vast increase in claims for melanoma, for example, it’s fair to say that melanoma probably hasn’t increased by 800%, but that, through advances in veterinary research and technology, our ability to diagnose and treat these diseases has vastly increased. Consequently, costs associated with these conditions are increasing as more advanced veterinary care becomes available, and we feel that pet insurance can play a huge role in helping pet parents with that.”

The following are some of the most frequently occurring types of cancer in pets, along with average claim amounts, according to Petplan's claims data:

• Lymphoma: The highest costs among cancerous conditions were for lymphoma, which averaged $2,700 per incident, with the highest per-policy cost topping $18,000. Petplan saw a 40% increase in lymphoma claims from 2010.

• Melanoma: This condition saw the greatest leap in 2011, with an 837% increase in claims over 2010. The average cost for care per incident was $2,000, but some claims exceeded $9,500.

• Carcinoma: Claims for carcinoma-type cancers jumped 380% in 2011, making it the second most dramatic jump among cancers. Costs averaged $2,700 per incident, with the highest per-policy cost nearing $17,000.

• Mast cell tumors: Claims for mast cell tumors rose 76% in 2011. The average cost of care was around $1,250
per incident, with costs for one policy exceeding $7,600.

• Mass: The various lumps and bumps classified as “masses” saw a 25% increase in 2011. The 2011 cost of veterinary care averaged around $635 per incident, with costs for one policy reaching as high as $13,200.

For more information about cancer and Petplan’s coverage, visit www.gopetplan.com.

ABOUT PETPLAN
Top-rated pet insurance provider, Petplan, is the only pet insurance company to have been included on Inc. Magazine’s list of 500 fastest-growing, privately held companies in America. Petplan’s fully customizable policies provide coverage for all hereditary and congenital conditions for the life of the pet as standard, and meet the coverage requirements and budget for pets of all/any age. Petplan policies are underwritten by AGCS Marine Insurance Company, a member of the Allianz Group, rated A+ by A.M. Best (2010). For information, about Petplan pet insurance, visit www.GoPetplan.com or call 1-866-467-3875.
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