

AlignCare is the One Health healthcare system designed to improve access to veterinary care for families with limited means by aligning community resources and activities nationally.



The Need

Families struggling to access veterinary care is a national crisis, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. Not being able to get veterinary care negatively affects family health and wellbeing. Lack of veterinary care threatens public health due to inadequate prevention and control of zoonotic diseases.

Before COVID-19, 28% of families with pets reported a barrier to veterinary care, primarily because they could not afford it. Now, millions have lost their job due to the pandemic, dramatically increasing the number needing assistance.



Who We Are

The Program for Pet Health Equity at the University of Tennessee exists to improve access to veterinary care for underserved families. This novel healthcare system, AlignCare, enhances access to veterinary care for bonded families by providing subsidies and mobilizing community resources.

Our Founder

Founded & directed by Dr. Michael Blackwell who served as Chief of Staff, Office of the Surgeon General of the U.S., the Chief Veterinary Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service, and Dean of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine. He achieved the rank of Rear Admiral/Assistant Surgeon General while on active duty with the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.



Maddie's
Fund

Our Partners



We help bonded families who participate in means-tested assistance programs connect with Veterinary Service Providers and Veterinary Social Work Coordinators to remove barriers to veterinary care and expand access to existing community resources and activities, while leveraging cost saving strategies.



Our Objectives

- * Each family is assigned a Veterinary Social Work Coordinator to work with the family on pet-related and health care needs.
- * Pets of enrolled families needing veterinary care are seen by AlignCare Veterinary Service Provider partners who utilize incremental veterinary care.
- * The family is linked to community resources to address human and pet-related concerns.
- * Enroll as many bonded families as resources allow.



One Health

AlignCare transforms the healthcare system through a holistic approach to family health and well-being and strategically connects the human and veterinary healthcare systems. The reduction of disease in pets and humans is a multifaceted issue that invokes the principles of One Health; collaboration across disciplines to achieve the best health outcomes for people, animals, and the environment or their ecosystem.

Benefits

Family

Enrolled families pay 20%, and AlignCare pays 80% of covered services, including prescription medicine & food.

Preventive Vet provides information to enable better decisions to maintain your pet's health and avoid preventable problems. Veterinary Social Work Coordinators help bonded families make difficult decisions about their pet, provide support before or after the loss of a pet, and link families to community resources to keep themselves and their pets healthy.

Community

- * More families able to access veterinary care
- * More pets recover from an injury or illness
- * Fewer economic euthanasias and reduced relinquishments to animal welfare organizations
- * More families receive needed emotional support when faced with a medical crisis involving their pets
- * Improved zoonotic disease prevention & control
- * Healthier families and a healthier community



Ongoing Research



The Program for Pet Health Equity continues to research the benefits of a One Health healthcare system, including definitions, standards, and policies and procedures to improve veterinary care access. Assessments to measure whole family health and well-being are performed at the time of enrollment in AlignCare, and later periodic assessments will be performed to determine whether family well-being improves as a result of AlignCare. Family health outcomes that are measured include cardiovascular disease, type-2 diabetes, obesity, depression, and anxiety.

Veterinary service provider assessments will demonstrate whether AlignCare contributes to successful outcomes when using an incremental veterinary care approach to patient management. Partnering providers will be able to expand their client base, help their community, and turn away fewer clients due to the inability to pay for services.