



IAHAIO 2013 Chicago Declaration

Given the biological and psychological evidence for the innate affinity of humans to companion animals and a commitment to their health and welfare, the members of the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations overwhelmingly embrace the concept of "One Health," which asserts that the health and wellness of animals, people, and the environment are inextricably linked.

The following resolution and guidelines for action were approved at the IAHAIO General Assembly held on July 20, 2013 in Chicago, Illinois, USA.

Companion animals play a key role in One Health through the documented health and social benefits of the human-animal bond, through the role of service/assistance animals and through exchanging information on the etiology and treatment of naturally occurring disorders in companion animals and humans. Interactions between companion animals and humans can have a positive influence on human and animal health through similar processes.

Acknowledgement of this declaration has consequences requiring action in various fields of legislation and regulation. IAHAIO urges all international bodies and national and local governments:

1. To encourage cooperation between the medical, veterinary and allied health professions, social work, psychology, and education professions in both training and practice to promote the concept of the human-animal bond as an important concept of One Health in public health education.
2. To facilitate programs engaging companion animals and people, which are aimed at promoting health and wellness for both, including - but not limited to - animal-assisted interventions; the regulated presence of animals in schools, nursing homes and other settings; responsible pet ownership; positive policies toward pets in housing regulations; human-animal bond-centered veterinary practice; human/animal support services and assistance/service animal programs.
3. To promote a better understanding of naturally occurring diseases and conditions in companion animals, and the dissemination of this knowledge to prevent and treat conditions occurring in humans and animals.
4. To promote standards on the wellbeing of animals in programs engaging animals and people, and to recognize the importance of the sentience of animals and professionals' responsibility towards them.