

## **Mission Statement & Boilerplate**

### **Mission Statement:**

Helping Paws Foundation aims to provide accessible and reliable networks to allow pet owners to care for their pet's health and well-being.

### **Boilerplate:**

Helping Paws Foundation is a nonprofit dedicated to assisting pets and their owners in paying for unexpected vet bills. Helping Paws has already provided aid to over 200 pets in Frederick, MD. Founded in 2023, Helping Paws has a history of being a reliable community resource. We are dedicated to allocating 95% of donations toward pet care. For more information, to donate or to sponsor a pet, visit <http://www.helpingpaws.com>.



### **Backgrounder: Increases in Pet Medical Bills**

Pet medical bills are rising due to inflation, creating financial strain for many households. Veterinary care costs have surged in recent years, making it increasingly difficult for pet owners to afford necessary treatments. This trend has significant implications for pet welfare and household budgets across the country.

#### **Background**

Veterinary medicine has evolved significantly over the decades, with advancements including but not limited to diagnostics, treatments and specialized care. Historically, pet health care was relatively affordable, with most procedures and medications costing a fraction of what they do today. However, inflation, increased demand for specialized veterinary services, and supply chain disruptions have all contributed to the rising costs.

Inflation is the rate at which the general level of prices for goods and services rises, eroding purchasing power (MetLife. (n.d.)). Veterinary inflation is the specific rise in costs associated with veterinary services and products. Pet Insurance is a financial product designed to offset the high costs of veterinary care (Steere, 2020).

#### **Current State**

As of 2024, veterinary care costs have risen by over 10% year-over-year (Consumer Price Index, 2024). This means that if a vet bill was \$100 in year 1, it would raise to \$260 in year 10. Factors driving this increase include higher wages for veterinary staff due to labor shortages; increased costs of medical supplies and pharmaceuticals; and advanced treatments requiring expensive equipment and specialist care (Consumer Price Index, 2024).

According to a report by USA Today (2024), the average cost of a routine veterinary visit has increased from \$50-\$75 in previous years to over \$100 today. More advanced treatments, such as surgeries or chronic disease management, can run into the thousands, putting pressure on pet owners.

#### **Implications**

For pet owners, the rising cost of veterinary care means difficult financial decisions, with some forced to delay or forgo treatments. A Morning Brew (2025) report found that nearly 30% of pet owners have had to take on debt to afford veterinary care. Additionally, pet shelters have reported an increase in pet surrenders due to owners being unable to afford medical expenses (Inflation is making pet ownership more expensive, 2024).

Veterinarians are also affected, facing increased pressure to provide affordable care while managing the rising costs of running a clinic. Many are implementing payment plans, offering telehealth services, or recommending pet insurance to ease financial burdens on clients.

### **Helping Paws Foundation**

The Helping Paws Foundation aims to aid pet owners who cannot pay their vet bills. Helping Paws believes that all pets deserve the best care, and money should not be an obstacle interfering with a pet's quality of life. Inflation, due to aforementioned causes, should not impact health care, it has no place limiting what care can be received.

### **Call to Action**

Contact Founder Addy Benton at [alb37@hood.edu](mailto:alb37@hood.edu) for more information.

Get involved by donating at [helpingpawsfoundation.org/donate](https://helpingpawsfoundation.org/donate)

## References

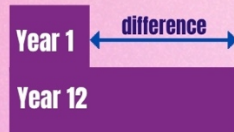
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# VET BILLS RISING

Average Pet Lifespan **12 years**



Year 1 vs. Year 12



Due to increases in...

Wage costs because of labor shortages  
Costs of medical supplies and pharmaceuticals



**2014 -> 2025**

60% increase in average costs of vet bills compared to 30% increase in general inflation



The Helping Paws Foundations aim to ease pet owners financial stress by assisting in unexpected vet bills that pet owners may face.

Contact Addy Benton at [alb87@hood.edu](mailto:alb87@hood.edu) for more information.

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## When a Vet Bill Becomes a Death Sentence

By Addy Benton

*Addy Benton is the founder of the [Helping Paws Foundation](#), an nonprofit dedicated to reducing the stress put onto pet owners by unexpected vet bills. The views expressed in this op-ed are solely those of the author.*

Every year, millions of pet owners face an impossible decision: pay for a costly, unexpected veterinary bill or say goodbye to a beloved family member. For many, financial constraints turn lifesaving care into a luxury rather than a necessity. No owner should have to lose their best friend because they can't afford treatment for their pet. Yet, in a country that prides itself on being pet-friendly, we've done little to address the devastating impact of the rising cost of veterinary care.

Veterinary expenses have skyrocketed in recent years. [According to the American Pet Products Association \(APPA\), Americans spent nearly \\$37 billion on vet care and related services in 2023 alone, compared to 15.73 million in 2015.](#) With emergency procedures often costing thousands of dollars, many pet owners are left scrambling for solutions. Some take out high-interest credit cards, others launch crowdfunding campaigns and too many are forced to make heartbreaking decisions at the vet's office. [Approximately 20 million pets in the U.S. experience poverty with their families and 70% have never seen a veterinarian.](#)

The financial burden of emergency veterinary care disproportionately affects lower-income families, widening an already existing socioeconomic divide. Pet ownership isn't just a privilege of the wealthy; it's a source of companionship, emotional support and mental well-

being for people of all backgrounds. [Studies from the American Psychological Association \(APA\) show that pets reduce stress, improve heart health, and provide emotional stability.](#) When a pet is lost due to financial hardship, the impact extends far beyond the animal—it affects families, children and individuals who rely on their furry friends for comfort and stability.

The problem isn't just that vet care is expensive—it's that we have no safety net for pet owners in crisis. While human medicine has payment plans, insurance and government assistance programs, pet healthcare remains a Wild West of unpredictable costs and limited support. Even pet insurance, often touted as a solution, frequently denies claims or leaves owners stuck with hefty out-of-pocket expenses.

So, what can be done? First, we must push for more accessible financial support programs for pet owners in need. Nonprofits, like [Helping Paws Foundation](#), work to fill this gap, but the demand far exceeds the supply of available funds. Increased partnerships between veterinary clinics and charitable organizations could help alleviate the strain by creating low-cost care options for emergencies.

Second, veterinary clinics must embrace transparency in pricing and offer more flexible payment options. [61% of first-time pet owners were surprised by the cost pet care.](#) Many pet owners are blindsided by the cost of care because they don't know what to expect. Clear pricing, upfront estimates and expanded payment plans would give pet owners the ability to plan and make informed decisions.

Lastly, we need to rethink how we view pet care in society. If we value pets as members of the family, we must treat their health with the same level of urgency and compassion that we do for human healthcare. Advocacy for policy changes, such as tax deductions for veterinary

expenses or expanded pet insurance regulations, could provide long-term solutions that benefit both pets and their owners.

The next time you hear someone say, “If you can’t afford a pet, don’t get one,” consider the reality. Life is unpredictable. Job loss, medical emergencies and financial hardships happen to even the most responsible pet owners. Our goal shouldn’t be to punish people for caring—it should be to create a system where no one must choose between bankruptcy and their pet’s life.

**Media Advisory**

**Helping Paws Foundation**





**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 1, 2025

123-456-2233

[alb37@hood.edu](mailto:alb37@hood.edu)

Contact: Addy Benton

Founder

**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**Free pop-up Veterinary clinic**

**WHO:**

Helping Paws Foundation is a nonprofit committed to assisting local pet owners in the continued care of their animal's health. Help Paws Foundation provides financial assistance to pet owners and this clinic will help animals get preventative care to prevent future complications. Helping Paws Foundation in partnership with Dr. Smith at Rocky Springs Veterinarian Clinic, Dr. Jones at Frederick Family Veterinarian Clinic and Dr. Johnson at Central Maryland Veterinarian Clinic.

**WHAT:**

Helping Paws Foundation is hosting a free pop-up veterinary clinic, providing essential pet care services such as heartworm preventatives, vaccinations, and consultations for pet owners with specific concerns.

**WHEN:**

May 1, 2025, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**WHERE:**

Church Parking Lot

1234 Church St. Frederick, MD, 21702

**WHY:**

This event aims to support pet health and well-being, ensuring access to vital medical care for families in need. Many pet owners face barriers to veterinary care due to financial constraints or limited access.

###

**Free Pop-Up Veterinarian clinic provides essential pet care for families in need**

*Nonprofit hosts successful event offering vaccinations, consultations and preventative care*

FREDERICK, Md., April 2, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Hundreds of pet owners received vital medical care for their pets at a free pop-up veterinary clinic hosted by the Helping Paws Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to assisting in unexpected pet bills, in collaboration with the Frederick Veterinarians Alliance last weekend.

The event served over 200 pets, thanks to the support of volunteer veterinarians and community sponsors. Pet owners were able to consult with professionals about concerns ranging from nutrition to early signs of illness, further empowering them with knowledge to maintain their pets' well-being. Held in Baker Park, the clinic provided essential services, including heartworm preventatives, vaccinations, and expert consultations, ensuring pets in underserved communities received the care they needed.

"Access to veterinary care should not be a privilege, it's a necessity," said Addy Benton, executive director of Helping Paws Foundation. "Our goal with this pop-up clinic was to bridge the gap for families facing financial hardship, ensuring that pets stay healthy and safe."

"It's heartwarming to see the community come together for a cause like this," said Andrea Smith, President of the Frederick Veterinarians Alliance. "Every pet deserves quality medical care, and through partnerships like this, we're making that a reality for more families."

**Key highlights of the event:**

- Free vaccinations to protect pets from common illnesses
- Heartworm prevention treatments to ensure long-term health
- One-on-one veterinary consultations addressing owners concerns
- Resources and educational materials for pet owners

For more information on upcoming events or to support our mission, visit

<http://www.helpingpaws.com>.



Caption: Two veterinarians care for an elderly dog in need, examining for any lumps, bumps, or other abnormalities.



*Keeping pets healthy shouldn't be a luxury.  
Thanks to @HelpingPawsFoundation,  
families received essential vet care at a free  
pop-up clinic! #PetHealth #VetCareForAll*

[Click To Tweet](#)

### **About Helping Paws Foundation:**

Helping Paws Foundation is a nonprofit dedicated to assisting pets and their owners in paying for unexpected vet bills. Helping Paws has already provided aid to over 200 pets in Frederick, MD. Founded in 2023, Helping Paws has a history of being a reliable community resource. We are dedicated to allocating 95% of donations toward pet care. For more information, to donate or to sponsor a pet, visit <http://www.helpingpaws.com>.

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Executive Director, Helping Paws Foundation

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Social Media Adaptations

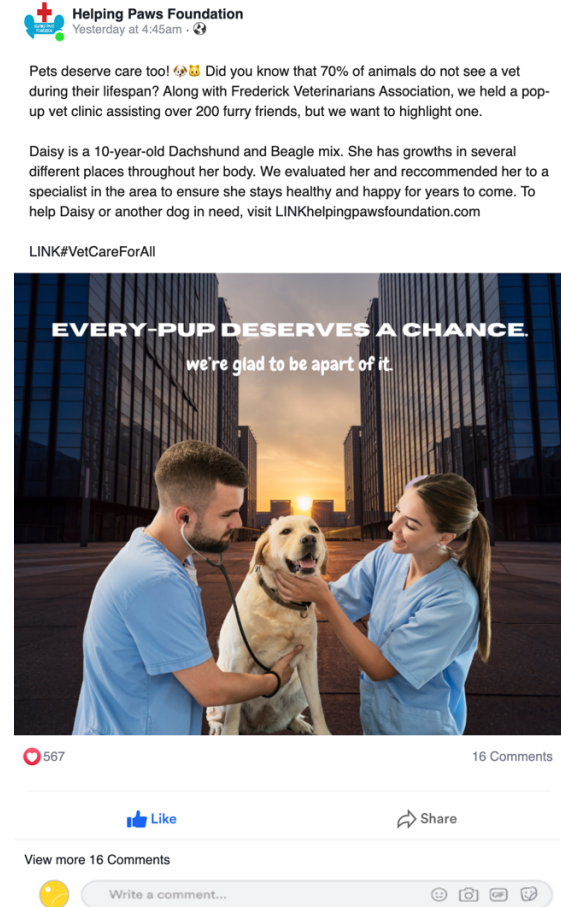
## Twitter/X Post



## Instagram Post



## Facebook Post



## Media Pitch

### Background:

1. I am pitching a feature story that is a case study. The story is through the eyes of a pet owner who needs support financially for their dog to get life-saving care.
2. I will be pitching The Washington Post's Eli Slaslow. He has written stories that are emotional and hard-hitting before and I think he will do the story justice.
3. This information is valuable to the outlet because it shows a way that people in distress could seek help for their pet. It also serves to raise awareness of how the cost of vets has risen and is negatively impacting many pet owners. This feature story is newsworthy because Frederick is close to Washington It is also a very relevant cause as a large majority of people have or have had a pet.

**Subject Line:** Pitch:The Race to Save Luna

**Email Body:**

Dear Mr. Slaslow,

What would you do if your dog needed emergency surgery, but you didn't have the money to save them?

That was the nightmare reality for Maria Lopez, a single mother in Frederick, MD, when her 2-year-old golden retriever, Luna, was hit by a car. The vet said Luna needed immediate surgery to survive, but the cost, over \$5,000, was far beyond what Maria could afford. As minutes turned to hours, Maria scrambled to raise the money, desperate not to lose the dog her children call their "furry sister." Maria found her solution with the Helping Paws Foundation; a nonprofit geared toward assisting pet owners faced with unexpected vet bills. Would you be willing to write a feature on Maria and her story?

I believe this story would resonate deeply with your readers at *The Washington Post*, especially those who understand the emotional bond between pets and their people. With more families facing rising vet bills and unexpected emergencies, Maria's story brings a human face to an issue affecting pet owners across the region. Thank you for your time.

Would you be interested in speaking with Maria and sharing her story? I will follow up by email next week.

Sincerely  
Addy Benton  
Founder, Helping Paws Foundation  
123-456-7890  
[alb37@hood.edu](mailto:alb37@hood.edu)





## Fundraising Email

**From:** Helping Paws Foundation

**Subject line:** Help Dogs Cross the Finish Line And Get the Care They Deserve 🐾



**Dear Brooke,**

Did you know that **many pets need urgent medical care every single day**, and many owners simply can't afford it [with 3.1 million dogs getting surrendered yearly?](#)

**Run in the Bark** is more than just a 5K. It's a race to save lives. On **May 2, 2025**, dog lovers from all over will gather at **Baker Park** for a one-of-a-kind event where **owners and pets run together** to raise money for pets in need of surgery and care.

**You can help.** Your donation goes directly to covering medical bills for pets whose owners have applied and been approved through our vetting process. Whether it's surgery, medication, or recovery support **your contribution keeps tails wagging and hearts full.**

**Here's how you can get involved:**

- Donate to a runner's campaign
- Register to run or walk with your pup
- Share the cause using **#RunInTheBark**

Every runner gets a limited-edition **dog bandana** to honor their participation, and every donor becomes part of a support system that says: **"No one should lose their best friend to medical bills."**

**Time is critical.**



New cases come in every day. Your donation today could mean **a tomorrow for a pet in need.**



**DONATE NOW** →

**DONATE**

Thank you for supporting our mission and for believing every dog deserves a healthy, happy life.

With gratitude,

Addy Benton

Founder, Helping Paws Foundation



**P.S.** Don't forget to follow us and tag your photos using **#RunInTheBark** 🐾



**Attachments:**

- Run in the Bark Event Flyer

# Helping Paws Foundation

**Radio Public Service Announcement—Pet Medical Awareness**

**Expiration Date: May 3, 2025**

**Target Audience: Ages 18–55, Pet Owners and Animal Lovers**

**“Best Friends Shouldn’t Suffer” — 15 Seconds**

What would you do if your best friend needed life-saving surgery, but you couldn’t afford it?

Every day, pets face medical emergencies their owners can’t pay for.

You can help keep tails wagging and hearts together by visiting

[helping-paws-foundation-dot-org](http://helping-paws-foundation-dot-org) to learn more.

Brought to you by Helping Paws Foundation and the Ad Council.

**“Best Friends Shouldn’t Suffer” — 30 Seconds**

Imagine rushing your dog to the vet, only to discover that

the surgery is too expensive.

Every day, beloved pets are lost due to unaffordable medical bills.

At Helping Paws Foundation, we raise awareness and funds to help pets get the care they deserve.

You can donate and help save someone’s best friend today.

Learn how to save a best friend at [helping-paws-foundation-dot-org](http://helping-paws-foundation-dot-org).

Brought to you by Helping Paws Foundation and the Ad Council.