

On The Health Front

By Kay McGuire, DVM, MS

This has unquestionably been a year we will remember. While our daily life essentially has been closed, obviously our sponsored research has also been stalled. Our grant process for 2020 had approved \$65,000 for research as of March 2020 with money left for upcoming opportunities. This spring, we will determine which health issue studies to focus WFA 2021 grant funds.

You might remember that the Westie Foundation (WFA) made the introduction of human pulmonologist, Dr. Natali Kaminski from Yale University and Dr. Elizabeth Rozanski, a criticalist at Tufts College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Kaminski had found a thyroid like hormone that seemed to halt pulmonary fibrosis and even improve the symptoms in mice with induced fibrotic disease. The WFA brought these two individuals together to determine if this hormone might have an effect on Westies with naturally occurring pulmonary fibrosis. A study was undertaken at Tufts treating patient Westies to evaluate the effect of Sobetirome on their fibrotic disease. This work is still ongoing at Tufts; however, it has inspired testing Sobetirome in human patients with COVID that developed fibrotic lung disease. Please see the press release from Tufts University concerning the Westie study. <https://now.tufts.edu/articles/terriers-test-therapy-lung-disease>

Thanks to past WFA's officer Daphne Gentry's bequest, the WFA awarded a \$5000 scholarship through the Canine Health Foundation's Fellowship program in 2020 to Dr. Lopamudra Kher. Her work at the University of Florida started in January

with her mentor Dr. Dominico Santoro. Dr. Kher has a DVM from Mumbai Veterinary College, a Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry degree (Mumbai), a Master's in Veterinary Parasitology (Mumbai), a Master's in Small Animal Clinical Sciences (UFL) and is currently pursuing her PhD in Small Animal Clinical Sciences. We are excited that Dr. Kher is actually working on one of our supported grants on atopic dermatitis. Thank you, Board member Susie

Stone, Scholarship Committee chair; for helping in this project. This is our third year to award a scholarship to a candidate in the Veterinary field, something we are hoping to continue and possibly expand.

One of the most exciting events of this past year is the building of our new WFA website. We will be launching our informative site which has been developed by a company specializing in non-profit corporations. Once launched, we look forward to your feedback on

ease of use in finding everything you may need. We will be announcing the launch on our Facebook page.

By the time this newsletter has gone to press and been mailed, we wish that most of our readers will have had the opportunity to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine. Everyone is anxious for his/her life to return to some semblance of normalcy. I pray that we will reach this time soon, that we get to return to events with our dogs, that our research can move forward, and that new discoveries will be made to improve the health of the Westies we love.

