



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Press Release: New Survey Reveals Alarming Rates of Pet Obesity in the US**

Pet obesity rates in the United States continue to rise, becoming a significant health concern for veterinarians and pet owners. A recent survey by the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP) showed that in 2022, 59% of dogs and 61% of cats were classified as overweight or having obesity, an increase from the previous surveys conducted in 2018 and 2017.

According to Dr. Ernie Ward, founder of APOP, "Obesity in pets is not just a cosmetic issue, it is a major health issue that can lead to numerous medical conditions, such as diabetes, orthopedic diseases, cardiovascular disease, and some types of cancer. It's time for veterinarians, the pet industry, and pet owners to take further action and address this growing problem."

Despite the increased awareness about pet obesity, there is still a significant need to treat the disease. Many pet owners do not recognize their pet's excess weight or overweight body condition, and only 49% reported that their veterinary professional discussed their pet's ideal or healthy body condition yearly. Many pet owners "normalize" their pet's weight because they are accustomed to seeing them daily.

Dr. Ward stated, "It is time to shift our efforts from raising awareness to treating pet obesity. We need continued innovations in diagnostic tests and tools, interventional therapeutics and diets, and resources to encourage compliance and adherence to weight loss programs."

The survey results also showed that accurate body condition scoring (BCS) assessments can be challenging, particularly in dogs with long or thick fur and cats with prominent primordial pouches or long hair. However, APOP is working with organizations to create improved methods for measuring body condition and body fat in pets.

While two-thirds of pet owners surveyed reported not feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable when told their pet needed to lose weight, 17% reported feeling



uncomfortable or embarrassed. APOP encourages veterinary professionals to approach this sensitive topic with compassion and provide resources and support to help pet owners achieve their pet's healthy weight.

The 2022 State of U.S. Pet Obesity Report is available for download on the APOP website. Pet owners are encouraged to talk to their veterinary professionals about their pet's healthy weight and ways to achieve it.

As Dr. Ward reminds us, "We all want our pets to live long, healthy, and happy lives, and achieving a healthy body condition is a critical component of that goal."

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