

Why Valley Fever Research Needs Our Help

Valley Fever, Progress at VFCE, & Valley Fever Alliance

Valley Fever

- About 2 out of every 7 puppies raised from birth in Pima and Maricopa counties will contract Valley Fever and 1 out of 17 will get very sick by two years of age.
- About 1 out of 25 of all dogs in our area will be very sick with VF each year
- About 150,000 VF infections occur in the southwestern U.S. each year to people. Approximately one-third of these results in a self-limited, although often protracted, respiratory illness (where people do get over it). However, in a small percentage the illness is more serious, spreads to other organs, bones, and/or the brain, and can be fatal.
- Two-thirds of all Valley Fever cases occur along the I-10 corridor connecting Tucson and Phoenix.
- Valley Fever is considered an “orphan disease” because fewer than 200,000 people have it at any one time. (Not profitable enough for pharmaceutical companies to be interested in researching and producing the diagnostic tools to find it, drugs to treat it, or vaccines to prevent it.)
- Research and development of solutions requires specialized skills, creative problem-solving, time, controlled clinical trials, and many, many millions of dollars.
- All animals, canines, mice and humans, get Valley Fever the same way, and are diagnosed and treated in the same way – so any progress that helps people, also helps dogs and vice versa.
- Valley Fever is Arizona’s disease – if we don’t spread the word and raise funds for the research – this problem will likely not be solved.

Progress at the Valley Fever Center for Excellence

- Nikkomycin Z vaccine development – a possible cure
- Detecting Fungal Proteins – for early, more reliable diagnosis
- Valley Fever Corridor Project – developing a physician communications network to connect experienced specialists with clinicians who are unsure what to tell patients or how to manage complicated and even uncomplicated cases of Valley Fever.

Valley Fever Alliance

- Volunteer effort to raise public awareness and research funds for the Valley Fever Center for Excellence – and to help each other by sharing information about our personal experiences with Valley Fever
- Organized Inaugural Walk for a Cure in Phoenix last Nov. 1 – 245 people and 72 dogs participated
- Have raised approximately \$60,000 to-date (largely as a result of our volunteer efforts)
- We are organizing a walk in Tucson the morning of 10-10-10 at the U of A Mall and a walk in Phoenix the morning of 11-7-10 at the U of A College of Medicine.
- We need help: spreading the word, soliciting sponsors (ie: your vet), getting in-kind donations to put on the walk, collecting items we can raffle off, getting publicity, and getting people to register for the walk and begin collecting pledges. We will also need help the day of the walk, and we hope kennel clubs across the state will partner with us to make this dog-friendly walk a success!