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Pet Partners Announces New Professional Organization, the Association of Animal-Assisted Intervention Professionals

*– New Membership Organization Focuses on Connections and Resources for Professionals Working with
Therapy Animals in Practice –*

Bellevue, WA – Pet Partners, the nation’s leading organization registering therapy animals for animal-assisted interventions (AAI), is pleased to announce the creation of an affiliated membership organization, the Association of Animal-Assisted Intervention Professionals (AAAIP). The association will be a professional home for health care providers, educators, and others to gain the knowledge needed to practice animal-assisted interventions safely and ethically while also advancing the field.

While Pet Partners focuses on serving volunteer therapy animal teams, it recognized an increasing demand among AAI professionals for services specifically designed for those who partner with animals in vocational practice, including professionals in allied and mental health fields, school counselors and personnel, eldercare professionals, social workers, and others in related fields. “Serving multiple audiences, including professionals, has always been part of the mission of Pet Partners, but we recognized the need to connect professionals and offer our high-quality education more tailored to the needs of this rapidly growing audience,” said C. Annie Peters, President & CEO of Pet Partners. Pet Partners spent two years conducting research, listening to what the field needed, and collaborating with field leaders to create AAAIP; a professional membership association with the mission of empowering professionals to responsibly integrate the healing power of therapy animals into their practice while advancing the field of animal-assisted interventions.

Members of AAAIP will have access to a wealth of resources for AAI professionals including research findings, education courses, a members-only online professional community, and industry resources. AAAIP has developed an array of courses specific to AAI professionals, which have been designed to align with the Animal-Assisted Intervention Specialist Certification (C-AAIS) – the first of its kind in the field. Members will also have exclusive access to liability insurance to cover their work with therapy animals. “Through its website and myriad resources, AAAIP will create pathways for members to connect with other professionals who share their passion and professional expertise, thus working to create a future where AAI is practiced widely, ethically, and successfully. I am honored to be a part of this association which will pioneer efforts to shape the future of AAI,” said Dan Dooley, EdD, AAAIP Chair and Superintendent of Absecon (NJ) Public Schools.

The Association of Animal-Assisted Intervention Professionals officially launches on March 24, 2022. To learn more about AAAIP, the C-AAIS certification, and how to become a member, please visit www.aaaiponline.org.

About Pet Partners

Pet Partners is the national leader in demonstrating and promoting the health and wellness benefits of animal-assisted therapy, activities, and education. Since the organization’s inception in 1977, the science proving these

benefits has become indisputable. With thousands of registered teams making millions of visits annually, Pet Partners serves as the nation's most diverse and respected nonprofit registering handlers of multiple species as volunteer teams. Pet Partners teams visit with patients in recovery, people with intellectual disabilities, seniors living with Alzheimer's, students, veterans with PTSD, people who have experienced crisis events, and those approaching end of life, with the goal of improving human health and well-being through the human-animal bond. With the release of its *Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Interventions* and international expansion, Pet Partners is globally recognized as the industry gold standard. For more information on Pet Partners, visit www.petpartners.org.

About AAAIP

AAAIP is a community of professionals who value the human-animal bond and the power of animal-assisted interventions. Our mission is to empower professionals to responsibly integrate the healing power of therapy animals into their practice while advancing the field of Animal-Assisted Intervention (AAI). Members of AAAIP are professionals who are passionate about the power of the human-animal bond with a shared vision for safe, effective, and ethical practice in a professional setting. AAAIP welcomes all levels of professionals working with therapy animals or those who plan to work with them in the future. We also welcome individuals who may work in a field that requires knowledge of AAI. We envision a future where AAI is practiced widely, ethically, and successfully. www.aaaiponline.org

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