

The History of the Westie E-book

By Robert McCaskill, DVM, MPH, DACVPM

Past president of the Westie Foundation of America, Inc. (WFA) Wayne Kompare originated the concept of the Westie E-book. At one of the annual board meetings of the WFA back in the early 2000's, Wayne tasked the Health Committee to develop a health book that would discuss the common health issues of the West Highland White Terrier. His idea was that the book would be in an electronic form. This would allow Westie owners and veterinarians to quickly obtain this information. The Health Committee embraced this concept and began to consider options.

Daphne Gentry, while on a cruise one summer, met a veterinarian who was on the faculty of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine (VMR). We contacted him, and he connected us with the dean of the research office at the school. A grant proposal was discussed to have VMR develop an electronic health book that would consist of chapters discussing the most common diseases found in the West Highland White Terrier.

John Robinson, DVM, PhD, the Director of the Center of Comparative Center for Oncology at VMR, took on the grant. He collaborated with Elizabeth McStay, BSVetMed, MS, a clinical resident, to oversee the project. Each summer for the next three years, a team of rising third-year veterinary students who needed a work study project were assigned clinical areas to research. Dr. McStay edited their work with Dr. Robinson providing the final review and edits. At the end of three years, the WFA was presented a CD with the work of their grant. It was an immediate success!

We heard many accolades from Westie owners who found the information extremely helpful. We also heard from numerous veterinarians who also found the information beneficial in their practices.

By 2015, some of the information in our E-book was becoming outdated. We again approached the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine for an update. We learned that Dr. Robinson had transferred to another college in the Virginia Tech University and was not available to assist us. We then reached out the University of Georgia, College of Veterinary Medicine. They agreed to a WFA grant to review our E-book and to include



two additional chapters on Cushing's Disease and Cancer. The University of Georgia used the same process as VMR, hiring third-year veterinary students in a summer work study program to complete assigned chapters. The college also used two medical illustrators which added a degree of professionalism to this work. Review and editing of the completed work was done by Drs. Jim Moore and Robert Scott.

We are indeed grateful to Virginia-Maryland Regional Veterinary College and the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine for assisting the WFA in our efforts to provide us with a unique source of health information for the West Highland White Terrier.

The current topics of our Health E-books include: Addison's Disease, Aggression, Cushing's Disease, Craniomandibular Osteopathy (CMO), Atopic Dermatitis, Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF), Legg-Calve Perthes Disease, Patella Luxation, White Dog Shaker Disease, Diabetes Mellitus, Inflammatory Bowel Disease, Copper Toxicosis, Juvenile Cataracts, Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca, and Cancer such as Transitional Cell Carcinoma and Lymphosarcoma.