



The New OFA–ACVIM Advanced Cardiac Database



Over the past year, the OFA has been working with a steering committee established by the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM) to make improvements to the OFA's existing Congenital Cardiac Database. The primary purposes of the enhancements are to 1) develop an appropriate screening protocol for adult onset cardiac diseases, and 2) begin collecting better data on cardiac disease prevalence and progression in the purebred dog.

The OFA's existing cardiac database only provides clearances for congenital cardiac disease, with a minimum exam age of 12 months, and where exams can be performed by general practitioners, specialists or boarded veterinary cardiologists (ACVIM/Cardiology Diplomates). Since many canine cardiac diseases develop after 12 months age, the current congenital cardiac database does NOT clear dogs for these adult onset diseases.

Since the OFA Cardiac application forms are used primarily by breeders and owners to clear their dogs for congenital cardiac disease, very few applications with abnormal exam results are ever submitted. As a result, the congenital cardiac database statistics are almost completely skewed towards normal dogs, and in no way represent an accurate incidence of cardiac disease in dogs.

Highlights of the Advanced Cardiac Program

- Two-tiered clearance:
congenital and adult onset cardiac disease
- Improved statistical data regarding prevalence and progression of canine cardiac disease
- Exams limited to ACVIM/ECVIM
Cardiology Diplomates
- Results meet all CHIC cardiac criteria
- No changes to OFA submission procedures

There will be a transition period (length to be determined) where the current OFA Congenital Cardiac Database will continue to be available with no changes to the forms, submission procedures or exam protocols. However, effective April 1, 2016, we will be offering the Advanced Cardiac Database (ACA), which will become the new standard for cardiac exams and will eventually replace the existing Congenital Cardiac Database. Please note, exams for the new Advanced Cardiac Database are limited to boarded veterinary cardiologists with Diplomate status in either the ACVIM (American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine/Cardiology subspecialty) or the ECVIM (European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine/Cardiology subspecialty). General practitioners and other specialists may not perform Advanced Cardiac Database exams.

Modeled after the OFA's eye screening program, the new ACA exam form is a triplicate form, and is therefore not available as a .pdf download from the OFA website. All the participating cardiologists have been sent forms, and ACA forms will be available at the time of the exam. Regardless of whether or not the owner submits their copy of the form to the OFA for official certification, the examining cardiologist will submit one copy of the form to the OFA. The results contained on the cardiologist-submitted copy will remain confidential. No official OFA clearances will be issued from this copy. The cardiologist-submitted copy will only be used to record results

at an aggregate level to begin collecting better cardiac disease prevalence and progression data by breed in the purebred dog, one of the major purposes of the enhancements. Should an echocardiogram be warranted as a result of the basic auscultation, the echo section of the new form is also far more detailed so that better statistics regarding flow rates, velocities, etc., can be collected. From an owner perspective, there is NO CHANGE once receiving the completed signed form following the exam. For official OFA certification, owners should submit their copy of the completed signed form to the OFA along with the required fee, and an OFA number for all passing dogs will be issued.

Under the existing Congenital Cardiac Database, certification numbers begin with “CA” to indicate a cardiac clearance. Exams submitted using the new Advanced Cardiac Database forms will result in certification numbers beginning with “ACA” for Advanced Cardiac. If the breed is participating in the CHIC program and the breed’s CHIC criteria include a cardiac exam requirement, the new ACA clearances WILL QUALIFY.

Only normal results submitted by the owner for official OFA certification will automatically be placed in the open database, released to the public domain and viewable on the OFA website. For dogs with abnormal exam results, owners can “opt-in” for full disclosure by initialing the abnormal release block on the exam form. For abnormal results, ONLY those authorized for release by the owner will appear on the OFA website. As with most other OFA databases, the registration fee is waived for owners willing to place abnormal results in the public domain or open database.

Since the second major enhancement of the Advanced Cardiac Database addresses adult onset diseases, the new ACA has a two-tiered clearance for normal dogs. In other words, the resulting OFA certificate will indicate, “This dog has been found to be free of congenital cardiac disease,” “This dog has been found to be free of adult onset cardiac disease,” or “This dog has been found to be free of congenital and adult onset cardiac disease.” The clearance type will also be indicated on the OFA website. The minimum age for either clearance type is 12 months. While the congenital clearance remains valid for the life of the dog, owners should be aware that the adult onset clearance will only remain valid for one year from the time of the exam. If owners wish for the adult onset clearance to remain current, repeat exams will be necessary. This is the only way to address cardiac diseases which can develop throughout the life of the dog. The one year validity period and subsequent expiration for adult onset clearances is viewed as a critical component by the ACVIM/Cardiology group in order to even consider diagnosing dogs as normal when many cardiac diseases of concern to breeders can develop at any time in the dog’s life.

The ACVIM/Cardiology group has also determined that because of the specific cardiomyopathy concerns in the Boxer and Doberman Pinscher breeds, an adult onset clearance for these two breeds will ALSO REQUIRE a Holter test to be performed within 90 days of the regular cardiac exam. The examining cardiologists will also have Holter exam forms available. Interpretation of the Holter test is limited to boarded veterinary cardiologists with Diplomate status in either the ACVIM or the ECVIM.